

Choosing a Lens

One approach that works for some people is to choose a particular “lens” through which to focus their observations. Going in with some specific questions in mind can help you focus your attention and lead to a more meaningful observation. Here are some possible lenses, though there are dozens more possibilities:

Motivation

- How does the Instructor arouse curiosity in her students?
- How does the Instructor keep his students engaged in the material?
- How does the Instructor show his learners he is interested in them?

Content

- Does the Instructor survey her learners to assess what they already know?
- Does the Instructor summarize her central points clearly?
- Does the Instructor give some space to her students to set the agenda?
- Are her examples relevant and current?

Diversity

- How does the Instructor accommodate differences in his learners?
- How does the Instructor ensure his curriculum addresses diversity?
- How inclusive is the Instructor in his teaching practice?

Instructional Strategies

- Is there variety in the way the Instructor delivers material?
- How does the Instructor encourage self-reflection and critical thinking?
- How effectively does the Instructor handle small group work?
- How does the Instructor handle unexpected moments in the classroom?
- Does the Instructor model different learning processes?
- Do her questions generate meaningful discussion?

Classroom climate

- Do his students feel respected?
- Do his students feel comfortable asking and answering questions?
- Does the Instructor set clear parameters for participation?
- Can his students challenge his position on an issue?