

Peer Observation Recommendations

Peer evaluation of teaching differs from student evaluation of teaching (FCQ's) in two important ways: (i) peer evaluation is conducted by an experienced teacher, and (ii) the evaluation is not anonymous.

Below are some recommendations for conducting a peer evaluation. These recommendations involve a pre-observation meeting with the instructor, a class observation, possibly a post-observation meeting, and a report.

I. Pre-observation meeting.

Meet with the teacher, agree on the date of observation. Agree on the review criteria. Briefly discuss the course plan. Possible questions the observer might ask are:

- (i) What is the main goal of your course?
- (ii) What is your specific objective for the lesson to be observed? (I.e., what do you expect students to be able to know and do by the end of the lesson?) How does this lesson relate to previous and subsequent lessons?
- (iii) Will you explain/show your syllabus to me? (recent quiz? HW assignment? course website?)
- (iv) Are there specific aspects of the lesson on which you would like to receive feedback? (If yes, plan on a post-observation meeting within a week of the observation.)

II. Class observation.

Arrive on time. Stay for the full lesson. Observe, take notes, but otherwise be invisible.

III. Report.

A reasonable length for a report is 2 pages. Consider commenting on the following main areas.

- (i) Clarity and organization. (The instructor (a) starts on time, (b) presents goals for the lesson, (c) reviews prior material, (d) presents material in a logical order, (e) periodically relates new material to previous material or experience, (f) summarizes main points near the end of the lesson, (g) ends on time.)

- (ii) Knowledge. (The instructor (a) demonstrates thorough knowledge of the subject matter, (b) answers questions clearly and accurately.)
- (iii) Effective communication. (The instructor (a) speaks clearly, (b) uses board and space well, (c) holds the students' attention, (d) highlights important points, (e) presents appropriate examples, (f) encourages questions, (g) seeks student involvement, (h) explains assignments clearly.)
- (iv) Interaction with students. (The instructor (a) listens carefully to students and responds constructively, (b) checks periodically for student understanding, (c) treats students with respect.)

Tips for post-observation feedback or your report:

Focus on 2-3 main points.

Be descriptive rather than judgmental.

Be specific rather than general.