

OLL K-12 PROTOCOL—2007-2008

VIRTUAL CLASSROOM OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

This protocol is virtual classroom observations using online offerings.

Introduction

The following is a suggested introduction. When you begin the observation, make these points, but use your own words for a more personal introduction.

You may know that we are working on a project sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education to look at characteristics associated with prevalent types of online learning and identify promising practices that are associated with improved student achievement. One of our priorities in this project is to learn more from you about *the features and capabilities of this online offering, as well as how the application is implemented and administered at your school.*

We want you to know that this project does not evaluate you or your school; we are looking to learn from your experiences to identify promising practices in online learning.

Program Features

1. What is the name of the program?
2. Who developed the program? Who funds the program?
3. Is offering *synchronous* (instruction occurs at a scheduled time in either a physical or virtual space); or is instruction *asynchronous* (with a time lag between the presentation of instructional stimuli and student responses)?
4. How can the Learning Experience be classified (choose option):
 - Is knowledge transmitted online and appropriated by students (Expository)?
 - Does the technology allow students to manipulate digital organisms / devices in order to solve questions (Active Learning)?
 - Does the technology mediate and play a role in the interaction between the teacher and the student (Interactive Learning)?
 - Can the learning experience be classified as a hybrid? Which experiences are combined?
5. What kind of academic, tech, instructional supports are available? How do teachers and students receive support?
6. How widespread is the product? How many people use it in total?

7. How often is the program updated?
8. What are offerings strengths / weaknesses?

Curriculum

9. What are the main goals of the curriculum?
10. What material does the curriculum cover?
11. What does a typical unit look like? How is it structured?
12. How often does instruction occur; for how long?
13. Are there any curricular features that the offering bills as unique, or that are highlighted by the developer?
14. What aspects of the curriculum support online learning?
15. How much reading is required for a typical course?
16. What do students receive for taking the course (AP / college credit, credit toward GED, high school diploma, etc.)?
17. What courses are offered to students?

Interaction

18. How do students use the program? What kind of interactions do they engage in?
19. Does face-to-face interaction exist, or is instruction entirely online?
20. Where does instruction take place – in the classroom during the school day? Or outside of school in another setting?
21. How often do they use the program or interact with the facilitators? What is the students' role in a typical lesson?
22. Is there a way for students / instructors / administrators to give feedback? How is this done?
23. Is there space for online discussion and community?

Evaluation

24. How are students evaluated?
25. How often do students complete assignments? What types of assignments do they complete? How often are they tested?
26. Do students have to take the AP exam at the end of the course?
27. How does the program ensure that students do their own work?

Student Population

28. Who is eligible to take the online course?
29. Who is the offerings' target audience?
30. How do students find out about the offering?
31. Are the courses tailored to meet the needs of a certain demographic group / audience?

Enrollment

32. What is the enrollment process?
33. What are the policies / rules that the program requires students to follow in order to receive credit?
34. Is it easy for students to enroll; do they have easy access to the program?
35. Do they have to pay for the course?
36. How many students can enroll in a course; is there a limit?

Instructor Characteristics

37. How is instruction evaluated; how does the program ensure high quality instruction?
38. Who are the instructors? What are their qualifications?
39. How many instructors actively teach a specific course? If there is more than one, how do they interact with students and with each other?
40. What training is required for instructors?

Before you leave, be sure to try and find any available data and documentation on student outcomes / achievement.