

PEER REVIEW OF TEACHING

Faculty peer review of teaching entails the collaboration of colleagues who assist one another by developing, improving, and transforming approaches and course content through an evaluation of teaching activities.(1)

Purpose: (i) to enhance student learning by implementing teaching approaches and content for effective student learning; and (ii) to assist departments, Schools, and programs in crafting a faculty peer review structure and to integrate those criteria that are best suited for their objectives.(2)

The following is designed as a guideline to enable individual units to establish their own faculty peer review document based on their culture and local issues. This document is not intended to present a unilateral set of criteria that will be used by all disciplines to evaluate teaching. Each department, School, and program should determine the criteria needed in an effective approach to match the specific context in which the review will be undertaken.

ASPECTS OF TEACHING TO BE EVALUATED (3)

- Quality, amount, and level of classroom instruction (including shared instruction)
- Development of curricula, new courses, and classroom materials
- Conduct and supervision of laboratory instruction
- Supervision of field work
- Supervision of internship experiences
- Supervision of undergraduate and graduate research
- Supervision and mentoring of graduate students, including chairing of dissertations
- Supervision of teaching assistants in undergraduate courses
- Service on graduate examination and dissertation committees
- Advising students
- One-on-one consultation with students
- Supervision of independent study and readings courses

METHODS FOR EVALUATING TEACHING (1)

- Review of Course Content (internal or external colleague reviews course materials)
- Classroom Observation of Teaching (a colleague observes an instructor's teaching)
- Reciprocal Classroom Visits (colleagues visit each others' classes)
- Research on a Course in Progress (colleagues experiment with a course)
- Student Outcomes (examples of students' work)
- Student Course Evaluations (students give feedback)

- Interviewing Students about What They Have Learned (a colleague with content expertise talks with students about what they have learned)
- Interviewing Students about Their Learning Experience (a colleague or consultant talks with students about what contributed to their learning)
- Teaching Portfolios and Course Portfolios (documentation about teaching or a course)
- Evaluating teaching through classroom observation encompasses a three-fold process. The first phase occurs prior to the evaluation in which the instructor and the observer will meet and discuss the goals of the class, expectations regarding the students, and the teaching style that he/she will employ. The second component concerns the aspect(s) and method(s) that the observer will use for the evaluation. The final phase comprises a post-observation interview in which the instructor will begin the session by discussing the positive qualities of what transpired in the class. This portion will be followed by any recommendations that the observer may have.(4, 5)

PART I: PRE-CLASSROOM OBSERVATION INTERVIEW

- What will happen in the class?
- What are the broad aims of this class within the semester?
- How does it connect with what came before it and will follow?
- What do you want the students to achieve?
- How are the students expected to prepare for this class?
- From the instructor's perspective, on what should the observer focus most?
- How does this class compare to the instructor's normative method of teaching?

PART II: CLASS OBSERVATION

- Clarity of purpose and intended results of student learning?
- Appropriateness of structure, presentation, and pace? Is the instructor sensitive to interacting with students? Did the instructor convey enthusiasm? Were the students actively engaged in learning?
- At the end of the session did the instructor explain what was achieved? Were connections made to later and parallel work?
- How effective was the presentation? Was an appropriate use made of resources?
- What was the quality of the instructor's rapport with the students? Were the students motivated and engaged?

PART III: POST OBSERVATION INTERVIEW

- Reflection on the extent to which the instructor achieved the intended results of this class:
With what aspects was the instructor pleased?
What aspects would the instructor change?
- If anything did not go as planned, how did the instructor react to it: was it a problem or a benefit? What is there to learn from it?
- What were the strengths and weaknesses observed in the class session?
- What specific recommendations for improvement can the observer suggest to the instructor?

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3. Guidelines for Evaluating Teaching, University of Michigan
Center for Research on Learning and Teaching, <http://www.crlt.umich.edu/guidelines.html>
4. Chism N, 1999. Peer Review of Teaching: A Sourcebook, Anker Press, pp. 75-99.
5. Faculty Peer Review of Teaching, A.R. Linse, Temple University, 2006 Teaching and Learning Conference, <http://www.temple.edu/tlc/about/main.htm>

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Classroom Observation Worksheet

While no single worksheet can hope to address every need of a department, School, or program, the following are suggestions of what might be included in such a document. One of many ways that can help a colleague shape his or her written comments is to employ a scalar system consisting of a series of ratings based on observations made during the review: 5= Exceeds level of expected qualities; 4= Meets level on all qualities; 3= Meets level on most qualities; 2= Meets level on some qualities; 1= Meets no/few expected qualities; 0= not applicable (4).

Name of person observed

Course Title and number

Date

Type of class (lecture, lab, seminar...)

Number of students

Name of observer

Content

Main ideas are clear and specific

Relevancy of main ideas is clear

Responds to questions during lesson

Demonstrates command of subject matter

Organization

Paces lesson appropriately and logically

Clear organizational plan

Effective use of media

Effective use of class time

Presentation

Is audible and understandable to all students

Uses intonation to vary emphasis

Explains ideas with clarity

Maintains eye contact with students

Listens to student questions and comments

Defines unfamiliar terms, concepts, and principles

Presents examples to clarify points

Relates new ideas to familiar concepts

Uses lexicon appropriate to student level

Confident and enthusiastic

Interaction

Encourages student questions and discussion
 Maintains student attention
 Instructor feedback is informative
 Instructor incorporates student responses
 Rapport with students
 Accepts students responses
 Draws non-participating students into discussions/
 activities
 Prevents specific students from dominating discussions/
 activities
 Helps students extend their responses
 Guides the direction of the discussion
 Mediates conflict or differences of opinion
 Provides explicit directions for active learning tasks
 Incorporates group work
 Attends respectfully to student comprehension or
 puzzlement
 Invites students' participation and comments
 Treats students as individuals
 Provides periodic feedback

Written Comments

Strengths
 Weaknesses
 Recommendations

FURTHER READING

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