



## ***Open Door Week***

### ***Open Door: Peer Observation of Teaching***

#### **Advice for Observers**

The units you will be peer observing are delivered in Canvas so there is a different look and feel to what you may be used to, however the tool set is similar to what you can use in Blackboard/vUWS.

When you login, the first thing to do is to have a look at the 'start here' or 'instructions for students'. Here you will find an overview of the unit, learning modules, activities, assessment and so forth. This information helps students manage their time and sets expectations of what they should be doing and completing. Signposting students helps them progress through the material and activities.

The units have been adapted for fully online delivery. You'll see a simple design with embedded activities and content, rather than as attachments or single files. The information is presented for screen reading.

Online activities are designed for students to check their learning regularly which helps students self-reflect. Immediacy of feedback is important for online learners.

When synchronous activities are scheduled they are spaced out for students to plan their time and provides a catch up point to bring students back to task.

Have a good look around and make notes of what designs and activities you like and think could be adapted to your unit. Share your thoughts and feedback with Learning Futures.

#### **Getting the most out of your observation of teaching**

This guide offers some ideas for how to get the most out of the opportunity of observing a fully online unit:

- What questions might you ask yourself?
- What things should you look for?
- Other resources that may support you to reflect on your own teaching practices

Just as importantly, what does it feel like to be a student in this class?

- Try to "put yourself in their shoes" – think about how they might be experiencing the class, *from a student perspective?*
- This can help us think about how students might feel in our own online classes.
- Take the opportunity to reflect on how they interact online, which is difficult to do ourselves when we are busy facilitating.

Here are some prompts to think about.

#### **Before commencing your peer observation:**

Reflect on what you might specifically want to get out of the observation?

- Are you going because a teaching approach or practice that you are interested in is being utilised? Is this something you would like to use yourself, or would like to see ideas for how



you might improve, or adapt your own practice? If so, there may be key questions you have arising from challenges which you yourself have faced. If so, make a note of them, so that they are front of mind and you can particularly attend to them.

- Think about how you are going to approach the observation? Taking notes is a good idea. Use the guide we have provided to assist you with your observation. It is worth thinking about what you are particularly interested in and how you might approach it.
- The UC/tutor might wish to elicit feedback from his or her observers. However, this is not a given for this process. **Feedback should only be provided by agreement.**

### **Important Protocols for Peer Observation of Teaching**

1. Observe as unobtrusively as possible. Do not speak, address the students, participate in learning activities or give opinions on the teaching or learning materials.
2. If the colleague you are observing seeks feedback, ensure it is constructive, honest, supportive and respectful.
3. Respect confidentiality and do not download or share materials generated in the unit with any third party and without consent.

### **During the peer observation and exploration - what should I do?**

Take note of:

- What you see...
- What you notice...
- What questions come to you...
- What ideas come to you...
- What can you use or adapt...
- What's interactive ....

Note them all down to reflect on them later.

### **After the online peer observation:**

Some key questions which may help you reflect on the observation are:

- What approaches and/or techniques did you observe which were particularly effective in engaging students, or communicating difficult concepts? Are these transferable to your online teaching? How might you use them?
- Are any of the strategies you observed useful in addressing challenges you have confronted in your teaching?
- How would you describe the online teaching practice you observed? How does this differ from yours? If the styles are quite different, are there discernible reasons? Can you learn from or adopt anything from their teaching style into yours?
- Did anything in the class reinforce or contradict your beliefs about online teaching and learning?
- Do you consider the 'ebb and flow' of your online delivery of a unit when planning them and build in strategies to help maintain engagement of students?