

# Peer Review of Teaching: Summary Notes<sup>1</sup>

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The purpose of Peer Review is to allow colleagues to provide “formative” assessment and feedback regarding teaching (including aspects of instructional design, delivery, content expertise, course and classroom management) in order to enhance learning outcomes and the quality of instruction.

The Procedure: faculty will be paired with others willing to review one another. Pairs will prepare for this process by becoming familiar with indicators of teaching effectiveness. At the beginning of semester they meet to discuss learning outcomes, teaching goals, anticipated challenges, and course-related materials. Factors to be taken into account in evaluating those materials include:

- Syllabus (indicates the value of the course, identifies student responsibilities, shows how assessments are linked to learning outcomes, includes realistic assignments, fair/explicit grading policies, and course/university policies, is consistent with catalog course description)
- Handouts, online materials, use of technology to enhance student learning
- Classroom presentation materials (do PowerPoint/transparencies help; are they legible?)
- Textbooks (appropriate, respected, reasonable for class level)
- Assignments (appropriate, clear, doable in time given, helpful/specific feedback)
- Tests/quizzes (clear, appropriate, match course goals, graded in timely fashion)
- Availability outside of class (office hours, online access)

During the semester faculty will observe one another’s classes, focusing on aspects of teaching of particular interest to the observed teacher. In those visits reviewers will consider the following:

- Instructor organization (classroom time management/logistics, link to previous classes)
- Engagement (draw a variety of students into discussion, complete learning objectives)
- Content knowledge (accuracy, expansion on textbook, applications, providing rationale)
- Presentation (audible, tonal variations, mannerisms, eye contact, reliance on notes, pace)
- Rapport (address students by name, attempt to determine comprehension, reinforcement)
- Clarity (define terms, elaborate/repeat on complexities, examples, pause for questions)

If this classroom visit is for “summative” T&P purposes, two faculty members should visit three times on different days. Before visits, the evaluated teacher and visiting faculty should meet to discuss the teacher’s goals, practices, and policies, and review the points mentioned above.

After the visit, the pair will discuss the visitor’s observations about the points mentioned above. At that meeting, teachers should be: asked about how they thought the class went and how they know if students learned, provided specific feedback points (beginning with the positive), and invited to discuss possible changes. These observations will not be shared with anyone other than the teacher. At the end of the semester the teacher will do a self-evaluation with an eye toward future semesters.

Faculty members’ overall assessment should include how they incorporate research into their teaching, collaborate with other faculty to improve their teaching, participate in professional development activities, publish in the scholarship of teaching and learning, and mentor students.

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<sup>1</sup> These notes are based on points raised in materials distributed by the Center for Teaching Excellence, Beth McNeill (Health/Kinesiology), and Kerry Litzenberg (Agricultural Economics).