Classroom Teaching Observation Checklist

The Chan Classroom Teaching Observation Checklist provides performance descriptions for four tiers of classroom instructional practices. The first, second, and third tiers include a progression of recommended teaching practices. The substandard tier includes items that are contrary to best practices and/or USC policies. The checklist can be used for two purposes. It can be used as a developmental tool to provide faculty formative feedback to enhance their teaching, showing progression over multiple observations. It can also be used as an evaluative tool to document evidence of teaching performance for annual merit reviews, promotion, tenure, or continuing appointment.

Not Included in the Classroom Teaching Observation Checklist

- Evaluation of course design, which is addressed in a separate Chan Course Design Syllabus Review Checklist.

- Aspects of teaching that cannot be observed.

Checklist Conditions

- Effective use of the checklist requires that observer and observed have met prior to the observation and discussed class format and purpose, and will meet for a debrief after the observation.

Observer

- Visits one class session for each of the first- and second-tier evaluations. Two visits are recommended before an instructor is judged to be performing at the third-tier.

- Is familiar with the course learning objectives listed in the syllabus.

- Understands the content of the course well enough to evaluate effectiveness of instruction in that topic.

- Has been trained by CET or by a CET Faculty Fellow to use the checklist.

Checklist Items

- Are observable actions and behaviors of the instructor (observable during a single visited class session), not the behaviors of students.

- Describe practices that can be implemented within a wide variety of teaching models, both traditional and innovative.

- Reflect actions and behaviors that should be observable in *nearly* all classes, regardless of level, field, or student population. Some items in the Tier 3 column may not be applicable to certain educational contexts, which should be noted in the comments sections.

- Are rated in such a way that achieving mastery in one tier implies mastery of the previous tier(s), as well. Satisfaction of Tier 2 requires achievement of items in Tiers 1 and 2. Satisfaction of Tier 3 requires achievement of items in Tiers 1, 2, and 3.

- Were developed to include best teaching practices relevant to occupational science and occupational therapy as identified by Chan faculty in alignment with the Chan Definition of Excellence in Teaching and resources from the USC Center for Excellence in Teaching (CET).

Each dimension in the checklist measures one or more criteria in the Chan Definition of Excellence in Teaching and those criteria are noted next to the dimension name. The practices in Tiers 1, 2, and 3 are supported through training provided by Chan Faculty Fellows and CET's faculty institutes.

DIMENSION	SUBSTANDARD TIER	TIER 1	TIER 2	TIER 3
*USC Definition of Excellence in Teaching criteria measured by each dimension are noted.	Performing Below Minimum USC Teaching Policy Standard	Performing at Minimum USC Teaching Policy Standard	Performing at Proficient Level of Teaching Standard at USC (Includes Tier 1 Minimum criteria)	Performing at Excellence Level of Teaching Standard at USC (Includes Tier 1 Minimum + Tier 2 Proficient criteria)
CLASS ORGANIZATION				
Instructional plan 5a, 5b*	☐ Instructor changes the established class session plan without prior notification to students.	☐ The class session demonstrates clear signs of planning and organization, and follows a logical flow.	☐ The class session includes instruction and formative assessment[1] to assess student learning for that class session.	☐ The class session includes instruction, formative assessment, and reflection components. ☐ The class session includes opportunities to ask and answer questions to facilitate learning.
Communication of clear learning goals for the class session 6a*	☐ Instructor communicates no learning goals for the class session and/or each lesson activity. ☐ Instructor communicates inappropriate or unrealistic learning goals for the class session and/or each lesson activity.	☐ Instructor clearly identifies realistic learning goals for the class session.	☐ Instructor clearly connects the learning goals for the class session to the course learning objectives. ☐ Instructor emphasizes/ summarizes main points of class session.	☐ Instructor clearly identifies the learning goals for each instructional activity, and connects them to the course learning objectives[2].

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[1] Assignments intended to help students evaluate their mastery of a skill or learning objective and provide information to the instructor on student progress.
[2] See the CET resource A Clear Guide to Writing Learning Objectives.

Time management 3e, 5c*	☐ Room and/or technology issues occur during class that could have been addressed before the start of class.	☐ The class session starts and ends on time. ☐ Planned sections of the class session are well-timed. ☐ Little or no time spent on non-instructional activities. ☐ Instructor prepares the room and relevant technology before the start of class.	☐ Instructor utilizes and references educational technology for passive learning activities[3] outside of class to support effective use of in-class time (for example, using Blackboard to post articles and videos).	☐ Instructor maximizes in-class time, using active learning or applications[4] rather than passive learning. ☐ Instructor clearly indicates time limits for all student activities.
Comments:				

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[3] When students receive information from the instructor.

[4] Activities in which students practice course concepts during class.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Classroom climate 1b, 2e, 2f, 3a, 4e*	☐ Instructor raises students' stress or anxiety by using discriminatory, dismissive, or other abusive language. ☐ Instructor minimizes students' struggle with material. ☐ Instructor discourages student input. ☐ Instructor violates confidentiality by publicly revealing students with accommodations. ☐ Instructor ignores disruptive student behaviors.	☐ Instructor consistently uses verbal and body language that is responsive to students' stress or anxiety. ☐ Instructor encourages student participation. ☐ Instructor treats all students equitably. ☐ Instructor is responsive to students' different educational backgrounds and learning needs by providing a variety of instructional strategies.	☐ Instructor establishes and consistently upholds classroom norms that foster a positive and inclusive environment.[5] ☐ Instructor encourages interaction between students. ☐ Instructor addresses disruptive student behaviors.	☐ Instructor uses practices that increase students' motivation and foster a growth mindset.[6]
Presentation form 1a, 1b*	☐ Instructor uses inappropriate or offensive gestures and/or speech. ☐ Instructor displays a negative attitude in tone and/or content.	☐ Instructor volume, pace, and diction allow observer to follow the class session. ☐ Instructor faces students when speaking. ☐ Instructor avoids prolonged reading from notes or slides.	☐ Instructor incorporates appropriate eye contact and effective non-verbal communication (e.g., hand gestures). ☐ Instructor avoids distracting mannerisms or speech patterns, such as filler words and nervous habits.	☐ Instructor is engaging, responsive, and constructive in both tone and content of their speech.
Presentation substance 4a, 4d, 3f*	☐ Instructor does not use, or uses inappropriate, visual support for presentation and/or examples/illustrations.	☐ Instructor provides visual support for verbal presentation and uses concrete examples/illustrations to clarify content.	☐ Instructor cites sources for content discussed.	☐ Instructor follows accessibility best practices by verbally describing and/or captioning any images used in presentation.

Comments:

INSTRUCTIONAL CONTENT

Knowledge of subject 4a*	☐ Instructor does not appear to understand course content.	☐ Instructor's factual statements are consistent with current knowledge in the field. ☐ Instructor correctly answers questions about course-level content.	☐ Instructor answers questions confidently, clearly, and simply. ☐ Instructor distinguishes facts and opinions, as well as observations and interpretations.	☐ Instructor ties current content to topics or knowledge from the profession and/or more advanced courses.
Discipline-specific language 1d*	☐ Instructor does not use, or incorrectly uses, discipline-specific and/or academic language.	☐ Instructor uses discipline-specific and academic language.	☐ Instructor explains use of discipline-specific terms.	☐ Instructor facilitates the use of discipline-specific language by students.
Contextual relevance and transferability 3b, 3c, 4c*	☐ Instructor teaches content devoid of real-world scenarios and/or examples. ☐ Instructor assumes unrealistic skill level of students in the class.	☐ Instructor provides real-world applications of class session content. ☐ Instructor explicitly builds on prior student knowledge and experience.	☐ Instructor has students provide real-world examples of class content or apply content to real-world scenarios.	☐ Where appropriate, instructor uses examples where their discipline converges with other disciplines in addressing challenges. ☐ Where appropriate, instructor addresses "wicked problems"/public policy identified by USC on a local, national, or global level.
Comments:			

Classroom Teaching Observation Checklist

CONTEXT Record pertinent characteristics of the course, student population, and physical environment. Examples: enrollment, student demographics, classroom type (stadium, small conference room, etc.), class meeting time, and general education status.	Context: