

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

- Beckman, T.J., Lee, M.C., Rohren, C.H. & Pankratz, V.S. (2003). Evaluating and Instrument for the peer review of inpatient teaching. *Medical Teacher* 25(2):131-5.
- Blanco, M.A. (2007). Training Medical Faculty Members to Review Peers’ Teaching through Peer Observation. Doctoral Dissertation. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Graduate School of Education.
- Braskamp, L. & Ory, J. (1994). *Assessing Faculty Work. Enhancing Individual and Institutional Performance*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- DeZure, D. (1999). Evaluating Teaching Through Peer Classroom Observation. In Seldin, P. *Changing Practices in Evaluating Teaching. A Practical Guide to Improved Faculty Performance and promotion/Tenure Decisions*. Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing.
- Irby, D.M. (1983). Peer Review of Teaching in Medicine. *Medical Education* 58(6):457-461.
- Penny, A. & Coe, R. (2004). Effectiveness of Consultation on Students Ratings Feedback: A Meta-Analysis. *Review of Educational Research* 74(2):215-253.
- Rippey, R. (1981). The Evaluation of Teaching in Medical Schools. *Springer Series on Medical Education* (Vol.2). New York, NY: Springer Publishing Company.
- Speer, A., Elnicki, D. & Michael D. (1999). Assessing the Quality of Teaching. *The American Journal of Medicine* 106(4):381-384.
- Van Note Chism, N. (1999). *Peer Review of Teaching*. Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing Company.

For questions/suggestions please contact Maria Blanco at: maria.blanco@tufts.edu