



The Peer Review of Teaching: Handout for Peer Reviewers

Formative Peer Review Program – Resource (updated November 21, 2011)

Things to think about when conducting a classroom observation of teaching

Throughout the process, think about what you will do to put the reviewee at ease (e.g., meet in a comfortable place, smile, make eye contact) and tell them a bit about yourself and your experience with teaching and/or peer reviews.

Before your first face-to-face meeting

- Contact the reviewee and ask about his/her timeline to ensure it is doable for you.
- Schedule a face-to-face pre-observation meeting.
- Determine whether you are being asked to conduct a summative peer review (for tenure, promotion, or reappointment purposes) or a formative one (formative reviews focus on the instructor's self development as a teacher and are normally confidential to the reviewer and reviewee)
 - The reason this matters is because, in some departments, the person conducting a summative review, must follow a specific process, write a report according to particular guidelines and/or be at the same or a higher rank than the reviewee.

The first face-to-face meeting (before the classroom observation of teaching)

The purposes of the pre-observation meeting are to:

- Meet and develop some rapport with your reviewee.
- Share something about your (respective) backgrounds and teaching philosophies.
- Learn about the reviewee's goals for the review.

Some questions you may want to ask include:

- What are your goals for the review and how can I help you achieve these?
- What are your learning objectives for students in this class? In other words, what do you expect the learners to be able to know, do, and/or have experienced by the end of your session?
- What strategies and methods will you use to help the learners reach these objectives?
- How will students show that they know and can do what you expect of them and/or that they have reflected on the experience(s) they have had?
- Is there any other information that would be helpful for me to have prior to reviewing the class? For example: relevant student background, relevant course history, previous experience with peer review, etc.
- Do you have any concerns about the process?
- Would you like me to use a particular feedback form or other review instrument during the classroom observation?
- What would you like to know about me?

Other:

- Confirm the dates/times of the classroom observation(s) and schedule a post observation meeting to take place within 1 week of the classroom observation.



- Ask the reviewee where s/he would like you to sit in the class, whether s/he will introduce you to the class and whether s/he would like you to participate in any of the activities (in a small class, the reviewer's presence cannot go unnoticed and, for that reason, it is recommended that s/he be introduced).
- If, for any reason, you cannot stay for the entire class, and/or you need to leave immediately after class, let the reviewee know (they may expect to be able to touch base with you right after class even though you have scheduled a post-observation meeting).

The classroom observation of teaching

- Review your notes from the pre-observation meeting. You may find it helpful to design a form to bring to the classroom observation to help you remember the reviewee's goals.
- Arrive early, sit in the spot you and your reviewee agreed upon.
- Instructor introduces the reviewer and explains his/her role/participation (if this is what you agreed on).
- With respect to the goals/issues that you and the reviewee discussed in the pre-observation meeting, what are you noticing? What strengths do you recognize? What suggestions for improvement do you have? (record)

The post observation meeting

- Focus on the reviewee's goals.
- Invite reviewee to discuss how things went.
- Communicate your observations and reflections with respect to the goals/issues you and the reviewee discussed in the pre-observation meeting (start with the positive).
- Blend reviewee's active self-reflection with your supportive and constructive feedback.
- Provide written and verbal feedback from the classroom observation(s) of teaching so that your reviewee can refer back to and reflect on your comments over time.
- Determine and discuss any follow up in terms of resources, additional support etcetera.

Additional Resources

For sample questions relevant to the pre- and post-observation meeting, and the classroom observation(s), see the Process tab in the Peer Review of Teaching section of the CTLT website (<http://ctl.t.ubc.ca/programs/all-our-programs/peer-review-of-teaching/>)

