

**Open Door Week: Peer Observation of Teaching Scheme****Advice for Participants/Open Doorers**

Firstly, thank you once again for participating in this exciting initiative. The following advice is provided, based on published information and experience of such programs elsewhere, about things you might wish to consider prior to your open class session. There are no right or wrong approaches - these are just suggestions for your consideration.

Do I tell the students there will be observers in the class?

Unless the observer(s) slip into the class completely unnoticed, which is unlikely unless this is a very big and well attended lecture with a backdoor entrance, then students are bound to notice. They may also know the person(s) from other classes etc. and wonder what is going on. It is best therefore to advise them one way or another. You might like to advise them the week before and then remind them at the beginning of the session, or not.

What should I tell them?

You could just note that there is a colleague or more attending to observe the class. Because “we are all learners” this is a normal practice; an opportunity for “teachers to be students” for a change and reflect on their own teaching practices by observing others.

You might want to introduce them, but this is not necessary.

What if the students feel a little apprehensive about having someone observing them (as well as you)?

You could reinforce that they are there to observe teaching approaches and practices used – i.e. to observe you! But, acknowledge that they will also be observing how students respond, engage and interact as a result...just like when they go out into the workplace. You could stress that you just want them to “be themselves”; to try to forget that there is anyone else in the class, because the idea is for them to be able to observe a “real live class” in all its glory and complexity, not a showcase.

What if a student(s) refers to an observer and seeks to involve them in the class?

Observers are just observers and should not become involved in the class. If this happens, just cut it off and perhaps joke that we don’t want to embarrass them!

Will the observer(s) critique and provide feedback on the class?

Observers have been specifically advised that this is *not* the purpose of the scheme. But let’s face it, as human beings we critically reflect on our peers all the time, so inevitably some may find criticism with our practice. If they have any critical feedback, observers have been specifically advised to “keep

it to themselves” and to use for their own personal reflection and learning, ***unless you ask them for specific feedback.***

Do I need to interact with the observers before and/or after the class?

You aren't required to interact with your observers. We will, however, forward you the names of your observers, so you can if you want to. If you have time available, you might want to conduct an orientation for your observers, to show them around your site or to provide any additional information, instruction to them or highlight areas which they may find interesting. This entirely your prerogative.

If you do have specific instructions for your observers, please let Learning Futures know. We can assist with circulating any written instructions, directions, or requests.