

“Identifying the Focus of a Peer Review of Teaching System”

from Peer Review of Teaching: A Sourcebook by Nancy Van Note Chism of Ohio State University

Peers are the ideal reviewers for evaluating subject matter expertise and teaching strategies specific to the discipline. Often are asked to evaluate other aspects, i.e. in dossier review to examine evidence such as student ratings, self assessments by person being reviewed, etc.

Questions to help identify the focus:

Is the purpose for formative evaluation or summative evaluation?

Are you reviewing only subject matter expertise and teaching strategies specific to the discipline?

Or are you evaluating judgements and evidence from multiple sources such as happens in a dossier review?

Several models suggest areas for review

Depending on your answers to the previous questions, the choice of areas focused on in peer review might vary. Various models reviewed suggested following areas (not exhaustive list):

- course goals
- course content and organization
- instructional methods
 - appropriate methodology for teaching course
 - appropriate techniques to foster student learning
 - reasonableness of time and efforts required to complete assignments
- instructional materials
 - appropriateness of reading list
 - appropriateness of handouts and learning aids
 - suitability of media materials to course
- evaluation of students' work
 - inclusion of higher order cognitive processes on exams and assignments
 - reasonableness of length and difficulty of exams
 - appropriateness of grading criteria

- knowledge of subject matter
 - current with developments in field
 - knowledgeable of ideas and findings of other scholars
- concern for and interest in teaching
 - assumed responsibilities related to teaching mission, e.g. curriculum committee, involvement with Center for Faculty Development

Again, depending on your answers to the previous questions, the choice of what evidence of performance you choose to review might vary. Such as:

- classroom observation
- written course descriptive material,
 - such as syllabi, course outlines, reading lists, etc.
- texts, study guides,
- non-print materials
 - such as audio-visual and web materials
- assignments
- copies of graded exams and papers
- service on department or institutional committees dealing with teaching issues
- descriptions of activities in supervising graduate students learning to teach
- evidence of design of new courses
- statements of what activities faculty member has engaged in to improve teaching
- examples of questionnaires used for formative purposes
- examples of changes made on the basis of feedback
- reflective memo composed by faculty member being reviewed
- course portfolio (Annette will discuss further in next hour)