Peer Observation of Teaching with Collegial Feedback

Focus of Observation: Instruction

“...the observable performance of the variety of teaching acts. It includes many of the most crucial aspects of pedagogy: organizing and managing the classroom; presenting clear explanations and vivid descriptions; assigning and checking work; and interacting effectively with students through questions and probes, answers and reactions, and praise and criticism. It thus includes management, explanation, discussion, and all the observable features of effective direct and heuristic instruction already well-documented in the research literature on effective teaching.” (Shulman, 1987, p.17)

Benefits

Peer’s critical insights on:
- The quality of course materials
- Organization
- Methods
- Session climate, rapport, interaction and functioning

Peer observer:
- Opportunity to gain meaningful insights into teaching
- Increase motivation to improve own teaching
- Promote self-directed learning and development

Challenges

- The lack of agreed-upon criteria for faculty teaching
- The long tradition of keeping faculty teaching practices private
- Insufficient time
- Reliability of observational data

Barriers to Collegial Feedback

Interpersonal Barriers
- Difficulty of giving peers corrective feedback
- Tendency to compliment peers on their teaching
- Different reactions
- Reluctance to receive feedback when needed
- Insecurities in teaching and fear of evaluation

Institutional Barriers
- Uncertainty about expectations
- Lack of faculty connection to the medical school

References


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