# Adjunct Faculty Mentoring Guide

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*Denotes required paperwork*

# Introduction

The Adjunct Faculty Mentoring Program is a formal program run by and for faculty members. Mentoring activities have been designed to help ease the transition of the new faculty members into the College and to provide them the opportunity to work one-on-one with faculty members in their field.

The goals of the Program include assisting all faculty members in building community and relationships on each campus, assisting new faculty members in acclimating to the culture of the College, and assisting all faculty members in the achievement of their professional goals.

**Definition and Philosophy**
In keeping with the classic definition of a mentor (a wise and trusted counselor or teacher), FVCC mentors are outstanding faculty members who are selected on the basis of their ability to serve as a resource and positive role model for new faculty. These individuals acquaint new faculty with FVCC as an institution and with valuable information concerning the discipline in which they are teaching. In addition, they pass on to new faculty the teaching wisdom they have acquired over the years. Mentors do not serve as evaluators or judges of new faculty. Instead, they offer an insider's guidance and insights.

Further, mentors should not be expected to do the job that a supervisor should. For example, if the new faculty member receives low evaluations, his or her supervisor would be responsible for resolving any issues, not the mentor. For this reason, supervisors should not serve as mentors to those they supervise. A mentor must function as an individual who does not judge, does not evaluate, and does not make employment decisions for that new faculty member.

Although mentors are paid a stipend of $200 based upon ten hours of mentoring, that stipend only partially indicates the importance and value of the mentoring experience. For the most part, mentors serve for the good of their discipline, for the good of their colleagues, and for the good of FVCC students. The stipend is a concrete way to show gratitude for this service.

**Mentee Benefits**
As a result of the mentoring relationship, it is expected that new faculty members will:
- Gain a more complete understanding of the mission, goals, and objectives of Flathead Valley Community College.
- Feel a greater sense of belonging to the College community.
- Receive individual support and encouragement in developing more effective teaching methods, using contemporary instructional technologies, and balancing life, work, and family responsibilities.
- Provide a more rewarding learning experience for students.
- Know how to access resources to support their classroom instruction.
- Receive support and guidance in understanding the curricula and requirements for degrees and certificates.

**Mentor Benefits**
It is expected that the faculty mentors will:
- Gain satisfaction in assisting in the development of another faculty peer.
- Have the opportunity to learn new techniques and approaches from the mentee.

Overall, it is hoped that both parties in the mentoring relationship will be stimulated to rethink and discuss pedagogical and philosophical issues that will improve the teaching/ learning process.

# Mentor Program Outline

**Mentor Criteria**

- Mentors must have been employed at FVCC as full-time or adjunct faculty for at least three years and have positive student evaluations.
- Mentors must complete Mentor Orientation/training every three years.
- Mentors must spend approximately 10 hours per semester as a mentor to new faculty.
- Mentors must serve as a resource and positive role model.
- Mentors may not be supervisors (without specific permission from the Vice President of Instruction).

**Mentor Appointments**

Before the semester starts, Division Chairs will identify new adjunct faculty and ask their Division Director that they be matched with mentors from the current Mentor List. Division Directors will coordinate these requests with the Faculty Mentor Coordinator (Faculty Development & Assessment Specialist). Faculty members who have completed the Mentor Orientation/Training within the last three years are eligible to serve as mentors.

Adjunct faculty members new to FVCC are mentored for one semester. If special circumstances apply, the Vice President may approve an additional semester. The first meeting between the mentor and mentee is to be held prior to the beginning of classes whenever practical and at least twice during the semester at a time and location convenient to both.

**Mentor Responsibilities**

- Both the Mentor and Mentee must complete the *Mentor Partnership Agreement Form* with signatures and return it to the Mentor Coordinator.
- Mentors must initiate contact with mentees to plan the mentoring activities.
- Mentoring activities should involve a minimum ten hours of mentor/mentee contact.
- At the end of the semester, the mentor and mentee must each submit a *Mentor* or *Mentee Checklist* and a *Mentor* or *Mentee Program Evaluation* form.

**Mentor Orientation/Training**

Any faculty member selected to be a mentor must complete a Mentoring Orientation/ Training if he or she has not already done so in the last three years.

Orientations will eventually be offered online, but initially training will be conducted face-to-face by the Mentor Coordinator.

**Partnership Matching Process**

New faculty members will be paired with mentors who are in the same, or a closely related, discipline. Mentors are selected based on their interpersonal skills, organizational knowledge, and technical competence.

For existing faculty who would like to participate in this program, please submit a completed copy of the *Prospective Mentor Information Sheet*, on page 8, to the Mentor Coordinator.

**Payment Process**

Mentors will receive $200 for each new faculty with whom they work, for a maximum of $600 per semester.

To receive payment, mentors must complete the following steps:
1. Fill out and submit the *Prospective Mentor Information Sheet*

2. Attend a mentor Orientation/Training, offered each semester by the Faculty Development & Assessment Specialist.  Upon completion, their names will be added to the Current Mentor List.
3. The mentor and mentee fill out the *Mentor Partnership Agreement form* and submit it to the Mentor Coordinator.
4. Upon completion of the mentoring process, the mentor and mentee should fill out the appropriate *Checklist*, located on pages 10 and11, and the appropriate *Mentor Program Evaluation form*, located on pages 12 and 13. Completed checklists and forms are submitted to the Mentor Coordinator.
5. At this time, the Mentor Coordinator will generate the paperwork necessary to pay the $200 stipend.

# Partnership Guidelines

The following are some guidelines to consider as you develop your relationship with your colleague(s).

For mentors:
1. **Maintain regular contact and communication with your mentee(s).**

Determine early in the semester the number of meetings that may be needed and how you want to meet, whether by phone, in someone's office, over lunch, etc. Remember to be flexible. The amount of communication will depend on the needs of your mentee and may change as faculty members make progress with their goals. To establish the scope and goals of the partnership, you and your mentee(s) should complete the *Mentoring Partnership Agreement Form* on page 10.

2. **Maintain confidentiality.**

A mentoring partnership is effective only if it is built on trust, openness, and mutual respect. Therefore, details of your conversations with your mentee(s) should remain confidential.

3. **Provide information, guidance, feedback and constructive comments.**

Help with the development of strategies to meet the performance goals set by your mentee(s), if applicable. Regularly assess how well the strategies are working throughout the semester.

4. **Manage the development of the relationship.**

Be proactive in your communication with your mentee(s). Do not assume that because a mentee has not asked any questions that s/he has none. Reassure your mentee(s) that you are available to help and that any request for assistance is in no way an imposition. You should regularly assess how well the partnership is working and if any changes need to be made to the original partnership agreement form. You may find the form on page 10 helpful with this.

For the mentee:
1. **Set out to achieve new skills and knowledge.**

Develop performance goals, along with strategies for achieving each, early in the partnership. Utilize your mentor when identifying resources you need or barriers to eliminate in order for you to achieve your goals.

2. **Be open to receiving guidance, feedback and constructive comments.**

Work with your mentor to regularly assess how well the strategies are working throughout the semester.

3. **Manage the development of the relationship.**

Be proactive in your communication with your mentor. Ask lots of questions!—anything pertaining to classroom management, facilitation, discipline issues, Who does what? Where do I find? Never think that your request for assistance is in any way an imposition. You should regularly assess how well the partnership is working and if any changes need to be made to the original partnership agreement form. You may find the form on page 10 helpful with this.

**Mentor Activity Checklist for Semester 1**
Below is a checklist of activities to be completed throughout the new faculty member's first semester to familiarize him/her with campus and College policies.

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## Module 1: Should be completed during the week prior to and after the start of the semester

☐ New adjunct faculty members participate in the Adjunct Orientation.

☐ Complete the *Mentoring Partnership Agreement Form* on page 9 with your mentee.

☐ Review the *New Adjunct Faculty Checklist* on page 14.

☐ Review the *Beginning of the Semester Checklist* on page 15 with your mentee.

☐ Verify your mentee knows where to find the following resources: Adjunct Faculty Handbook, latest course profiles, academic calendar, final exam schedule, and textbook instructor resources.

☐ Offer to review syllabi for any course your mentee has not previously taught. Share your course calendar so your mentee may see an example of how to time the course content. Point out the fillable syllabus template.

☐ Discuss FVCC's attendance policy, as described in the student handbook, and the importance of including such a policy in all course syllabi. Share your attendance policy and why it works for your discipline.

☐ Describe the online course management options available in D2L and CAMS. Discuss the Early Alert System and Attendance Reporting features in CAMS.

☐ Check with your mentee to see how the first week is going and answer any questions that may have arisen. Be sure to ask if any assistance is needed with attendance reporting.

☐ Discuss the use of supplemental materials (such as review sheets, tutorial software) for the different courses you teach. Share what you have found that works for your students.

☐ Discuss appropriate grading policies for the different courses in your discipline. Share your policies and how you weight your grades.

☐ Give tour of campus, specifically offices such as Educational Services, Student Services, and adjunct faculty offices, the classrooms in which the new faculty member will be teaching.

☐ Discuss when to call 9-1-1, when to call campus security, and where to check in case of severe weather and possible school closure.

☐ Discuss how to reach the Helpdesk.

Notes:

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# Module 2

□ Give tour of the Learning Center, Media Center, and Library.

□ Make sure your mentee knows how to post their photo to the Faculty / Staff directory on the FVCC website. Ensure that their credentials and contact information are correct in online directory.

□ Discuss FERPA with your mentee.  A tutorial is available on the Faculty website.

□ Discuss course schedules set at the beginning of the semester by sharing where you are in your courses. Provide suggestions (such as particular activities) to help keep to the schedule.

□ Discuss the use of supplemental materials (such as review sheets, tutorial software) for the different courses you teach. Share what you have found that works for your students.

□ Discuss what to do if the faculty member must miss a class, who is responsible for securing a substitute teacher (when necessary), and the protocol for doing so.

□ Discuss how and when the new faculty member's performance will be evaluated.

□ Encourage your mentee to attend professional development sessions through the Teaching Excellence Center.

Notes:

_____

_____

# Module 3

□ Discuss how to address disruptive students and the role of the Dean of Students and Student Services.

□ Show him/her the VP's Office, Office for Students with Disabilities, Financial Aid Office, and Business Services.

□ Check to see where your mentee is in his/her courses and provide suggestions if s/he is having problems adhering to the course calendar.

□ Check in with your mentee to ensure the semester is running smoothly for him/her.

□ Discuss the appropriate use of "Withdrawal by Instructor" and "Incomplete" grades and the process one would follow to issue those grades.

□ Discuss course schedules set at the beginning of the semester by sharing where you are in your courses. Provide suggestions (such as particular activities) to help keep to the schedule.

□ Discuss the Service Learning options available to students.

Notes:

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## Module 4

□ Discuss final exam issues with your mentee. Ask to review his/her final exams and discuss any department policies regarding the exams.

□ Check with your mentee about grade reporting and show him/her how to submit grades electronically.

□ Discuss where to find Grade Change and Incomplete Grade forms, as well as how to complete them.

□ Review the End of the Semester Checklist on page 16.

□ Discuss the College's Tuition Reimbursement Program, including where more information and the application are available.

□ Complete the Mentor and Mentee Evaluation Forms, pages 12 & 13.

□ Check in with your partner to ensure the semester is running smoothly for him/her.

□ Discuss possible professional development activities with your mentee and describe the process for requesting professional development funds (for professional conferences / meetings).

Notes:

_____

_____

_____

## Prospective Mentor Information Sheet

Name: _____ Phone Number:_____

Number of years teaching at FVCC: _____

Discipline in which you teach: _____

Other professional experiences: _____

What do you think your communication preference will be with your partner(s)? Please rank in order of preference.

____ Email

____ Face-to-face

____ Phone

____ Other (please describe): _____

What qualities do you possess that you feel would make you an excellent candidate to serve as a mentor?

_____

_____

_____

What information would be helpful in matching you with an individual or group?

_____

_____

_____

Please submit the completed form to the Mentor Coordinator, Jessica Hopkins.  Thank you for your interest in this new program.  We look forward to working with you.

# Mentoring Partnership Agreement Form

Mentor:_____

Mentee:_____

Semester:_____

In order for this relationship to be beneficial to both of us, we have discussed and agreed to:

1.  Meet regularly (at least 4 times during the first semester of employment). We have agreed to meet (frequency, time, location):

2.      Provide regular feedback to each other and evaluate progress. We will accomplish this by...

In the event one of us believes it is no longer productive for us to continue, we will contact the Director of the Mentoring Program, who will make new mentoring assignments.

Participant Signature (Mentee): _____        Date:_____

Participant Signature (Mentor): _____        Date:_____

Division Director:_____        Date:_____

Mentor Coordinator:_____        Date:_____

# Mentor Checklist

Mentor _____Discipline _____
Mentee _____Discipline _____

Please check each item completed during the mentoring process. Use the Comments section of the form for general remarks or for a brief explanation of why certain activities could not be completed. Please note that all aspects of this process are kept confidential. Thank you for the time and energy you spent mentoring this semester.

**As soon as possible after being assigned a mentee, I**
___ contacted the mentee to exchange phone numbers, email information, office hours, etc.
___ verified that the mentee had an FVCC phone number and email account
___ campus tour

**Early in the semester, I met with the mentee in person and discussed the following:**
___ the course syllabus for each course the mentee is scheduled to teach
___ course pre-requisites and program semester sequence (where appropriate)
___ an overview of each course taught
___ textbook(s) and possible first day handouts and activities
___ review "No Show" attendance and Early Alert reporting
___ my personal teaching philosophy
___ possible teaching methods and techniques
___ FVCC faculty support services (Professional Development, Library Services, Media Services, Tutoring Labs, Copy Room)
___ FVCC policies and procedures (adjunct faculty evaluation, adjunct faculty handbook, grading policies, student handbook, copyright, plagiarism, etc.)
___ information regarding campus/college resources for student referrals

**Within the first three weeks or so of the semester, we discussed/completed the following:**
___ student retention strategies
___ test construction tips/strategies
___ classroom management issues (time management, discipline, student complaints, etc)
___ instructional techniques/strategies (handouts, overheads, special topics etc)
___ scheduled a visit to the mentee's class
___ mentee observed my class
___ professional development opportunities at FVCC

**About the middle of the semester, I**
___ discussed mentee's classroom successes or difficulties
___ reviewed the student evaluation/adjunct faculty evaluation process
___ observed the mentee's class

**Within the last three weeks of the semester,**
___ had a final meeting with my mentee
___ completed this Mentor Checklist
___ reminded the mentee to complete the Mentee Checklist
___ discussed end-of-semester grading policies and procedures

Mentor Signature _____Date _____

# Mentee Checklist

Mentor _____Discipline _____
Mentee _____Discipline _____

Please check each item completed during the mentoring process. Use the Comments section of the form for general remarks or for a brief explanation of why certain activities could not be completed. Please note that all aspects of this process are kept confidential.

**As soon as possible after my mentor was assigned to me, he/she:**
___ contacted me, and we exchanged phone numbers, email information, office hours, etc.
___ verified that I had an FVCC phone number and email account

**Early in the semester, we met in person and discussed the following:**
- ☐ the course syllabus for each course I am scheduled to teach
- ☐ course pre-requisites and program semester sequence (where appropriate)
- ☐ an overview of each course taught
- ☐ textbook(s) and possible first day handouts and activities
- ☐ review "No Show" attendance and Early Alert reporting
- ☐ my mentor's personal teaching philosophy
- ☐ possible teaching methods and techniques
- ☐ FVCC faculty support services (Professional Development, Library Services, Media Services, Tutoring Labs, duplication on site)
- ☐ FVCC policies and procedures (adjunct faculty evaluation, adjunct faculty handbook, grading policies, student handbook, copyright, plagiarism, etc.)
- ☐ information regarding campus/college resources for student referrals

**Within the first three weeks or so of the semester, we discussed/completed the following**:
- ☐ student retention strategies
- ☐ test construction tips/strategies
- ☐ classroom management issues (time management, discipline, student complaints, etc)
- ☐ instructional techniques/strategies (handouts, overheads, special topics etc)
- ☐ scheduled my mentor's visit to my class
- ☐ I observed my mentor's class
- ☐ professional development opportunities at FVCC

**About the middle of the semester, my mentor:**
- ☐ discussed my classroom successes or difficulties with me
- ☐ reviewed the student evaluation/adjunct faculty evaluation process
- ☐ my mentor observed my class

**Within the last three weeks of the semester:**
- ☐ had a final meeting with my mentor
- ☐ completed this Mentee Checklist
- ☐ discussed end-of-semester grading policies and procedures

**Comments:**


Mentee Signature _____Date _____

## Mentor Program Evaluation Form for Mentors

The Mentor Evaluation will be completed and turned into Jessica Hopkins, Mentor Coordinator, for each mentee. Your input is very important for future improvements to the mentoring process.   Use the back of this form or attach additional pages of comments if necessary.  Note:  All aspects of the mentoring process are to be kept strictly confidential.

| **Please circle the appropriate response:** | **POOR** | **FAIR** | **GOOD** | **EXCELLENT** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mentor Training session | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Mentor Training materials | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Interest & enthusiasm of the mentee | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Effectiveness of the mentor relationship | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Quality of the communications | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Frequency of the communications | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| My overall evaluation of the mentor process/experience | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

The activity or information that stands out as being the most beneficial to the mentee was...

The activity or information that stands out as being the least beneficial to the mentee was...

Would you consider being a mentor in the future?  If no, why not?

**Please return this evaluation to Jessica Hopkins.**

**Thank you for responding!**

# Mentor Program Evaluation Form for Mentees

The Mentee Evaluation can be completed and turned in to Jessica Hopkins, Faculty Development & Assessment Specialist/Mentor Coordinator. Your input is very important for future improvements to the mentoring process. Use the back of this form or attach additional pages of comments if necessary.  NOTE: All aspects of the mentoring process are to be kept strictly confidential.

| Please circle the appropriate response: | POOR | FAIR | GOOD | EXCELLENT |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Suggestions by the mentor | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Helpfulness of the material supplied by the mentor | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Interest & enthusiasm of the mentor | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Effectiveness of the mentor relationship | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Quality of the communications | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Frequency of the communications | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| My overall evaluation of the mentor process/ experience | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

The activity or information that stands out as being the **most beneficial** to you was...

The activity or information that stands out as being the **least beneficial** to you was...

What would you change on the mentee checklist or process?

Any other comments or suggestions?

Please return this evaluation to Jessica Hopkins.

**Thank you for responding!**

# New Adjunct Faculty Checklist

*Mentors:* Use this checklist as a guide to ensure that the new adjunct faculty member has received the necessary resources and information needed for a successful transition to FVCC. Many of these will have been taken care of by the faculty member's department chairperson and at the Adjunct Faculty Orientation, so the idea is to verify that nothing has been missed.

Resources - **The Basics**
- ☐ Adjunct Faculty Handbook
- ☐ Classroom key (if needed)
- ☐ Adjunct Office Key
- ☐ Multimedia cabinet key (NOVA station)
- ☐ Email (hyperlink to login on Faculty Portal)
- ☐ D2L tutorial (if appropriate)
- ☐ Helpdesk: 1-877-325-7778 (for D2L assistance)
- ☐ Copy Room and alternate copier locations
- ☐ Faculty mailboxes
- ☐ Copier code
- ☐ Important Dates (Drop/Add, Attendance reporting, etc)
- ☐ FERPA
- ☐ Faculty/Staff Directory
- ☐ Student Code of Conduct (see page 31 in FVCC catalog)
- ☐ General Education Assessment Plan
- ☐ Course Sequencing
- ☐ Course Plans
- ☐ Syllabi examples/ syllabus template in Faculty Handbook
- ☐ Textbook(s) and supplemental materials
- ☐ Other materials

# Beginning of the Semester Checklist

Gearing up for the beginning of the semester? Here is a checklist to get you started:

- ☐ I know what course(s) I will be teaching this term.
- ☐ I have a copy of the course profile for each course.
- ☐ I have obtained textbooks and any supplemental material needed for my courses.
- ☐ I have created a syllabus for each course.
- ☐ I have accessed my course rosters. A tutorial is available in the Faculty Handbook.
- ☐ I know in what classroom(s) I will be teaching.
- ☐ I have a key to the classroom(s) or have arranged to have the door unlocked for me.
- ☐ I have submitted a copy of each of my course syllabi to my Division Director (by the end of the first week).
- ☐ Attend Adjunct Orientation

**Other items to remember:**

- ☐ I have completed multi-media classroom training and received a key to the equipment console (NOVA station).
- ☐ I know my username (last name + first initial) and password for the Faculty Portal
- ☐ I know my FVCC email address: first initial +last name + @fvcc.edu

**Did you know?**

- ❖ The Faculty Handbook is located online.  From the main FVCC webpage, click on Faculty & Staff, Adjunct Faculty Resources.
- ❖ The Faculty/Staff Directory is located online.

# End of Semester Checklist

Gearing down for the semester?  Here is a checklist to help you:

- ☐ I have checked my mailbox one last time for any missing student assignments and homework before issuing final grades.
- ☐ I have submitted Final Grades via the Faculty Portal (CAMS).
- ☐ I have submitted an Incomplete Grade Form for any Incompletes assigned this semester. Included on the form is a description of how the final grade will be calculated.
- ☐ I have submitted a Change of Grade Form for any Incompletes from the previous semester(s). The Incomplete will automatically be changed to an F if the student does not complete the missing work or if the instructor does not submit a grade change.
- ☐ I have returned all materials due back to the FVCC library.
- ☐ I have returned all keys back to the Business Office or Media Center if I am not scheduled to teach at FVCC in the following semester.

# Teaching Observation Checklist

(Checklist use is optional and for discussion purposes only.  Do NOT submit to Mentor Coordinator.)

| 1.  Class Structure | Could Improve | Acceptable | Excellent | Not Observed |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a.  Reviews previous day's course content. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| b.  Gives overview of day's course content. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| c.  Summarizes course content covered. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| d.  Directs student preparation for next class. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

**Comments:**

| 2.  **Methods** | Could Improve | Acceptable | Excellent | Not Observed |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a.  Provides well-designed materials | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| b.  Employs non-lecture learning activities (i.e., small group discussion, student-led activities). | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| c.  Invites class discussion | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| d.  Employs other tools/instructional aids: (i.e., technology, computer. Video, overheads). | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| e.  Delivers well-planned lecture. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

**Comments:**

| 3.  **Teacher-Student Interaction** | Could Improve | Acceptable | Excellent | Not Observed |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a.  Solicits student input. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| b.  Involves a variety of students. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| c.  Demonstrates awareness of individual student learning needs. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

**Comments;**

| 4.  **Content** | Could Improve | Acceptable | Excellent | Not Observed |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a.  Appears knowledgeable. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| b.  Appears well organized. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| c.  Explains concepts clearly. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| d.  Relates concepts to students' experience. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| e.  Select learning experiences appropriate to level of learning. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

**Comments;**

**5.     Other comments (note either effective or ineffective teaching practices observed):**

# Elements in Effective Classroom Instruction
# From Teaching Observation

### *Class Structure*
A well-structured class often begins with a brief review of concepts from the previous class period, if time allows. In addition, students benefit from a brief overview of the major concepts of each new class. Summarizing the main points covered allows students the opportunity to review their own notes for thoroughness before the class period ends.  And, finally, it is important that students be told what is expected of them for the next class period

### *Methods*
Although various teachers use various teaching methods, clear communication is the basis of all of them.  Providing handouts is an aid to this clear communication, as is something as simple as writing legible on the board.  Although well-planned and well-delivered lectures are tried and true tools of the teaching trade, non-lecture learning activities are becoming increasingly common in most college classrooms today because they offer a different way for non-verbal learners to learn.  For example, whenever possible, classroom discussion is also a valuable tool as it allows students to actively participate in the topic and keeps them from becoming mere "sponges," soaking up information.

Stimulating discussion can be difficult. Asking students questions can trigger much discussion; however, these questions need to be carefully phrased. For example, simple "yes or "no" questions are not going to stimulate discussion.  Similarly, posing a rhetorical question is going to imply that discussion is not encouraged.  A second part of the discussion approach has to do with handling student responses.  A teacher needs to allow students sufficient time to answer and should offer sincere, not forced, verbal reinforcement.  Students are much more likely to participate in group-discussion if they feel comfortable that their ideas have value.

Using technology and linking to web based resources in the classroom is also valuable in certain classes when it actually provides for increased effectiveness. Certainly, the use of technology simply for technology's sake is not effective. However, technology can enliven the classroom and create visual interest in the content.  Using electronic resources, videos, or other audio-visual materials can offer experiences and information to students in a way that simple lecture and handouts cannot.

### *Teacher Student Interaction*
Faculty members at FVCC often teach 50+ students per semester.  Establishing a close relationship with each is not possible. However, creating a solid teacher student interaction is an important way for faculty to assure effective learning takes place. Calling students by name as early as possible in the semester and making eye contact can pull hesitant students more quickly into the learning process. Seeking student ideas, suggestions, and discussion reminds students that they have a role in their own learning. In addition, it's also important, when possible, to involve all students in class discussion and activities so that the primary beneficiaries are not just the vocal few. While not always possible, establishing a comfortable rapport with students is integral in effective teaching.

### *Content*
The success of the classroom experience hinges on content. Being well-organized imparts a professionalism that students appreciate and respect. Appearing knowledgeable and explaining

concepts clearly in several different ways is probably one of the most important teaching tools of all time. And, students absorb information and knowledge much more readily when it relates to experiences they understand and are able to relate to.  As has been noted, no one teaching technique is effective for all teachers. And, not all students respond as positively as we would like to our best teaching efforts.  Anyone who has taught for any period of time knows that some students will never allow student teacher interaction; some will never participate in discussion; some will never have homework ready no matter how you stress its importance. But, the majority of students appreciate learning from a faculty member whose preparation includes attention to class structure, effective methods, teacher student interaction, and content.

## Definitions of Classroom Observation Ratings:

### Could Improve
A rating of "Could Improve" signals that the faculty member has not demonstrated effectiveness in the area being observed. For example, a teacher may only quickly refer to the homework for the next class period, without fully explaining the requirements of the homework. Or, the faculty member may use inferior handouts that are hard to read and understand. Perhaps the faculty member has problems organizing his or her thoughts and lecture content or does not clearly explain the concepts being taught. This rating implies that with some effort, the faculty member could greatly improve his or her effectiveness in the area noted.

### Acceptable
A rating of "Acceptable" indicates that the faculty member has adequately addressed the area being observed. For example, to a degree, he or the invited class discussion or employed non-lecture activities. Perhaps his or her lecture is thorough and sound, though it is not exceptionally good. Or, to an acceptable degree he or she relates concepts to student experience. An Acceptable rating indicates that the teacher has satisfied the important minimum expectations; however, he or she has not demonstrated exceptional facility in this area.

### Excellent
A rating of "Excellent" reveals that the faculty member being observed has demonstrated exceptional facility in the area observed. He or she conducted an effective classroom discussion, involving all members of the class. He or she may have used effective and innovative technology that caught class attention and interest. Perhaps the faculty member is exceptionally organized or has a uniquely effective way of explaining complex topics. An Excellent rating indicates that the teacher is especially effective, engaging the students' intellectual curiosity.

### Not Observed
A rating of "Not Observed" indicates one of two things: first it may indicate that the observation area on the checklist does not apply to the course being taught. For example, the classroom environment may not allow for a board upon which to write legibly. Or, the hands on approach of some courses may preclude any use of handouts.

Or, this rating may indicate that the area addressed on the checklist did not occur in the class being observed when it could have or should have been. For example, although the class environment and course topic might lend itself to the use of technology, a rating of "Not Observed" would indicate that although technology could have been used effectively, it was not.