



Peer Review of Teaching

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1:50-2:50 pm

Trabant University Center A

Session Agenda

- Introduction and overview:
 - General types of and uses for peer review
 - Common design elements of formative peer review
- Discussion: peer review practices in place at UD
- Areas of teaching for review and types of evidence
- Setting up a departmental system for peer review
- Discussion: Issues and questions related to piloting a formative peer review process
- CTAL support and resources

Definition and Context

- “Peer review of teaching is informed colleague judgment about faculty teaching for fostering enhancement” (Chism, 2007).
- Peer review of teaching is embedded in multiple activities such as faculty hiring, faculty review, contract renewal decisions, determining teaching assignments, approving teaching sabbatical requests, selecting teaching award winners.

Central Distinctions

- Formative: provides information that individual faculty can use to enhance their teaching. Faculty-owned and determined.
- Summative: provides information needed for personnel decision making. Institutionally owned and determined.
- Multiple sources, methods, and points in time

Note: The distinction between formative and summative purposes helps guide evaluation efforts, yet in practice it may be challenging to keep them distinct. (Chism, 2007)

What Peers Are Most Suited to Review

- Course content and instructor's knowledge of it
- Knowledge and application of most appropriate methods for teaching discipline-specific content
- Knowledge and application of assessment methods that align with learning objectives
- Selection and use of resources (e.g., textbook, handouts, slides, Sakai, multimedia)
- Level of commitment to the academic and personal success of students
- Professional attributes and behaviors: is s/he a good departmental citizen?

Derived from Cohen and McKeachie (1980)

Potential Benefits

- Provides the foundation for continued growth and development as an instructor in the discipline
- Engages faculty in systematic and scholarly examination of the impact of their instruction
- Contributes additional data sources
- Enhances and makes visible quality teaching and how teaching supports student learning
- Affirms the value of teaching for faculty and the academic program

Table Discussion

- What peer review practices are currently in place in your academic unit?
- From your perspective as chair, which practices have been most informative for mentoring of new (to UD) or early career faculty and why?
- Please select 1-2 practices from your table's discussion to share with your colleagues from other tables.
 - Do you use standard forms or other instruments to collect and share the information?

Types of Instruments

- **Checklists** – used to indicate that a certain behaviors have occurred.
- **Rating scales** - indicate relative effectiveness of given behaviors. Effective rating sheets explain the rating scales and describe the behaviors.
- **Written analyses** – open-ended. Observer selects what to observe and decides how to interpret what s/he observed.

Questions that Guide Selection of Core Elements of the Peer Review System

Purpose and Audience

- What is the purpose of the peer review?
- Who is the review designed for? (e.g., faculty new to UD, early-career?)
- What constitutes expected and exemplary teaching performance at early-career stages of faculty?
- Who will be involved in the peer review process and at what stage?

Questions that Guide Selection of Core Elements of the Peer Review System

Process

- When and how will the peer review be conducted?
- What areas of teaching will be reviewed?
(e.g., instructional planning and assessment of student learning, teaching performance, course materials, supervision of individual students, contributions to teaching in the department)
- What evidence would be most informative for the areas that will be reviewed?

Questions that Guide Selection of Core Elements of the Peer Review System

Feedback and Outcomes

- What standards will be used to provide constructive and consistent feedback?
- How will the review outcomes be conveyed and utilized?
- How will we know that the process achieves its purpose?

Peer Review Based on Multiple Kinds of Evidence

- Statement of teaching responsibilities, including special contexts (e.g., service learning, clinical, UG research)
- Reflective statement about teaching in the discipline
- Teaching materials (e.g., syllabus, handouts, guides, online resources, materials in Sakai, texts)
- Sample classroom artifacts (student work and products) and contextual narrative
- Classroom observation
- Student achievements and honors
- Utilization of professional development opportunities
- Contribution to departmental teaching mission

Example of Evidence: Formative Peer Observation

- Based on mutually agreed upon elements and criteria
- Acknowledges and appreciates varied teaching contexts and diverse approaches
- Guided by consistent and transparent protocols including process for selecting and training reviewers, timing, frequency, recording and reporting
- Applies standard instrument rooted in expectations for discipline-based teaching
- Process incorporates pre- and post-observation discussion that informs instructional decision-making and professional development

Example of Evidence: Formative Teaching Portfolio Process

- Provides collection of documents (for one or more courses) that are representative of and demonstrate teaching competency
- Engages faculty in thinking about, planning and documenting instructional activities, decisions and growth over time as instructors in the discipline
- Demonstrates faculty ability to learn from experiences, reflect on strengths, identify areas for enhancement, and discuss next steps
- Sets the stage for a ***collaborative, non-evaluative*** faculty partnership
- A selection of the portfolio documents ***may*** be offered as documentation for summative purposes

Possibilities: Teaching Portfolio Content

- Author's objectives for formative teaching portfolio
- Course learning goals, activities, and assessment tools
- Explanation of how the course(s) fit(s) into the curriculum
- Evidentiary materials such as syllabi, assignments, samples of student work accompanied by faculty feedback, rubrics
- Reflection about decisions regarding the learning, teaching, and assessment processes to capture the rationale and thinking behind these decisions
- Documentation of author's growth and development as instructor over time, including what the author has learned from engagement with the portfolio process that has been ***informed by peer review***

Peer Review of Teaching Sample Institutional Practices

- University of Nebraska, Lincoln – Peer Review of Teaching Project, focused on course portfolio development, voluntary, stipend-based, one-year process

<http://www.courseportfolio.org/peer/pages/index.jsp>

- University of Texas at Austin – Peer Observation Process

<http://ctl.utexas.edu/teaching-resources/advance-your-career/>

- SUNY Albany – Peer Observation Process

http://www.albany.edu/teachingandlearning/tlr/peer_obs/index.shtml

Table Discussion

Based on the discussion so far, what issues and questions do you have related to conducting a formative peer review process?

Please select 1-2 central issues and/or questions from your table's discussion to share with your colleagues from other tables.

CTAL Support and Resources

- Clearinghouse for instruments and processes
- Department-based consultation for development of peer review process
- Campus-wide forum for UD best practices?
- Campus-wide faculty working groups for development and/or refinement of instruments and processes?
- Electronic teaching portfolio guide?
[Sample guide](#) from HETC program regarding academic ePortfolio development

References

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