Getting Useful, Trustworthy Data on Teaching – Planning Guide for Observers

Learning-Focused

Student Learning
- What helps students learn?
- What challenges to learning do students typically face in trying to learn this material?
- How does this course help students face the challenges?

Instructor Learning
- What helps instructors learn more about teaching?
- What do instructors learn from the peer review?
- What next steps does the review lead to?

Inquiry-Guided

Pre-observation questions for the instructor
- What goals do you have for teaching and learning in the class session(s) to be observed? In the course as a whole?
- What would you like to develop or improve in your teaching?
- What are the challenges you’ve been encountering with this particular group of students? How have you been trying to address these challenges with your students?

Before observing …
- What can you (the observer) look for to help address the questions identified by the instructor?
- Considering the nature of the course and the challenges it poses, what else will you be looking for when you observe the class?

While observing …
- Keep instructor goals for the observation in front of you
- Focus on descriptive notes, for later evaluation of further questions
- Identify questions you want to ask after the observation

Post-observation discussion and analysis
- What did the instructor observe? For example, what was typical or atypical about the class period, what went according to plan, what will happen next, etc.
- What did the reviewer observe that addresses the issues identified prior to the observation?
- What other questions does the evidence raise?

Documentation
- Documenting both the observation and the review
- The instructor should always be given a voice in documentation of the review.

Integrative

Evidence that reasonably portrays the complexity of what you are assessing
- More than one type of data
- More than one perspective represented
- More than one point in time
- Instructor self-assessment and interpretation