

OBSERVATION OF TEACHING INSTRUMENT

Instructor Haley McCoy

Course PSY 453-003

Date 3-25-25

of students present 10 of 11 present

Rating scale: 1 = needs improvement, 2 = average, 3 = good, 4 = excellent, NA/VO = not applicable/unobserved

ORGANIZATION

Begins class on time in an orderly, organized fashion	1	2	3	4	NA/VO
Clearly states the goal or objective for the period	1	2	3	4	NA/VO
Reviews prior class material to prepare students for content to be covered	1	2	3	4	NA/VO
Effective transitions (clear w/summaries)	1	2	3	4	NA/VO
Summarizes and distills main points at the end of class	1	2	3	4	NA/VO
Presents topics in a logical sequence and flow	1	2	3	4	NA/VO

Comments:

Class Opening

They hopped right into the experiment with a bit of a preview but I thought this was highly effective. It was clear students were familiar with the routine for class and understood that after the experimental demo you would get into lecture. Students were also clearly attuned to the information that would be necessary for their lab reports. For the interim period while you were compiling data, is there anything useful that the students could be doing? (Example: Have them pull together an idea for an experiment on creativity they would be interested in running.)

CONTENT

Selects examples relevant to student experiences/course content	1	2	3	4	NA/VO
Presents up-to-date developments in field	1	2	3	4	NA/VO
Answers student questions clearly and directly	1	2	3	4	NA/VO
Demonstrates command of subject matter	1	2	3	4	NA/VO
Relevancy of main ideas was clear	1	2	3	4	NA/VO
Higher order and/or critical thinking is required	1	2	3	4	NA/VO
Models higher order and/or critical thinking	1	2	3	4	NA/VO
Definitions/examples were given for vocabulary	1	2	3	4	NA/VO

Comments: Like it that you set up the class by first asking students to describe their experience in the experiment. When getting down to the lecture, I liked how you started with a question about problems and let the discussion breathe. In that regard, the problem solving lecture was on point and went through key concepts with lots of effective examples and chances for students to engage with the content. One thing to consider: What were your key learning goals with this lecture? (Another way to put it: What did you want them to walk away with?) I like the approach to creativity as that is a notoriously difficult concept to pin down. That said, students love creativity and they seemed to really enjoy the approach you took here.

PRESENTATION

Speaks audibly and clearly	1	2	3	4	NA/VO
Rate of delivery was appropriate	1	2	3	4	NA/VO
Communicates a sense of excitement & enthusiasm toward content	1	2	3	4	NA/VO
Presentation style facilitates note taking, if appropriate	1	2	3	4	NA/VO
Selects teaching methods appropriate for the content	1	2	3	4	NA/VO
Relates current course content to what's gone before & will come after	1	2	3	4	NA/VO
Carefully explains assignments	1	2	3	4	NA/VO
Overheads/visual aids clear & well organized	1	2	3	4	NA/VO

Comments: Pacing was measured and easy to follow, without being forced or rushed. One thing that was evident early and throughout the lecture was that you were enjoying the topic and enjoying working with the class. (This is at least half of the battle in all of teaching—if we're not enthusiastic about the topic then how could we expect the students to be enthusiastic?) Another note: You largely stuck to the podium but I thought that worked very well in this setting and would certainly be better than sitting at the desk for the whole class period.

RAPPORT/INTERACTION

Responds constructively to student opinions/comments	1	2	3	4	NA/VO
Listens carefully to student comments and questions	1	2	3	4	NA/VO
Treats all students in a fair and equitable manner	1	2	3	4	NA/VO
Responds to wrong answers constructively	1	2	3	4	NA/VO
Encourages students to answer difficult questions with cues & encouragement	1	2	3	4	NA/VO
Respects diverse points of view	1	2	3	4	NA/VO
Is able to admit error or insufficient knowledge	1	2	3	4	NA/VO
Instructor questions at different levels of complexity/depth	1	2	3	4	NA/VO
Effectively structures opportunities for student group work	1	2	3	4	NA/VO

Comments: Excellent rapport opening the class and clearly a great vibe among all the students. Great job eliciting questions from the students, working with their answers, and encouraging them to resolve challenges in these answers. (I thought you were particularly skilled in handling a response, referencing levels of processing, that didn't connect neatly to the topic.) For Tower of Hanoi, as I mentioned before, I wonder if it would be useful to let them try solving this—maybe it could have even been put on Canvas for everyone to try a 3-disk solution? On student responses, I think at least 2/3 of the class responded to your questions; although there are probably some students who might be classified as “dominant” (e.g., Ella, Alice) I didn't think that discouraged the class as a whole from responding. While they work on their data, is it worth walking the class and monitoring their progress?

AREAS OF STRENGTH: This was an exceptional class session, characterized by your wonderful rapport with the students, command and enthusiasm for the material, as well as the pacing. In that regard, the measured pace of the class was superb, giving students plenty of time with concepts and examples without ever being rushed. This is something that can take years to develop (this reviewer is still working on pacing) but you already have it down pat. You also did a wonderful job of moving the class forward via questions, demonstrations, and engaging content rather than simply talking at them. The effect was that the students learned and a great time.

AREAS TO CONSIDER FOR FACULTY DEVELOPMENT: This was an excellent class and I don't have any substantial suggestions for improvement. I can offer two minor suggestions. First, problem solving is necessarily a bit of a piecemeal topic, with a number of different lines of work but without always lending itself well to unifying themes. In that regard, it was challenging at times to identify the central learning goals (beyond something like "learn about problem solving") for the class. Second, during the period when you were compiling data, the students got into a fairly wild conversation that probably was not befitting of class time. When you anticipate having a delay, consider providing a few minutes for a break and then giving them a task to work on, consistent with your learning goals.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT: Cards on the table: I do lots of these observations, both with the graduate student instructors and faculty. This is probably one of the better class sessions I have ever observed. What most resonated for me is that these ideas are interesting and fun and apply in our lives—the class session fully captured this dynamic and did so via a number of effective learning approaches. I thought you were excellent.