

Teaching Squares

Gaining Perspective by Observing Peers

What Are “Teaching Squares”?



An opportunity to reflect and enhance one’s own teaching by “observing” colleagues teach. This exercise is not to give the observer feedback, but to benefit the observing faculty member, who gains new insight into their teaching through reciprocal classroom observation and self-reflection.

The NONS of Teaching Squares

NON-THREATENING

NON-JUDGMENTAL

NON-EVALUATIVE

HOW A TEACHING SQUARE WORKS

1. Create a team of four faculty from a range of disciplines and experience.

- Arrange a time for an introductory meeting to establish rules and expectations.
- Set schedules in order to observe each other at least one time during semester for an hour. Therefore, you will observe three classrooms and three colleagues will observe you.

2. Observe each of your colleagues for an hour.

- While observing, note how the faculty member facilitates the class differently than you do, focusing on
- Teaching techniques and activities.
 - Managing disruptive or challenging situations.
 - Engagement with students.

3. Shortly after completing each observation, reflect in writing.

- What could you try in your class based on what you have observed?
- Are there techniques and activities that would not be appropriate or possible to do in your own class? Why?
- What techniques and activities do you want to continue doing?

4. Set up a time to meet and debrief with Teaching Square colleagues.

Share what you observed, ideas that you have to try and implement in your own class, and what you have gained from this experience.

Modified Teaching Squares *Alter the Teaching Square design as necessary by working in pairs, partnering within a discipline, observing online classes, or watching a video of one’s teaching.*

Visit the Handbooks & Documents tab at oakland.edu/cetl/resources for Teaching Squares forms and resources.