

## Characteristics of Effective Observers

The primary characteristics of effective peer observers are closely related to characteristics of good teachers. A good observer:

1. Has sensitivity; can empathize with the person being observed
2. Sees the observation process as an important objective in improving the effectiveness of teaching and learning
3. Is reflective about his/her own teaching
4. Is a good listener
5. Has the ability to give non-judgmental feedback
6. Accepts the validity of different teaching methods and styles, even when they differ from his/her own

These characteristics consistently appear in the literature on peer observation, and successful programs emphasize the necessity of keeping them constantly in mind when observing. By contrast, observers need to avoid the following:

Things to Avoid:

- Allowing one positive or negative factor to outweigh all other aspects of the observation
- Being overly neutral to avoid uncomfortable conversations
- Using your own teaching performance as criteria for judgment rather than agreed-upon criteria/protocol/indicators