

Peer Review of Teaching

Yale Center for Teaching and Learning

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Peer review of teaching offers a powerful opportunity for colleagues to observe one another's teaching strategies. Chism (2007) identifies several virtues that can elevate peer review, including patience and generosity of spirit. Through patient discussion and reflection, observers and observed can discuss best practices and areas for improvement (Thomas, et. al, 2014).

Peer review of teaching can happen at any point in term. When pursued during term, peer review gives instructors an opportunity to revise strategies in real time with students. When pursued at the end of term, peer review gives instructors an opportunity to review the arc of their teaching over the course of the semester.

Recommendations

- **Discuss Beforehand** - Peers can discuss particular instructional behaviors for the observer to focus on, which in turn leads to focused conversation about particular teaching skills or incidents. Peer review provides strategic feedback, not total evaluation.
- **Agree on Protocol** - Peers can discuss and determine an agreed-upon protocol or set of standards for observing in class, one which the observer feels comfortable using and under which the instructor feels comfortable teaching. Various observation protocols can be found at <https://ctl.yale.edu/Observation-Protocols-Teaching-Inventories>.
- **Provide Course Materials** - So that the observer has a full picture of class objectives, the instructor can provide the syllabus, a lesson outline, any readings, and notes about previous classroom conversations. The instructor can ask for feedback on these materials in addition to classroom instruction.
- **Schedule a Debriefing** - In addition to scheduling a specific observation day, peers can schedule a time in the office, over coffee, or over lunch to discuss the observation. Ideally, this is scheduled as soon after the observation as possible.
- **Consider Discipline/Department** - During or after the debrief, and only with permission, peers might consider sharing appropriate elements of their discussion with colleagues to paint a larger picture of departmental teaching approaches.

References

Chism, N. (2007). *Peer Review of Teaching: A Sourcebook* (2nd edition). Bolton, MA; Anker Publishing.

Thomas, S., Chie, QT., Abraham, M, Raj, S., & Beh, LS. (2014). A qualitative review of literature on peer review of teaching in higher education: An application of the SWOT framework. *Review of Educational Research* 84: 112-159.