Guidelines for Formative Peer Observation Process for Teaching Enhancement

Overview

Objectives of the peer-review process:
- To enhance teaching
- To encourage reflection on one’s teaching
- To improve student learning

Process:
1. Planning
   a. Department-level – find out what the expectations are for your position
   b. Individual-level – select a peer observer (from the department, LTSI, or other colleagues) and prepare for the steps below.

2. Pre-observation meeting – clearly articulate the focus, expected goals and outcomes, and provide all relevant information to the peer observer.

3. Conducting the teaching observation – suggest that the peer observer use the LTSI peer-observation form as a guideline, take ample notes, and be discreet.

4. Post-observation meeting – using questions, the peer observer will guide the instructor through discussion of the following: what the instructor did well, three (no more) constructive points to consider for improvement, and what the instructor should keep on doing.

5. Written report – It is important for there to be agreement between the observer and the instructor about the letter’s content so that both are comfortable with how this information will be shared to the appropriate audience. Sample letters are provided in the full version of this document.

Attributes:
Effective teaching practices are frequently identified as including:
- strong and supportive student-teacher relations;
- student-centered pedagogies, such as interactive and or collaborative teaching methods;
- pedagogies that ensure student engagement in the learning process;
clear intended learning objectives or outcomes;
expert and inspiring knowledge of one’s discipline and subject;
strong organizational skills, evident in class structure;
strong explanatory skills, evident in clarity and student learning;
appropriate and varied assessment and timely provision of feedback;
integration of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) into course design;
culturally respectful teaching practices that take into consideration diversity, equity, and inclusion of students; and
commitment to personal pedagogic self-reflection and professional development.

Conclusion:
The peer observation process can be a continuous process. At the LTSI, we recommend that instructors consider using the process on a continuing basis in order to stimulate reflection on one’s teaching practice and to engage with other perspectives about how to approach one’s teaching.

Resources

