

Considerations: Peer Review of Teaching

Peer review of teaching is most informative for course or curricular issues, currency of course content; course organization; appropriateness of course objectives, assessment methods, support of departmental instructional efforts (Centra, 1993). The peer review process is based on an understanding of the work that faculty are expected to do, the skills that are required to do the work, and the criteria to be applied (Theall, 2008).

The process includes all stakeholders in decisions about the process and/or policy and is supported by faculty and administration. Peer review might entail materials review (e.g., syllabus, test, student work) and/or classroom observations by peers in the same academic unit / sometimes institutional peers. Peer review tends to be academic program or institution-specific.

Guidelines from the Literature:

It is recommended to establish a system that

- is clearly understood and articulated
- is systematic and transparent
- is practical, feasible, and relevant
- rooted in local discussion and shared understanding of what elements define effective teaching
- offers reviewer preparation
- supports dialogue about teaching and student learning and is perceived as a valued process
- is integrated into other performance systems (award decisions, 2-year review, promotion & tenure, post-tenure review)
- includes ongoing efforts in improving the peer review process
- offers resources for improvement and support

Potential Purpose:

- Value for the individual and for the academic program
- Formative (improvement-based); Summative (for personnel decisions)
- Enhance and make visible quality teaching and how teaching supports student learning

Issues to Consider Regarding Process and Procedures:

- Acknowledges variations in teaching contexts and individual approaches
- Instrumentation, timing, frequency of data collection
- Protocols (e.g., selection and training of reviewers)
- Mutually agreed upon elements and criteria as sources of evidence and a basis for evaluation

Consideration in Reporting of Results:

- Data analysis and interpretation, nature of reporting, standard reporting format for personnel purposes

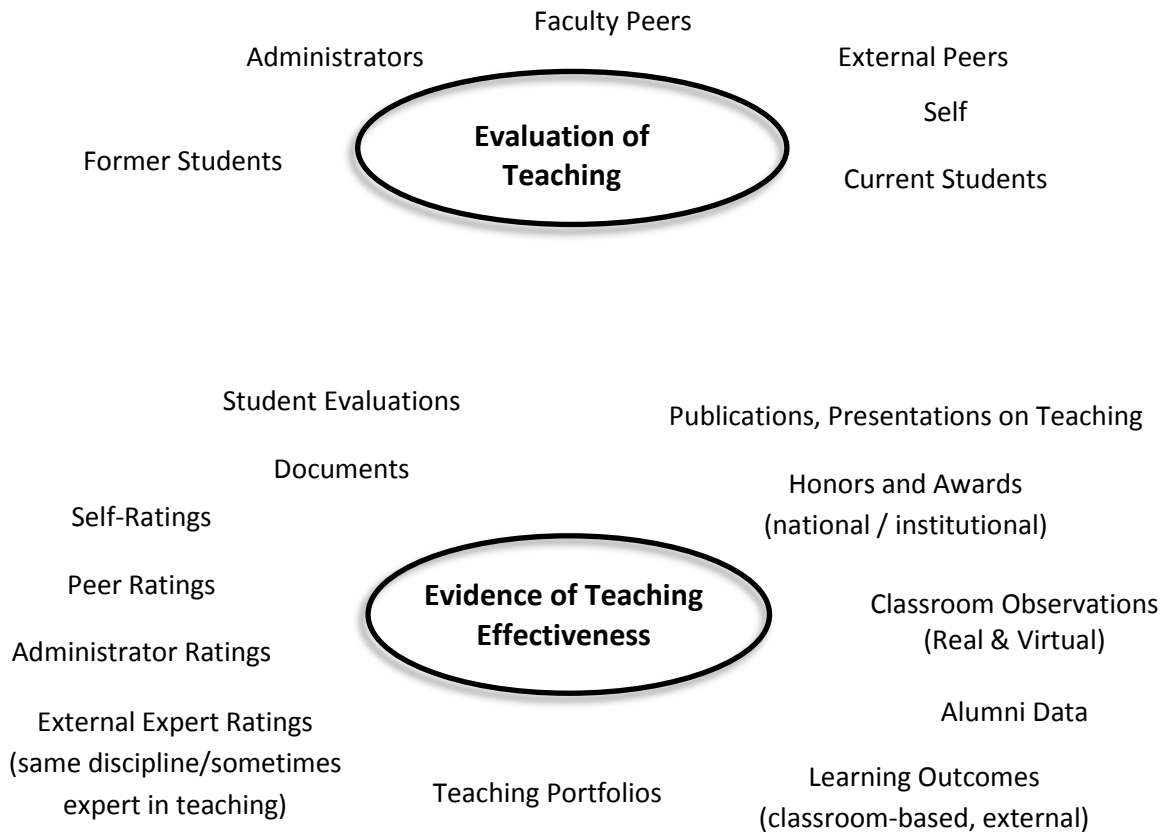
In summary, the following are characteristics of an effective peer review process (Seldin, 2006):

- * It provides for both formative feedback and summative decision-making.
- * The process and instrumentation have been developed with attention to thoroughness and fairness.
- * Peer reviewers understand their task and are well prepared to accomplish it.
- * Trust and confidence in the process is exhibited by all parties.
- * Ongoing efforts in the academic unit are invested in improving the peer review process.
- * Peer review assignments are made in ways that are likely to result in helpful collaborations.
- * Peer review is a valued process within the academic unit.
- * Parties are cooperative and timely in accomplishing peer review tasks.

References:

Berk, R. (2006). *Thirteen strategies to measure college teaching*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.
 Chism, N. (2007). *Peer review of teaching. A sourcebook*. (2nd ed.). Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing.
 Seldin, P., et al. (2006). *Evaluating faculty performance*. Bolton, MAL Anker Publishing.
 Theall, M. (2008). Collecting, analyzing, using faculty evaluation data. Academic Impressions Webinar.

Evaluation of Teaching Can Involve Multiple Constituents Using Multiple Data Sources



All of the above need to be considered in light of their purpose (formative versus summative) and in the context of ongoing institutional initiatives, for example: Diversification of faculty and students , interdisciplinary teaching