Post-Observation Reflection Form

This form is designed for three purposes: to help contextualize the class session observed for those reading the portfolio; to demonstrate the tenure track faculty member’s ability to self-assess, reflect, and integrate feedback; and to strengthen the impact of formative feedback received in order to improve instruction.

**Part 1** should be completed immediately following the observed class (ideally within 24 hours). If your observer has scheduled a post-observation discussion with you, you may want to bring a completed copy of Part 1 to that meeting. Part 1 may be modified and expanded upon after receiving formal feedback from the observer. **Part 2** should be completed only after receiving formal feedback from the observer. This form must be completed and included in the portfolio for each formal observation. Each section should be answered in roughly one paragraph.

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| Instructor’s Name | **Linda Monroe** | Class and Section Observed | **Microbiology 233 EFG** |
| Observer’s Name | **Department Chair** | Date of Observation | **XX/XX/XX** |
| Relation of Observer to Instructor | **Department Chair (Biology)** | Number of Students Enrolled | **18** |
| College | **Olive-Harvey** | Date Formal Feedback Received | **XX/XX/XX** |

**Part 1**

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| **Instructor’s Description of Class Session Observed** |
| Summarize the class session observed. Be sure to include the following in your summary: the intended purpose of the class session, the connection of the session’s purpose to the course student learning outcomes, the lesson organization including the instructional techniques used. Include any other information that will help to situate this class session in the context of the course.  **The intended purpose of today’s class session was for students to learn about the Gram staining procedure, how to interpret a Gram stain, and applications of Gram staining in medicine. Students would perform the procedure on two unknown bacterial cultures (a Gram-positive and a Gram negative) that they had been given.**  **The session’s purpose is connected to the following three SLO’s from the syllabus:**  **Students will be able to:**  **03) utilize aseptic technique to handle microorganisms**  **04) employ staining techniques to differentiate between types of bacteria**  **05) use brightfield microscopy to view and identify features of microorganisms**  **The lesson plan for today was as follows:**   1. **In the first 30 minutes of class students will prepare a smear (on a microscope slide) of their bacterial unknowns (laboratory exercise).** 2. **In the next 15 minutes an explanation of the Gram stain procedure will be provided, using Powerpoint slides as visual aids (lecture).** 3. **For the next 45 minutes, students will perform the Gram stain on their bacterial smears and observe them under the microscope to note the Gram stain reaction (+/-), cell shape, and cell arrangement (laboratory exercise).** 4. **The remaining time (90 minutes) will be spent discussing the structures of the eukaryotic cell (Chapter 5 of the textbook). Powerpoint slides will be used to provide visuals. Students were given a set of fill-in-the-blank worksheets (guided notes) which they could fill in during the lecture.**   **The lesson was about the Gram staining procedure. This is a method for staining bacteria to characterize their shapes and chemical structures, and thus aid in their identification. The students had just finished learning about the structures of bacterial cells during the lecture portion of the course. The goal of the accompanying laboratory portion of the lesson was to demonstrate how one of these structures, the bacterial cell wall, can be used to categorize bacteria into either of two groups, Gram positive or Gram negative. Following an overview of the procedure, students carried out their own staining of bacterial cultures and interpreted their results. Since most of the students enrolled in Microbiology 233 plan on entering a healthcare profession, I tried to emphasize to them how an understanding of basic science concepts (such as bacterial cell wall structure) is useful in medicine (in this case, to help with the diagnosis of an infectious disease in a patient and to determine the best course of treatment). The results of a Gram stain can help to determine which type of antimicrobial drug might be best to use on an infected patient. Towards the end of the explanation, I asked the students a couple of critical thinking questions, to check if they understood the rationale of the method. I tried to pay attention to their responses to gauge their level of understanding.**  **Later in the course, we will return to the Gram staining procedure when we discuss treatment of infectious diseases using antimicrobial drugs/antibiotics. We will discuss which classes of drugs are best suited to tackling infections caused by Gram positive or Gram negative bacteria.**  **In the following week, each student will be given an "unknown" bacterial species and asked to Gram stain it, as the first step in the identification process.** |

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| **Instructor’s Assessment of the Class Session** |
| Assess the class session, considering the success of the class session in achieving its intended purpose. Reflect on both what you felt went well and what you felt could have gone better. (For ideas of what to address, you may want to consider the categories and specific bullets provided on the formal classroom observation form.)  **I would conclude that the class session achieved its intended purpose, since every student in the class successfully performed the Gram stain and was able to interpret their results. I think that I did a reasonably good job of explaining the procedure and relating it to real-life applications. I felt that overall the students grasped the concepts well, as determined by their responses to my questions. The students were engaged and were eager to do the procedure. However, there were several things which could be modified in the future to make this lesson a more effective learning experience for students.**  **1) I had unusual difficulties with the computer recognizing the data projector, so it took several minutes to get the lesson underway. Unfortunately, I did not have the opportunity to pre-check the A/V equipment prior to the lesson, because we had actually started the class off by working on another aspect of the procedure (preparation of a bacterial smear) which had to be completed prior to doing the Gram stain. My evaluator may not have been aware of that, so it perhaps appeared that I had been negligent in checking the equipment beforehand. This was the first time during this semester that the computer-data projector connection was not working, so it was an unexpected and unavoidable problem.**  **2) As I stood at the front of the classroom asking the students questions to check if they understood, I realized that it wasn’t allowing for full participation. Generally the same students would participate and provide answers by calling them out verbally. I think use of clickers to facilitate 100% participation of all students in an “anonymous” way would allow the question/answer process to be much smoother and would yield more meaningful assessment data which I could use to modify instructional methods. I also felt that I could have waited longer to allow students to respond to my questions, or just individually call on students by name, to get increased participation. I think that I didn’t do this because I felt I might not have enough time if I stretched out the lesson further. In actuality, the lesson actually ended with some time to spare at the end.**  **3) A video demonstration of the Gram stain procedure might have been helpful to show students what happens during the procedure so that they felt more comfortable with it. I checked and found that a number of excellent videos are available on youtube.com. I could also have performed the procedure as a demonstration, but it might have been difficult for everyone in the room to see. Overall, this wasn’t a serious problem since the students’ lab manuals have a step-by-step illustration of the procedure in color. However, it might have made it a little easier to understand the technique (for example, students could see how to heat-fix their slides in a flame). Showing a video might have been beneficial.** |

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| **Instructor’s Selected Focus (Optional)** |
| What areas are you currently focusing on improving in your instruction, and how would you assess yourself on these areas based on this class session?  **I am focused on improving the following:**  **a) helping students to develop their critical thinking skills:**  **In this class section, in retrospect I think I could have done more to make this a critical thinking exercise. I initially felt that I was encouraging students to think critically, but the more I reflect I realize it was not the central focus of the lesson. Although I did ask them a couple of higher order thinking questions (troubleshooting the procedure), this was done in passing and did not really force the majority of students to think about the problems deeply. Upon closer analysis, I realized that the entire exercise could have been structured in a way that would go beyond simply showing the students how to perform a procedure. I think a more effective approach would have been to pass out a short worksheet with problems (i.e. what would happen if someone forgot to do step X?) and have them work in pairs to figure it out. This could have been done immediately after the Gram stain lesson to check their comprehension.**  **b) helping students to develop their study skills:**  **I also think I could have used this lesson as a venue for helping the students develop their study skills. I have not been very stringent about having them read the lab exercise in advance. I’ve been letting them know what will be covered in lab on the following day, and I encourage them to read the lesson early, but I actually don’t create an incentive for them to do so. So naturally most of them don’t read the lab protocol in advance. They would be far more motivated to read the lab exercise in advance if they knew that they would be quizzed on it or have to turn in homework of some sort prior to starting the experiment. The reason I didn’t do this is because it is a summer course with an accelerated schedule, and I felt that they might be overwhelmed with additional work. On the other hand, without high expectations being placed on them, they won’t learn to budget their time and prioritize their studies, which will become even more critical as they advance in their studies. In the next semester (Fall 2013), I will hold short quizzes at the beginning of each lab session, which will encourage students to read their lab manuals in advance.**  **c) conducting more classroom assessment to improve my own instruction and help students address areas of difficulty:**  **I have to admit that although I try to incorporate assessment in my lessons, I have not been very systematic about it. In this particular lesson, I did not assess the students at all, apart from asking the entire class questions and trying to gauge their level of understanding from their facial expressions and responses. I have obtained a set of student response clickers, so in Fall 2013, I will begin using them on a regular basis. This will allow me to collect actual assessment data to identify problematic areas for the students. It will also allow all students to participate in an “anonymous” way. I will design a set of questions based on the lecture topic or lab being discussed, which will be incorporated on Powerpoint slides throughout a particular lesson. This will give me instantaneous feedback on whether students understand a concept or not, so I can help them right away if necessary.** |

**Part 2**

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| **Instructor’s Response to Formal Feedback Received** |
| After receiving the formal classroom observation feedback, respond briefly to the feedback offered. Consider in particular any surprises from the feedback or places where your perception differed significantly from the observer’s. You are encouraged but not required to answer any questions the observer may have included in the observation feedback.  **My department chair observed my class on XX/XX/XX. She provided me with invaluable feedback, which has prompted me to make significant changes to my teaching approach:**  **1) Learning environment: she observed that not all students were following the laboratory rules (described in the syllabus). I actually realized from her feedback that I had inadvertently stopped checking students closely for compliance with lab rules (i.e. bringing chewing gum, water bottles, etc., into laboratory). I was strict about this during the first two weeks of class, but apparently became more lax about it. I will make sure that I consistently enforce lab safety rules throughout the semester.**  **2) Content and lesson organization: she suggested that I make it more clear how a particular lesson fits in with the student learning outcomes on the syllabus. This would help students have a reference frame for connecting the concepts and skills that they are learning and understanding in what contexts they would be useful. In future class sessions, when I write the outline for the day on the board, for each item I will list which SLO’s are covered and also preface a lesson by explaining under what circumstances (in “real-life”) would a particular concept or skill be useful.**  **3) Presentation and delivery: I experienced some difficulty with the computer not being able to recognize the data projector at the beginning of the lesson. My department chair suggested A/V equipment be set-up in advance while students are busy with something else to minimize time loss. I fully agree. In this case however, the projector had been checked earlier in the class period and was working fine then, so this was just an unavoidable technical problem. She also recommended checking with students to ensure that they can hear me all right. I will try to pay more attention to the audience in the future. I realize I have a tendency to look at the board as I speak. She also pointed out that I have a tendency to make more eye contact with the left side of the room (due to the position of the computer keyboard at the instructor’s desk). I noticed this myself and now try to make a conscious effort to look at all students on both sides of the room and address them by name.**  **4) Critical Thinking: I agree with my department chair that more activities could be included to help students develop their critical thinking skills. Such activities could include case studies, problem solving, concept mapping, etc., which could be done in pairs or groups to encourage students to work together and learn from each other. I will incorporate more activities of this type in the future. This would serve to stimulate higher-order thinking skills and also cultivate an atmosphere of collaboration in the classroom. In my case today, I just asked the students open questions and allowed anyone to answer, which didn’t facilitate participation of the entire class. Also, when I did this, I tended to not give enough time to let everyone try to answer (probably because I was concerned I would run out of time). This is an example of where clickers (student response systems) would be very helpful.**  **5) Student Assessment and Support: As described in #4 above, and also in my department chair’s feedback, student response systems would allow for a more systematic and comprehensive means of assessment during a lesson. I intend to use a set of classroom clickers in Fall 2013 for this reason. It would also encourage more class participation, since even the quieter students would feel comfortable in participating, knowing that their answers would be confidential.** |

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| **Instructor’s Identified Next Steps (Optional)** |
| Considering both the suggestions of the observer as well as your own ideas, describe any actions you plan to take to improve your instruction in this course.  **In the next semester (Fall 2013), as a result of my department chair’s feedback and my own reflection, I plan to implement the following changes in my instruction:**  **1) utilize a set of classroom clickers for assessment and student engagement purposes**  **2) incorporate more case studies and other critical thinking activities during a lesson, and allow for more group work.**  **3) ensure that I am inclusive of all students, including the quieter ones, by using methods such as the think/pair/share discussion strategy**  **4) tie the lesson concepts to student learning outcomes, so that students understand the purpose of what they are learning**  **5) enforce lab safety rules more strictly. I will actually enforce penalties to students who repeatedly fail to comply with lab rules**  **6) use videos or demonstrations to explain procedures** |

Signature: Linda Monroe Date: **XX/XX/XX**