Form C: Report and response – Teaching observation

Section 1 – Report
This section is completed by the reviewer, drawing upon Form B (Feedback framework) and any notes made during the teaching session. Please use as much space as required.

1. Demonstrating enthusiasm & stimulating curiosity

The class was scheduled at 9am and initially there weren’t many signs of interest from the students. I noticed that they didn’t seem to pay much attention to [BLANK] whilst he was talking and I thought that this might have made the presentation a challenging experience.

[BLANK] adopted a calm and fairly relaxed presentation style and this seemed to be a good match with the group. He employed humor and added pauses after demonstrating the efficiencies and time saving benefits of creating bibliographies using Endnote and MESH searching in Medline, this would have given the students the opportunity to reflect on the value of adopting these tools. I appreciated the benefits of this subtle approach. I noted that he avoided long winded explanations that might potentially lose students.

[BLANK] persistently used questioning to try to establish that the group understood his demonstrations but they weren’t very responsive. As the session progressed, it seemed that the default position was that no comment meant that they understood. After watching the students for the full session, I concluded that they appeared more shy than disengaged. They seemed much more comfortable with discussing issues individually during the practical component of the class. The students continued to work during the 10 minute break and this was a positive indicator of their engagement and enthusiasm.

2. Encouraging critical thinking and student learning

There was an opportunity for the students to practice skills at the end of each explanation and demonstration. [BLANK] provided sample searches for the workshop exercises, however, he also encouraged the students to personalize their learning experience by suggesting that they think about their assessment and conduct searches related to their assignment.

A number of students asked questions that suggested that they were thinking critically and applying the knowledge to their personal circumstance and learning. I observed that some of the students worked in pairs without direction and there was some peer to peer teaching occurring. This would be a good technique to explicitly employ in future sessions to support student learning.

3. Features of effective communication

[BLANK] tried to establish the level of prior knowledge of the group, by asking students at the start of the session about their experience with Endnote, communicating that there was the potential for flexibility in the content and that he was sensitive to offering a session that met their needs. He made an effort to ensure that the students were aware that he was open to providing further explanation, by consistently asking for feedback about their understanding of the content. I noted that [BLANK] used verbal cues such as, “this is important” to highlight threshold concepts such the need to use Source-It at Melbourne links.

There were a number of technical problems during the session and [BLANK] handled these with ease whilst maintaining the flow of the session. I think that it would have been useful to highlight, that most of the problems that occurred in the session were a result of local issues in the computer lab, rather than ongoing problems that they were likely to encounter in their own environment.
4. Session mechanics

The session commenced with a short introduction and a clear verbal outline of what would be covered in the class. [Name] was told by the lecturer to expect 30 students, however, the class size was greatly reduced. There was a lot to cover in the session and I think the reduced class size was to his advantage. I'm not sure that one roving staff member would have been sufficient support for 30 students.

The lab environment presented some limitations as it was huge space and was being used others during the session. [Name] remained calm and appeared confident as he attempted to resolve various computer related issues that emerged during the session as a result of the desktop configuration of the PCs. These problems affected individual students rather than the whole group and he managed to address these, whilst continuing to progress the session for the other class members.

The class was content was delivered in a logical sequence and covered four key areas learning areas. The activities successfully alternated between explanations, demonstrations and hands on exercises. Although most of the class participants chose not to take a 10 minute break, it was good strategy to offer this to assist with their concentration and delineate the end of part A and the start of part B of the session.

5. Priority criteria (as discussed by reviewee and reviewer)

[Name] addressed his priority areas really well. He used live demonstrations rather than explanations to highlight the advantages of using Endnote to support referencing. This was very powerful.

He provided a very clear explanation of MESH and the benefits of using MESH headings as a search strategy in Medline. This was reinforced with a well executed comparative search. His search using a MESH term retrieved 10 times more results than key word searching.

6. Are there any examples of good practice you would particularly like to highlight?

[Name] embedded the class exercises and the printable support notes in the [Embedded]. This paperless approach is sustainable method of providing individual resources and it highlights the value of the libguide as an ongoing support resource.