PROCEDURES FOR TEACHERS TO OBSERVE EACH OTHER’S CLASSES

History:
In the fall of 2001, the ABE/ESL Department (after discussions among full-timers and in a full faculty meeting) agreed on a Strategic Plan Objective for the Academic Year 2001-2002 in support of Strategic Direction #2: Building a Safe, Productive, and Supportive Work Environment. However, these departmental objectives are intended to extend well beyond 2001-2002.

Our departmental objectives:
To provide continuing relevant and practical professional development by sharing teaching and learning ideas,
to gain a better understanding of the continuity and progression of the six ABE/ESL levels,
and to improve teaching.

Measurement and assessment for the Strategic Plan:
1. Encourage observation of at least one other ABE/ESL class per quarter by both full and part-time ABE/ESL instructors.
2. Encourage individual ABE/ESL faculty to create opportunities to observe colleagues and communicate those opportunities to other ABE/ESL faculty.
3. Notify Faculty Coordinator in writing after completion of observation.

How to set up an observation:
• Arrangements are to be made between teachers. The coordinator need not be involved.
• Contact the teacher that you want to observe, find out if that person is agreeable to the idea, and agree on a day and time to observe.
• It’s fine to observe another section of the same level that you are teaching or a higher or lower level. It’s also fine to observe a Developmental English class, especially if you teach a higher-level ESL class, so that you will know more about what is expected of students in that program.

How to observe if you have a class at the same time:
If possible, observe a class which meets at a different time from yours. If you observe a class which meets at the same time as yours, here are possibilities:
• If you have a good, experienced volunteer, provide her/him with activities s/he can supervise, and leave her/him in charge.
• Combine classes with another teacher (with whom you will reciprocate in the future). Plan an activity to bring the 2 classes into one, such as trade-off interviews to result in a writing task.
• Use one of your reassigned days. Tell your class not to come one day, and then arrange to have class one day beyond the regularly-calculated cut-off day for it.
• Do NOT send your class to the library or the Loft without you (and not with a volunteer, either). All class visits to the library or Loft should be made after talking to a librarian or to the Loft director.
• Do NOT dismiss your class.

How to report your observations if you want to get Faculty Development credit for them:
Write a short report (1 or 2 paragraphs) giving the following information:
• What class you observed
• When you observed it
• Who taught it
• What you saw in the class (what happened)
• What you learned from this observation.
This is NOT an evaluation of another teacher or class, so do not include any evaluative categories, such as “what worked well.”

Send this report as an email or as an email attachment to the ABE director.

In submitting total Faculty Development credits with documentation to the director, include a copy of this report. Part-timers should submit this as soon as they think that they have earned another salary step. Full-timers should do this at the end of the academic year.
Like attending workshops and presentations, 1 hour = .1 of a salary credit, or in other words, 10 hours of workshop/listening-type activities = 1 salary credit.

By Alice Keller after discussions with ABE/ESL faculty
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