

Cleveland State University
Department of Electrical Engineering

1/13/95

Faculty Peer Review of Teaching Process

Introduction

The Department of Electrical Engineering has developed a process for faculty peer review of teaching in an effort to provide its faculty with a means to evaluate and improve their teaching methods and effectiveness in the classroom. The main features of the process are that it is:

- intended to promote change and to be non-threatening.
- voluntary.
- confidential--the review is given only to the faculty member being reviewed.
- intended for use by all faculty--not just for untenured faculty.
- used for improvement only and not for evaluative (merit, promotion) purposes.
- based on classroom visits (more than one), on the use of a standard form for the visits, on the review of class materials, and on a written assessment by the reviewer.
- not intended to go on indefinitely--perhaps review one course to identify areas for improvement, and then review one or two more courses to provide feedback on change and improvement.

Faculty wishing to make use of the process may do so at any time. However, it is recommended that untenured faculty utilize their first two or three quarters developing their teaching style and acclimating themselves to classroom lecturing and our student population before they request initiation of a peer review.

Process for Peer Review

For the system to be effective it is important that, within reason, all of the implementation steps listed below are followed.

1. A faculty member wishing to use the peer review process (the reviewee) should seek the help of two other faculty members (the reviewers) to do the review. The reviewers should be tenured faculty with a broad range of teaching experience, and the reviewee should choose reviewers with whom he or she is comfortable and whose judgement he or she trusts. The reviewee may seek the help of the Chair to identify appropriate reviewers.
2. The reviewee should provide the reviewers with a memo outlining his or her teaching style, classroom pedagogical objectives, and/or any other classroom teaching objectives that the reviewee holds important and wants the reviewers to critique. Such information not only helps the reviewers understand what the reviewee is trying to do in the classroom, it also tends to remove the reviewers somewhat from their own biases and may therefore improve the usefulness of the feedback to the reviewee. The review therefore will be based at least in part on how well the reviewee is doing in achieving his or her own classroom objectives, and not just on how well the reviewee's teaching style matches those of the reviewers. On the other hand, since the reviewers are experienced teachers, they should use their independent judgement about what constitutes effective teaching and should provide critique and guidance based on their own knowledge of the characteristics of an effective teacher.

Department of Electrical Engineering
Classroom Visit Review Form

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Instructor: _____ Course: _____
Number of Students Present: _____ Date: _____
Reviewer: _____

1. Does the instructor speak clearly, loudly, and directly to the students?
2. Does the instructor communicate effectively at the level of the students?
3. How well organized is the presentation?
4. Does the instructor ask questions and allow time for the students to answer?
5. Does the instructor respond appropriately to student questions and comments?
6. Does the instructor demonstrate enthusiasm for the subject matter?
7. Does the instructor periodically summarize and provide an overview?
8. Does the instructor explain ideas clearly?
9. Is the instructor's chalkboard/overhead-transparency technique satisfactory?
10. What are the instructor's major strengths? weaknesses?
11. What specific recommendations do you have for improving the instructor's teaching?

3. The reviewers should examine and consider as part of the review the completeness, appropriateness and comprehensiveness of course outline, textbook, class handouts, exams, projects, homework, and any other course materials. The reviewee should supply all of these materials to the reviewers.
4. The reviewers should prepare for the classroom visit by familiarizing themselves with the classroom visit review form, the reviewee's classroom objectives, and the peer review background material on file in the Department office. The background material file contains information about peer review (research results, other classroom visit review forms, formats for review different from ours, etc.) and not the results of reviews of faculty.
5. Classroom visits are a central part of the system. It is recommended that both reviewers visit the classroom on the same day so that the reviewee gets the benefit of two independent judgements of the same lecture. The reviewers' evaluations will be guided during each classroom visit by the classroom visit review form as well as by the areas of evaluation developed in 2. above. Generally, the intention of the initial classroom visit is to identify both areas of strength and areas that could be improved upon, and the goal of subsequent visits is to assess improvement in those areas that need improvement. It is envisioned that in most cases two classroom visits will be sufficient. After each visit the reviewers will furnish to the reviewee a copy of the completed classroom visit review form for that visit as well as a one or two page **written** assessment of both the reviewee's classroom effectiveness and his or her class materials. If the assessment is for a second or subsequent visit, it would be beneficial to the reviewee for the reviewers to identify those areas in which noticeable improvement has taken place and those that still need attention. To promote candid feedback and to avoid the natural tendency we have to compromise on differences in views of the same event, the two reviewers should develop their own independent assessments, and they should meet separately with the reviewee. In addition to classroom visits, the reviewee may want to make video tapes of his or her classroom performance for the reviewers to assess, but tapes are not necessary and they should not substitute for classroom visits--it is essential to high quality peer review that the reviewers actually visit the classroom.
6. Within a week of a classroom visit each reviewer should discuss with the reviewee the review form and the reviewer's written assessment for that visit. Timely feedback is important so that the reviewee can analyze the reviewer's comments and suggestions and incorporate suitable changes. The reviewer may also, at this stage, schedule a follow-up classroom visit.