Peer Review of Teaching

Peer review of teaching is a process destined to improve instructional effectiveness of faculty, and constituted part of the instructional mentorship and development. In some instances, schools/programs use summative evaluations to inform personnel decisions. Broadly, the process usually entails a preliminary interview with the teaching faculty, class observation and a post observation meeting summarizing strengths and weaknesses. Class observations are directed to evaluate knowledge, instructional materials, class organization presentation form and substance, teacher and student interaction, student participation and assessment practices. Time and effort, potential bias and collegiality issues typically limit peer review of teaching. Nonetheless, this process remains one of the methods to improve the quality of instruction.

The following summary table presents information retrieved from ASPPH Academic Affairs members. Members were requested information on peer review of teaching, with a focus on both process and observation tools used. 12 schools/departments responded to the request. The table below summarizes processes and tools used as reported by these 12 members.

Preliminary Observations:

In general, tools vary, some schools are using qualitative measures, some quantitative and some a mixture of both approaches. Most schools use a pre observation assessment to evaluate materials, some including meeting with the instructor. In general, all observation tools address objectives, structure of session, and ability to engage the students. Some measures, however, assess not only the instructor behavior but the students' behavior in class. In general, the tools are used as a guidance and are not required to be adhered to, and several schools reported that different departments within schools use different tools.

While some schools did not specify if the process was used only for formative purposes, data from the ASPPH report *Innovations on Pedagogy* survey (report here) indicates that 33 % of respondents (n=87) use peer reviews as a method for evaluation for promotion and tenure. This report also highlights that peer review of teaching is available in 47% of the schools/programs and reports that 37% of respondents find peer review very beneficial.

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1. Colorado School of Public Health – Department of Epidemiology

Process used	Tool used	Domains assessed as part of the observation	Final purpose
1. a. Pre-class review of syllabus for: appropriateness, clarity of goals, measurable learning objectives, planned activities and appropriate methods, cultural relevance and high expectations b. Pre-conference meeting to understand goals and expectations 2. In-class observation 3. Summary of observations – areas of strength, post-observation meeting and recommendation	N/S*	In-class observation Form includes statements and invites for suggestions: • Evidence of student learning (attentive, ask questions, answer questions, solve problems) • Class teaching style and methods: instructor knows the subject, enthusiastic, has high expectations, creates comfortable learning environment, presents clear and well-organized lectures, communicates clearly, interacts with students, expects students to prepare before class, encourages students' participation, provides constructive feedback, teaches students how to think, assesses learning throughout the class, adapts teaching to in-class assessment	Class observation notes and post-observation go to the instructor and are shared with departmental chair or committee. Importance of emphasizing the constructive nature of the observation

2. Colorado School of Public Health – Department of Epidemiology (online courses)

Process used	Tool used	Domains assessed as part of the observation	Final purpose
Online evaluation form	N/S	Feasibility of finding and accessing the information (syllabus, calendar of assignments, courses, quizzes, examinations, discussion, requirements of synchronous or asynchronous courses)	N/S

3. Colorado School of Public Health – Department of Environmental Sciences

Process used	Tool used	Domains assessed as part of the observation	Final purpose
Peer observation	N/S	Open-ended evaluation on instructors command of material, clarity of presentation, apparent quality of preparation, effectiveness of their use of teaching aids (PowerPoint, whiteboard, overhead, etc.), encouragement and use of student feedback during lectures and discussions, additional suggestions/comments about the course and/or instructor	N/S

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4. University of North Carolina Gillings School of Global Public Health

Process used	Tool used	Domains assessed as part of the observation	Final purpose
3 step: 4. Pre-observation conference – with interview guide focused on goal and expectation of class, students, and teaching style 5. Classroom observation 6. Post-observation conference – with interview guide focused on reflections, including areas for improvement	Adapted from Sorcinelli Observation Guide	Open-ended questions • Knowledge of Subject Matter (mastery) • Organization and Clarity (structure, teaching strategy and closure) • Instructor-student interaction – discussion, kind of questions, level of questions, what is it done with the questions and responses • Presentation and enthusiasm • Student behavior • Overall observations on instructor's teaching behavior	The forms are a guide and each department within the school uses different guides. The form adapted from Sorcinelli represents one of the forms in use. Peer observation of teaching is a requirement for APT.

5. Yale School of Public Health

Process used	Tool used	Domains assessed as part of the observation	Final purpose
In-class behavioral assessment of what the instructor and student are doing each minute from start to finish of the session	Modified version of Classroom Observation Protocol for Undergraduate STEM (COPUS) (Smith MK, Jones FHM, Gilbert SL, and Wieman CE. 2013. The Classroom Observation Protocol for Undergraduate STEM (COPUS): a New Instrument to Characterize University STEM Classroom Practices. CBE-Life Sciences Education, Vol 12(4), pp. 618-627)	Every two minutes student and instructor behaviors should be checked off under the following categories: • Student behavior: listening and taking notes, problem-solving, discussing in group, working in groups, answering questions, asking questions, engaged in class discussion, making a prediction or experiment, presentation by student, quiz/test or waiting • Instructor behavior: lecturing, writing, follow up, posting questions, listening, or answering questions, guiding the class, one on one extended discussion with one student, showing a demo experiment or simulation, administration or waiting	Class observation and subsequent consultation are shared only with the instructor for formative purposes.

6. Emory University Rollins School of Public Health

Process used	Tool used	Domains assessed as part of the observation	Final purpose
In-class observation	Office of Evidence Based Learning, Department of Behavioral Sciences and Health Education, Rollins School of Public Health	3 areas evaluated in a Likert scale (yes, somewhat, no , N/A) • Lesson organization • Lesson implementation – including focus on application, 7 areas • Delivery and Style – 6 areas • Strengths • Weaknesses and areas of improvement	The use of the form is not mandatory. It is used only upon request by teaching faculty who want to demonstrate professional development in the area of teaching as part of the APT packet.

7. Penn State Department of Public Health Sciences (online)

Process used	Tool used	Domains assessed as part of the observation	Final purpose
Online assessment for online courses	Adapted from Penn State	Availability/evidence of good practices on: contact between students and faculty, reciprocity among students, active learning, prompt feedback, time to task, high expectations, diverse ways of learning	N/S

8. Penn State Department of Public Health Sciences

Process used	Tool used	Domains assessed as part of the observation	Final purpose
Peer Review Activity Guide on process and tools including a first phase for selection and scheduling of peer observations 1. Pre-observation: lesson plan, teaching style, focus of observation instructor response to student evaluations 2. Review of student evals and syllabus 3. Class observation 4. Post observation a. student focus groups b. post-observation assessment – instructor reflection (on lesson and teaching style) 5. Evaluation: discussion and improvement plan	Penn State	Likert scale • Variety and pacing of instruction • Organization • Presentation skills • Clarity • Content knowledge • Rapport • General • Comments on teaching methods and instructional strategies • Summary checklist	Appears to affect promotion and tenure

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9. University of Arizona Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health

Process used	Tool used	Domains assessed as part of the observation	Final purpose
Observation of teaching Observation tool Documentation assisted by the observation template	Adapted from Baskamp and University of Minnesota	Organized in 8 areas, but only 20 items within these areas are selected for observation Likert scale on 4 points (very evident, evident mostly, evident during a portion of the class, not evident at all) • Lesson organization (other items included as opportunities to apply, frequent checks on student performance) • Content and knowledge • Relevance • Presentation • Instructor-student interaction • Collaborative learning techniques – focus on group task promoting learning objectives and engagement of non-engaged students • Lesson implementation – use of questions, probing, adequate pacing, promotion of critical thinking • Instructional material – what and how • Student responses – student behavior • What students learned • Strengths and weaknesses	N/S

10. University of Minnesota School of Public Health

Process used	Tool used	Domains assessed as part of the observation	Final purpose
1. Observation of teaching 2. Peer review of class assignments and assessments: 4 p Likert scales 3. Peer review of examples of student performance: 4 p Likert scale (appears to be overall and includes grade distribution) 4. Peer review of syllabus	Peer Observation of Teaching protocol	Observation of Teaching – open-ended Context or Background – setting Observation areas: 1. Instructor goals 2. Significance of class activities 3. Student engagement 4. Examination of student achievement goals Best practices: Assessments	N/S

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11. Albany State University of New York School of Public Health

Process used	Tool used	Domains assessed as part of the observation	Final purpose
Peer observation checklist	Peer observation template	Observation – all based on instructor behavior Check off if observed or not and provide comments on the following areas: • Clear communication • Examples and communication • Activities for student engagement • Challenges for students to think critically • Activities to assess understanding • Student to student interaction • Links to previously learned concepts • Use of visual and handouts • Requirement of students to be active	The form is only a guide suggested by the university's teaching center. Departments use it at their discretion. Peer observation of teaching is expected by departments and it is part of the promotion process.

12. Thomas Jefferson University College of Population Health

Process used	Tool used	Domains assessed as part of the observation	Final purpose
Observation	Kent State College of Public Health – evaluation form	5 point Likert scale (from excellent to poor) • Assesses number of students present • Overall experience • Assessment of material on overall level of difficulty and workload • Assessment review • Physical conditions of room • Student respect • Questions with ratings on strongly agree to strongly disagree, based on the type of class (lecture, Problem-Based Learning, or Socratic/discussion-based) • Knowledge of the class • Narrative section for the observer	N/S

13. University of Maryland School of Public Health

Process used	Tool used	Domains assessed as part of the observation	Final purpose
Process: 1. Pre-class meeting – course goals, strategies, and questions to get feedback on 2. Classroom – at least one, but more if it has multiple components observation 3. Post-observation meeting – discussion to enhance teaching effectiveness student engagement, course efficiency, list of questions to guide the discussion (around strengths and weaknesses) 4. Synthesis and documentation both the instructor and the observer can prepare a summary to reflect on the three meetings	Peer Teaching Observation Guide	Class observation ranked in Likert scale (yes, mostly, somewhat, no) • Logistics • Start and end on time • Well prepared • Class was used effectively • The student experience • Students were actively engaged in class • Questions were addressed • Positive environment • Tools were used effectively	The Peer Teaching Observation Guide is only a guide for evaluation of teaching. Peer observation of teaching is a requirement for promotion/APT.

14. University of Miami Department of Public Health Sciences

Process used	Tool used	Domains assessed as part of the observation	Final purpose
Observation, post-observation meeting, written summary	Teaching Observation Form	6 point Likert scale (improvement necessary, effective, highly effective) • Lecture-based • Introduction – clear objectives stated, assessment of needs, gained attention and motivation • Body of lecture – clear organization, instructional material, and methods, use of transitions • Conclusion • Teacher dynamics – effective communication, engagement, encouraged further learning, well-prepared • Strengths and recommendations	For teaching development only

15. Stony Brook University Program in Public Health (no form provided)

Process used	Tool used	Domains assessed as part of the observation	Final purpose
1. Student self-assessment of competency attainment (pre-course vs. post-course assessment) 2. Student end-of-semester course evaluation data 3. Student focus group data at the end of each course 4. Program director observation of teaching 5. Curriculum committee review of data collected (1-4 above)	N/S	Course content (meeting competencies) • Instructor presentation style and effectiveness • Student perceptions of adequacy of course content/materials in regards to competencies • Instructor-student interactions • Student behaviors	1. Data/feedback are shared with instructors to enhance/improve teaching 2. Program Director uses data to formulate comments about teaching for faculty promotion support letter

*N/S : not specified