Rutgers Academy for the
Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (RASTL)
Peer Review of Teaching

The Process for Peer Review of Teaching

An observer initiates peer review of teaching by holding a *preliminary meeting* with the instructor to ensure both parties have a mutual understanding of the process. The instructor provides input including selecting a session to be observed, providing a synopsis of the course and session, providing a summary of teaching methods, identifying subjects on which he or she would like to receive feedback, and providing teaching documents such as the syllabus, instructional plans, reading assignments, homework, tests, projects, and handouts. Prior to the classroom observation, the instructor may let students know that the observer will be visiting the class and explain to students the purpose of the visit.

During the *classroom observation*, the observer unobtrusively observes the class and takes notes on performance and suggestions for improvement. For this purpose, the observer may use a rubric that lists teaching practices to consider during the observation. While the rubric is not used in any formal capacity, it provides a template for note taking. If possible, the observer should also review and consider the quality of teaching material provided by the instructor.

The next step is a *post-observation meeting*, in which the observer and instructor meet to discuss the observation. The instructor should have an opportunity to explain whether this class was representative of his or her normal teaching experience, or whether a subsequent observation ought to be scheduled. The observer may ask the instructor to self-evaluate before providing formative feedback. The observer may wish to limit critical feedback to a couple of primary areas where immediate development is possible.

The instructor or department may request that the observer *write a letter* summarizing the observation. The letter can be used purely for formative improvement of teaching or it may be included as a summative document for the instructor's teaching portfolio or teaching record. If the observation is summative, it should be worded carefully using the language within the instructor's teaching contract. If the observation is formative, the letter may be less formal and should be forwarded to the instructor, preferably with time remaining in the course to enact instructional changes. In either case, the letter should provide positive comments along with avenues for improvement.

The RASTL Peer Review of Teaching Rubric

The observer may use this "checklist" rubric during a peer review observation as a guide for note-taking. The rubric categories are roughly based on Chickering and Gamson's (1987) framework for excellent teaching. Each category contains a list of observable behaviors and items that can be determined by asking the instructor or the students, or by examining the syllabus. Not all items on the rubric are required of excellent teachers: the observer should use judgment when translating this rubric into formative feedback for the instructor.

Meets Standards	Needs Improvement	N/A	**Mechanics and Logistics of Teaching**
☐	☐	☐	Speaks clearly and loudly enough for students to hear
☐	☐	☐	Makes eye contact with students when speaking
☐	☐	☐	Writes legibly on the whiteboard or chalkboard
☐	☐	☐	Uses classroom technology appropriately and efficiently
☐	☐	☐	Effectively dealt with classroom limits or issues
☐	☐	☐	Manages classroom space appropriately
Meets Standards	**Needs Improvement**	**N/A**	**Encourages Communication**
☐	☐	☐	Pauses for questions
☐	☐	☐	Checks on student comprehension throughout class
☐	☐	☐	Encourages dialogue for clarification
☐	☐	☐	Responds openly to student questions
☐	☐	☐	Conveys availability and approachability
☐	☐	☐	Provides feedback that encourages discussion
☐	☐	☐	Uses student names
Meets Standards	**Needs Improvement**	**N/A**	**Develops Cooperation among Students**
☐	☐	☐	Encourages students to engage with each other
☐	☐	☐	Includes activities that require communication and collaboration
☐	☐	☐	Assigns students' roles to foster cooperation and collaboration
☐	☐	☐	Uses technology tools for student collaboration and reciprocity
☐	☐	☐	Encourages students to articulate connections between what they say and what others have said
Meets Standards	**Needs Improvement**	**N/A**	**Uses Active Learning Techniques**
☐	☐	☐	Encourages students to participate during lectures
☐	☐	☐	Gives students opportunities to contribute and collaborate
☐	☐	☐	Generates energetic participation among students
☐	☐	☐	Class activities encourage analytic/synthetic/creative thinking
☐	☐	☐	Provides scaffolding or discrete steps for activities
☐	☐	☐	Uses and balances a variety of teaching techniques to facilitate multiple ways of learning (such as auditory, discussion, visual, experiential, active, reflective, group work, etc.)
Meets Standards	**Needs Improvement**	**N/A**	**Gives Prompt and Effective Feedback**
☐	☐	☐	Effectively answers questions and comments during class
☐	☐	☐	Provides constructive feedback when responding to questions
☐	☐	☐	Effectively diagnoses incorrect solutions/responses during discussion
☐	☐	☐	Gives effective in-class feedback to guide group work
☐	☐	☐	Uses empowering and empathetic language
☐	☐	☐	Shows how to work through challenge or failure

Meets Standards	Needs Improvement	N/A	**Emphasizes Time on Task**
☐	☐	☐	Begins and ends class on time
☐	☐	☐	Efficiently manages timing and pacing of the class
☐	☐	☐	Stays on topic; ensures class discussions stay on topic
☐	☐	☐	Monitors small group activity and guides groups to stay on task
☐	☐	☐	Sets realistic goals for what can be accomplished during class
☐	☐	☐	Responds to student needs while maintaining class pacing
☐	☐	☐	Uses appropriate time periods for student activities
☐	☐	☐	Efficiently divides class into groups

Meets Standards	Needs Improvement	N/A	**Syllabus and Out of Class Instruction**
☐	☐	☐	Responds to email in a timely manner
☐	☐	☐	Syllabus policies confirm commitment to prompt feedback
☐	☐	☐	Explains why answers are incorrect in written feedback
☐	☐	☐	Sets realistic goals for covering the semester's content
☐	☐	☐	Readings and homework are appropriate for time out of class
☐	☐	☐	Syllabus policies accommodate students with disabilities
☐	☐	☐	Turnaround time for grading allows students to receive feedback prior to handing in next assignment

Notes (please include comments about content delivery if applicable):

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