

# Microbial Pathogenesis

## Peer Feedback and Reflection

HM

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### Feedback from Alanna Styer

Your name: Alanna Styer

Date completed: February 14, 2019

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.

**Today they reviewed the previous lecture and worked on drawing pathways and strategizing experiments. They split off into small discussion/ work groups and then came back together to present to the class. Hannah utilized handouts and a (very small) whiteboard to execute the lesson. This approach was overall effective and kept students engaged.**

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?

**Hannah navigated the discussion well posing question to the group to drive conversation and prompted students answer each others questions before giving a final answer. Also she was quick to ask students for their solutions when practical problems with an experiment arose. This promoted critical thinking within the classroom and even lead students to challenge one another's methods.**

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?

**While no one seemed to get lost for long, when the groups split a send time the group of three students did not seem to be communicating with one another. If took about 3-5 minutes for Hannah to prompt them to speak to one another which cut into the time for discussion later.**

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.)

**This was truly a challenging environment to work in. As students arrived they noted how difficult it is to navigate the building. Throughout the class there was construction and hallway noise. Additionally it was a recruiting day so class attendance was lower than normal.**

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.?

**Overall a great job leading discussion and encouraging critical thinking. I believe the biggest strategy to working on is patience. Hannah was quick to move on or cut in when students hesitated. At one point a question was asked directly to a student and they hesitated. Instead of giving them time to find their words Hannah cut in and said they could answer a different question. This also happened with moments of silence, it is hard to sit and wait for someone to answer but often it is what is needed. Count to 7 and ask in a new way.**

6) Other comments or observations:

**Hannah asked me to observe her time management. This was good overall but I identified some moments that could have been more efficient. When assignments were given to the groups Hannah wavered on what to assign to which group, asking what they preferred and exchanging in back and forth of “I don’t know” and “what would you like”. This can be eliminated with a bit of preparation as groups are doing their first assignment or just an instinctual assigning.**

## **Feedback from Thomas Sauer**

Your name: TJ Sauer      Date completed: 3-29-19

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.

**Hannah led a review of a publication that was supplementary but arguably integral to the success of students in the class. Diagrams were drawn on the board prior to the start of class and each was followed up on throughout the session. Some were even adapted as the session went on to aid in understanding on an individual basis.**

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?

**Everything seemed to work just fine during the session, it seemed to have been thoughtfully planned and executed well. The lecture tone was good: formal enough to establish that Hannah was the authority figure but approachable enough that no one was uncomfortable interrupting to ask questions or clarify points.**

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?

**Not that I noticed, no. Everyone there was engaged the entire time, possibly because the information seemed to be somewhat challenging for the level of the students present, so they needed to be fully engaged to take anything away from the experience.**

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 physical environment was a little odd (out of Hannah's control, I know), but it seemed to be in a random lab's conference room. Some students seem to consistently have trouble finding these rooms as they apparently change location regularly.**

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.?

**Everything worked out according to plan as far as I could see. I realize that this is an optional session but somehow incentivizing a thorough reading of the paper beforehand would have helped to speed things along more effectively.**

6) Other comments or observations:

## **Reflection on Peer Feedback**

Overall, both observing another class and being observed were helpful exercises to improve my teaching. During my observation of other classes, it was easier to see where different teaching techniques could be implemented because I was unfamiliar with the subject matter and how "normal" classes are structured in those disciplines. Thinking about where to use these techniques also led me to contemplate more why certain techniques lead to more productive classroom environments and better student learning outcomes. Having colleagues observe my class was also helpful because I was given suggestions for improving student engagement and learning. I find that during a class while I am teaching, it is sometimes hard to evaluate how effective a particular technique has been, so having outside input was incredibly valuable.

An unexpected result of this interaction was a discussion between the three of us around the physical classroom environment. For both my class and TJ's class, we were in less than ideal rooms for the type of instruction and classroom environment we wanted to create. In this case, the room selection was completely out of our control and we both did the best with what we had, but in our follow-up discussion we talked about what an ideal environment would look like. It's interesting, because as a student I never really considered how the physical room impacted my learning, but from our discussion it appears that the physical environment plays a huge role in student learning. For example, my classroom (as well as the whole building unfortunately) is surrounded by construction, which means even with the doors closed there is still a



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considerable amount of noise. I have learned to tune it out, but Alanna commented on how distracting this might be for students. In TJ's class, all three of us noted how a different set-up with small tables may create a better environment for group work and facilitate discussion among the students. Assuming I am able to select a room for my classes in the future, all of these are important things to consider.

For future iterations of teaching triangles, it may be helpful to have groups meet at the beginning as well as the end of the semester. This way, we could discuss the structure of the class, what we hoped to work on throughout the semester, and perhaps any challenges we could see coming up throughout the course. This may help everyone frame their comments in a way that would be most helpful for the instructor being observed. At the end of the semester, we could use our meeting to go over the progress we've made in our own classes and receive suggestions for how to improve our teaching.