

CCT Classroom Observation Form

To be completed by the graduate student being observed

After this section is completed, email this document as Word Doc to your observer.

Instructor: Christina Bejjani (with Dr. Roberto Cabeza & Matt Stanley)

Date/Time: Tuesday, September 25th; 1:40-2:30 p.m.

Location: Soc/Psych 319

No. of Students: 18

Course Title: Introduction to Cognitive Psychology (PSY 102), discussion section 4

Topic(s) of Day: Long Term Memory Structure, via an online lab they did before class and a paper they read before class. (They post questions about the paper to Sakai before class).

1) The goal or outcome I have in mind for my students during this class session is:

I want students to identify the principles of implicit learning and differences between implicit and explicit learning, assessed via an in-class demo and guided discussion of the article they read and the lab they performed.

I want students to synthesize this discussion with what they will hear in lecture about long term memory structure next Monday and Wednesday, October 1st and 3rd (timing is not ideal, but not determined by me).

2) During this class session, I would like the observer to pay particular attention to, and give me feedback on the following:

Do I seem comfortable leading the discussion? Do I go too fast through the material? Do students seem engaged in the material? I wonder generally what the classroom dynamic seems like to someone else.

One particular thing I regret is not doing more community building exercises at the beginning of the class. I worry that the dynamic of the class is that folks expect only a few people to respond to the questions and otherwise just show up as warm bodies in the classroom, because they get participation points for attendance.

I think this is less of an issue for my Tuesday morning class (7 students) than my Tuesday afternoon class (18 students), which has more students.

To be completed by the observer

Use your handwritten "field" notes to create narrative answers. Your responses to these questions may vary in length. Focus on what you saw that 1) acknowledges what was done very well in the class session, and 2) provides constructive feedback on aspects of teaching that are actionable. Email this completed observation form back to the TA/instructor as a pdf.

Your name: Ben Richardson Date completed: 10/19/2018

1) Describe what happened in this class session. What was done by the TA/instructor and/or the students? What teaching methods did you observe? How effective were these activities and methods in achieving the goal or student outcome that the TA/instructor had set out for this class session? Explain.

Class began with a recap of the previous session and addressing questions that students had about this. Students were then asked to participate in an experiment involving remembering random sets of letters and meaningful words. This then led to a discussion of the different between implicit and explicit memory and also an article that students read for class, before concluding with addressing a set of questions that the students had posted on Sakai. I think the teaching methods on display were highly effective in engaging students with the material, particular the use of student questions to guide discussion toward what they found unclear or confusing.

2) What "worked" particularly well during this class session? Were there any small-group activities, assignments, or teaching strategies in particular that you think the TA/instructor should continue to use?

In addition to soliciting student questions, I felt that having students participate in the experiments under discussion really help engage them with the conversation. Through having them undergo the tests themselves, students seemed to come up with questions that might not have otherwise occurred to them if they had only dealt with these ideas abstractly. I also thought that you did a great job asking questions of the class to help them reflect on the meaning of particular terms. Instead of merely presenting definitions of things like "implicit memory," you often pressed students to explain how they understood these terms so as to help them reflect on their own understanding of these ideas.

3) Was there a point during this class session when the TA/instructor "lost" student attention? If so, what do you think caused it? How did the TA/instructor react, what did he/she do to regain student attention? Were the TA/instructor's efforts in this regard effective?

There actually did not seem to be any point during this class when you lost the students' attention, and while not everyone spoke this may have been merely a function of the size of the class. The only moments of confusion I observed were when students were struggling to recall the details of an experiment they had read about or conducted previously. I'm not sure how the course as a whole is structured or what students are meant to memorise from week to week, but I wondered if this confusion could have been avoided by just quickly recapping the generalities of the study being discussed before diving into particular questions about this.

4) How did the physical surroundings or environment of the class session affect the learning experience, if at all? (For example, the temperature or set up of the classroom, the time of day, number of students in the class, outside noise, lighting, problems with equipment or technology, etc.)

The class environment was spacious, well-lit, and a comfortable temperature, which seemed to contribute to the overall ease of conversation and apparent attention of the students. Also, the circular set-up of the desks—with yourself at the head of the tables—seemed to invite student participation, yet also to ensure that you were able to address each student's ideas and concerns without any interruption to the flow of conversation.

5) What suggestions do you have for the TA/instructor you observed in terms of expansion of particularly effective teaching strategies, improvement of teaching strategies that didn't work well, solving problems you observed, etc.?

I think many of the teaching strategies that you used in class worked really well, and there seemed to me to be few—if any—that did not succeed. My only suggestion would be that perhaps in addition to having students participate in experiments in class, some extra time could be spent explaining their relevance to the theoretical material under discussion. I think because conducting the experiments themselves took up a good chunk of time, perhaps a bit more of the class could be devoted to outlining what lessons the students could draw from what they had just done and how this related to the theories they were learning about. I'm not sure if students had been made aware of these connections in their lectures or reading material though, in which case this suggestion would be unnecessary.

6) Other comments or observations:

I thought your recapping of material covered in previous classes was really helpful, and it seemed to me that students really appreciated being reminded of what they had covered already. Also, your efforts to suggest to students different ways of researching a particular topic

they might be interested in—through things like Google Scholar and similar sources—was a really nice touch. Great work overall!

Feedback form adapted from Benedictine University Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence