

Peer evaluation of teaching

**Department of Pharmacy and Clinical Sciences
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Background

Adapted from the COP Faculty Development Committee, Spring 2002

The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education has addressed the importance of peer performance evaluation in “Best Practices Performance Review System for Faculty – Indicator Guide; p.92, Sept. 2000.” In keeping with the philosophy of the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE Bulletin, Nov 1994), peer evaluation of teaching is viewed as an essential component of such performance evaluation and fosters educational improvement and faculty development. This peer component of teaching evaluations is intended to:

- a) complement student evaluations
- b) facilitate mentoring of a junior faculty member
- c) contribute to documentation of teaching effectiveness for purposes of promotion, tenure and post-tenure review
- d) augment objective documentation that can be used for periodical faculty evaluation

One of the goals of the Department of Pharmacy and Clinical Sciences within the College of Pharmacy is to promote excellence in teaching. By constructively assisting faculty members in improving their teaching skills and guiding their methodologies, the faculty and its students are valuing specific behaviors in the classroom. Teachers should be evaluated on their instructional characteristics, behaviors, and teaching techniques. To achieve this, faculty will decide upon a list of “Best Practices in Teaching”. Once faculty members agree upon a list of items most important to them, they will be evaluated by this list of standards.¹

Definition

“Best Practices in Teaching” within the Department of Pharmacy and Clinical Sciences
Adapted from references^{1,2}

Objectives

- Lecturer states clear, achievable, and measurable objectives

Organization

- Lecturer’s presentation follows a logical sequence
- Lecturer provides transitions to facilitate student learning
- Lecturer summarizes main points at the end of the lecture

Content

- Lecturer is well prepared with up-to-date and evidence-based knowledge
- Lecturer provides evidence of relevance of course material (i.e. to include examples that demonstrate the importance of the information presented)
- Lecturer explains concepts clearly (i.e. uses examples, audio-visual materials)

Presentation Style

- Lecturer creates enthusiasm for the topic and maintains students attention (i.e. to respond to changes in student attentiveness)
- Lecturer incorporates effective instructional support (e.g. audio-visual materials)
- Lecturer speaks audibly and clearly
- Lecturer develops critical thinking and problem solving ability (e.g. cases, small / large group discussions)

Interactions and Rapport with students

- Lecturer creates a classroom environment that is comfortable and conducive to learning
 - Lecturer stimulates questions and responds to wrong answers constructively
 - Lecturer is fair-minded (i.e. to treat all students fairly, to make adjustments when requested by students)
 - Lecturer presents him/herself as a “real person” (i.e. the faculty member admits not knowing something, think through questions out loud so the students can improve their problem solving skills)
 - Lecturer treats students with respect
- Lecturer incorporates active learning (e.g. cases, problems, scenarios, projects, presentations, etc.)

Examination

- Lecturer tests students on the skills taught in class (i.e. if testing on problem solving skills, students should have been able to practice these skills during class)
- Lecturer’s exam is consistent with learning objectives

1. Lubawy WC. Evaluating teaching using the best practices model. American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education 2003;67 Article 87.

2. Hammer DP, Sauer KA, Fielding DW, Skau KA. White Paper on Best Evidence Pharmacy Education (BEPE). American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education 2004;68 Article 24.

Process

- 1) The yearly cycle of peer teaching evaluation for untenured and tenured faculty is an internal review integrated into their annual and APT 3-yr evaluations.
- 2) Faculty members will submit five (5) lectures to be evaluated during the upcoming year to the department chair at his/her annual evaluation. The department chair will choose one lecture to be evaluated by peers. Of note, first year faculty member will also participate in the process except that peer evaluations will only be used to facilitate mentoring and not to perform a formal annual evaluation of his/her teaching skills.
- 3) The department chair will release a list of teaching sessions (with no identifiers) that need to be evaluated by the faculty members of the department.
- 4) Following the release of submitted teaching sessions, faculty members will offer their availability for the evaluation of three sessions of their peers. A central office (department chair) will coordinate all observations to be made during that period. Three peers will be selected to evaluate each teaching session. The central office will assure that the three (3) peers will not hold the same faculty rank.
- 5) One week prior to his/her peer evaluation, the faculty member will be asked to submit their lecture objectives and other relevant educational materials (e.g. handouts) to be used during the session. Samples of at least three questions that will be used by the instructor on his/her test have to be submitted. The above-cited materials will be submitted to the central office (department chair) for their distribution to the three (3) faculty members who will be conducting the peer evaluation in the classroom.
- 6) Following a peer-evaluated session, the evaluators will meet with the instructor (immediately after the observed session). The evaluators will discuss their observations with the faculty (similar to a student grandround evaluation).
- 7) After each peer-evaluated session, the instructor is expected to submit a 1-page self-evaluation with the original evaluation reports from his/her peers to the department chair within two weeks of the observation. This self-evaluation should include a plan for improvement or for achieving “the best practices in teaching” approved by the department.

Updated on 3/31/05, 05/05/05 (Faculty meeting)