Peer Review of Teaching at IPFW

A Handbook

INDIANA UNIVERSITY-PURDUE UNIVERSITY FORT WAYNE

PEER REVIEW OF TEACHING AT IPFW

A Handbook

Preface

This Handbook has grown out of the work of the CELT Peer Review Committee during the past four years. Committee members drew on a number of publications and other resources on peer review of teaching in order to provide workshops and individual consolations for faculty colleagues. During the 2003-04 academic year, a reciprocal peer review program was implemented under the direction of Yvonne Zubovic, who was assigned one-quarter time to CELT for this work.

The materials in this Handbook were developed or adapted for CELT workshops, consultations, and reciprocal peer review. They have been revised several times based on feedback from faculty. We hope that the Handbook will be helpful to faculty, chairs, and directors who are interested in learning how they could use peer review to enhance teaching effectiveness in their programs.

We consider the Handbook to be a living document that will be reviewed and revised periodically. We encourage readers to let us know about additional resources that would be helpful to faculty and that could be incorporated into future editions of this Handbook.

The CELT Peer Review Committee
Yvonne Zubovic, Chair
Mary Ann Cain
Marcia D. Dixon
Jeanette Clausen, Handbook Editor

May 2004
(updated October 2009)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

What is Peer Review of Teaching? …………………………………………………………. 1

The Formative/Summative Distinction ……………………………………………………. 2

Formative Peer Review …………………………………………………………………. 2

Summative Peer Review ……………………………………………………………….. 3

Formative/Summative Interaction ………………………………………………… 4

Principles to Guide the Peer Review Process ……………………………………………. 5

Peer Review Services Available Through CELT …………………………………………. 6

Best Practices for Peer Review and Feedback …………………………………………. 8

Framework for Classroom Visits …………………………………………………... 8

Summary List of Best Practices for Providing Constructive Feedback ………….. 10

Best Practices for Peer Review: Differentiating Between
Observation, Interpretation, and Evaluation ……………………………………….. 11

Works Cited ……………………………………………………………………………….. 12

Appendices ……………………………………………………………………………….. 13

A: Overview of Reciprocal Peer Review ……………………………………………. 13

B: Sample Questions for the First Meeting ………………………………………. 13

C: Syllabus Checklist ……………………………………………………………… 14

D: Sample Mid-semester Evaluation ……………………………………………….. 15

E: Sample Questions for End-of-Semester Student Evaluation …………………. 16

F: Overview of Small-Group Instructional Diagnosis (SGID) ……………………… 18

What is Peer Review of Teaching?

Peer review means different things in different contexts. In the context of research/creative endeavor, peer review is usually a blind review process of evaluating work for publication, performance, or exhibition, as well as for promotion and/or tenure, grant proposals, and similar “high-stakes” situations. In other words, it is primarily a **summative** review, to evaluate whether the work meets predetermined criteria and standards.

Peer review of teaching can be, and often is, primarily summative as well. For example, in faculty annual reviews, nominations for teaching awards, and so on, the focus is on a faculty member’s progress toward or fulfillment of specific requirements. In contrast, the peer review workshops, consultations, and other services offered by CELT are **formative**. In formative review, the goal is to provide collegial assistance for the enhancement of teaching and learning. Formative peer review of teaching is a process for gathering feedback on one’s teaching, reflecting on the alignment of teaching strategies with the objectives, assignments, and assessments used, monitoring student learning, and improving the fit between teaching approaches and student learning if necessary.

To further clarify how formative peer review of teaching is defined by CELT, it may be helpful to state what it is NOT:

1. Peer review is not a procedure for certifying the quality of someone’s teaching. Faculty seeking such a review should turn to experts in their disciplinary associations.

2. Peer review is not a process in which a novice learns how to teach from an expert. A peer review consultant may indeed be more experienced than the faculty member who has requested a peer review, but the process is collegial and the goal is “to hone, not to clone.”

3. Peer review is not a process for training faculty in the use of particular teaching techniques, theories, or approaches. Rather, the faculty member decides, perhaps in consultation with a colleague, which teaching approaches to use and works on increasing his/her effectiveness with those approaches.

We turn now to a more detailed definition of formative and summative review.

The Formative/Summative Distinction

Formative Peer Review

As mentioned above, the peer review services available through CELT are for the enhancement of teaching and learning. The process is faculty-driven and it is the faculty member who requests a peer review. A decision to work on one's teaching may be motivated by personal goals, or by feedback from students or colleagues, or by a desire to address problems in a course. Whatever the motivation, a peer relationship for formative review should have the following characteristics:

1. The primary goal is enhancement of teaching and learning. The faculty member who requests a peer review may have several goals in mind, including tenure and/or promotion in the future. However, if the commitment to learning about, and potentially modifying, one's teaching is not strong, the peer review process will be less productive.

2. Faculty ownership. It is essential that the faculty member's own goals for her/his teaching guide the process, even—indeed, especially—when the motivation to seek peer review is on the advice of the chair.

3. Confidentiality. The discussions of teaching are between the faculty member and the peer consultant, and are not shared with others (chair, dean, etc.) unless the parties agree to change that. Keeping the discussions confidential allows the peers to develop a relationship based on trust. Only in a trusting relationship can most faculty be open to reflecting on feedback and, upon reflection, perhaps to changing something they are doing in the classroom.

4. Relationship of equals. The colleagues working together for teaching enhancement approach each other as equals, rather than a reviewer serving as the expert and the colleague being reviewed as an object of scrutiny. The process is consultative, not evaluative.

5. Collegial feedback. The colleague doing an observation of a class, a review of a course syllabus, or other peer review provides feedback that is constructive and collegial rather than evaluative. These distinctions are discussed more fully on pages 8-11.

6. Open-ended process. Gaining insight into one's teaching effectiveness often takes time. Therefore, a peer review consultation cannot be an isolated event, but must be ongoing. It should also be open-ended, depending on the progress the faculty member makes toward achieving her/his goals.

7. Multiple sources of information. The feedback is based on several sources, which may include but are not limited to teaching materials, classroom visits, written evaluations from students, conversations with students, videotapes of teaching, and the faculty member's self-evaluations and teaching reflections.

Summative Peer Review

Summative review is not the role of CELT. Summative reviews are done in order to evaluate a faculty member's work for annual reviews, tenure and promotion, teaching award nominations, etc. Such reviews take place whether the faculty member requests them or not. Summative review contrasts with formative in several respects:

1. The primary goal is to assess performance. A summative review of faculty work often includes goals for future growth and development, but the primary purpose of the review is still to assess the faculty member's performance relative to criteria.

2. Criteria are set by others. In a summative review, the faculty member's goals are certainly relevant, but external criteria (departmental, school, institutional, etc.) are decisive. A summative review may involve discipline-based criteria (e.g., from accrediting agencies and standards boards) as well as criteria defined by the particular department, school, or institution. It is obvious but worth repeating that all parties involved must know what the criteria are.

3. Limited confidentiality. A summative review is semi-public in that others besides the person being reviewed will read the review—in the case of faculty, the dean, vice chancellor and chancellor will read annual reviews, for example, and eventually those reviews will be included in the faculty member's promotion and tenure case.

4. Relationship of unequals. For summative review, the relationship between the reviewer and the person being reviewed is not a true peer relationship, even if, for example, a faculty member and department chair are close colleagues. The author of a summative review is required to make judgments of the other's work and most often is expected to evaluate the work not only on its own merits but also in comparison to the work of others. Thus, the reviewer becomes a judge and, at least to a limited extent, an expert.

5. Evaluative feedback. The feedback from the author of a summative review may be couched in collegial and supportive language, but is nonetheless an evaluation.

6. Deadline-driven. The faculty member cannot set her/his own deadlines for review, but must meet deadlines set by the department, granting agency, etc.

7. Multiple sources of information? Ideally, a summative review of teaching, like a formative review, is based on multiple sources of information collected over time by means of multiple observations or other interactions between reviewer(s) and faculty member. In practice, this is unfortunately often not the case. Too often, a summative review of teaching is based only (or primarily) on end-of-semester student evaluations or on a one-time observation visit by a colleague.

Formative/Summative Interaction

Our definitions of formative and summative review make use of several contrasting characteristics in order to cast the differences in sharp relief.

Formative	Summative
Primary goal: teaching/learning enhancement	Primary goal: to assess performance
Faculty-defined goals	Criteria set by others
Process is confidential	Process is semi-public
Relationship of equals	Relationship of expert/judge to candidate
Collegial feedback	Evaluative feedback
Open-ended process	Deadline-driven process
Multiple sources of information	(Often) limited sources of information
Announced visits*	Announced or Unannounced visits

***Announced or Unannounced Observation Visits?**
An area of contention for summative review is whether classroom observation should be announced or unannounced. Proponents of unannounced visits believe they are a window to the way the faculty member normally teaches, with no special preparation or bells and whistles developed specifically to impress the observer. We believe, however, that planned visits provide much more useful information. An observer making an unannounced visit does not know the faculty member's planned objectives for that class period, what has happened up to this point in the semester, whether the class has been going well or poorly, whether the faculty member is implementing a new approach, and so on. Thus, the observation is likely to focus on surface aspects of teaching that yield little real insight into the faculty member's teaching effectiveness. For these reasons, we believe that planned observations are preferable for summative as well as for formative reviews. See D. DeZure, "Evaluating Teaching through Peer Classroom Observation." *Changing Practices in Evaluating Teaching*, ed, Peter Seldin (Anker, 1999).

In practice, distinctions between formative and summative review may be less sharply drawn. It can be useful to think in terms of a **continuum**, in which elements of both inform the process. In particular, summative review of teaching will be enhanced if some of the formative characteristics are incorporated, using the following principles. See D. DeZure, "Evaluating Teaching through Peer Classroom Observation." *Changing Practices in Evaluating Teaching*, ed. Peter Seldin (Anker, 1999).

Principles to Guide the Peer Review Process

Multiple sources of information should be used. Possible sources include:

- The instructor, who is the best source of information on the course design, goals, objectives, etc. The instructor should also provide reflective comments on the course: What worked well (or didn't), how does this class compare with other courses taught by this faculty member or with the same course taught previously, etc.
- Materials from the course: syllabus, assignments, texts, handouts, exams or other assessments, etc.
- Colleagues who can provide feedback on aspects of the course or teaching materials they have reviewed. Colleagues can also confirm or clarify expectations within the department, standards in the discipline, and much more.
- Administrators (chair, dean, vcaa), who are familiar with the work of many faculty at various levels and can comment from a wider perspective.
- Students, who are the best source of information on what helps them most to learn. Feedback from students collected several weeks into a semester, when there is still time to make adjustments if they are warranted, is especially useful for formative review.
- Alumni, who may have a different perspective on a faculty member's teaching some years later, as compared to their feelings immediately after completing the course.

Multiple methods should be used to gather the data. Possible methods include:

- Classroom observation visits
- Review of videotaped classes
- Review of course web pages
- Review of course materials (syllabi, handouts, assessment materials, etc.)
- Review of samples of student work
- Consultation with student focus groups
- Consultation, usually at mid-semester, with all the students in a class (SGID = Small Group Instructional Diagnosis)
- Survey of students and alumni

Several of the above methods are discussed in greater detail below.

Data should be gathered at multiple points in time.

Making changes to one's teaching is often part of a larger goal to improve student learning, a process that occurs over time. The faculty member needs feedback at several points in time to monitor progress. Ideally, a feedback loop is constructed whereby a faculty member implements a change, receives feedback on the change, and then makes appropriate adjustments in response to the feedback.

Peer Review Services Available Through CELT

Subject to availability of consultants and trainers, CELT will provide the following services on behalf of formative peer review:

1. Individual Consultation to Get You Started. Faculty who wish to work on a particular aspect of their teaching or who would like assistance in identifying areas to focus on may schedule an individual consultation with a CELT representative. Consultations may include:

- **Syllabus review.** See Syllabus Checklist, Appendix C, and examples in Chism, *Peer Review of Teaching: A Sourcebook* (Anker 1999).
- **Mid-semester evaluation.** See sample, Appendix D. The purpose is to discover what the students find particularly helpful and whether they have concerns or frustrations of which the instructor is unaware.
- **Small-Group Instructional Diagnosis (SGID).** A group interviewing technique for collecting student perceptions of a course, the SGID is structured around specific questions that ask students to reflect on their role in the teaching/learning process as well as the instructor's. See Appendix F, summarized from N. Diamond, "Small Group Instructional Diagnosis: Tapping Student Perceptions of Teaching." *A Guide to Faculty Development*, ed. Kay Gillespie (Anker, 2002).
- **Student focus groups.** There is a clearly defined agenda, not necessarily focused on a perceived problem with the course, but on areas the faculty member wants to understand better in order to increase her/his teaching effectiveness.
- **Review of student evaluation data.** The consultant helps the faculty member find perspective by encouraging her/him to focus on trends or student comments that may point to strengths and weaknesses; then helps the faculty member determine how (or in some cases, whether) to address any perceived problems.
- **Consultation on classroom assessment.** In many cases, the use of Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs) can help a faculty member to discover how well the students have understood the material and, if necessary, make adjustments that improve learning and classroom climate as well. See Angelo and Cross, *Classroom Assessment Techniques* (Jossey-Bass, 1993).

Individual consultations usually require at least two meetings, one to identify the faculty member's needs and wishes, and one or more for discussion and decision-making. In some cases, individual consultations may lead to interaction with a peer consultant or to a reciprocal peer review relationship (defined below).

2. Peer Review Orientation Workshop. Offered at least once each semester, this half-day workshop provides an overview of principles and best practices of formative peer review. The workshop objectives are:

- To clarify the purposes of formative versus summative review.
- To explore the qualities of a good peer reviewer.
- To model, in an interactive format, the peer review process as it relates to classroom observation.

Department chairs and faculty who want to integrate principles of formative review into their **summative** review process are encouraged to attend an orientation workshop or to request one tailored to their department. An enrollment of at least 6 is required.

3. Peer Consultants. A faculty member who has decided to work on her/his teaching may request to work with a peer consultant. Consultants have participated in training workshops and have experience in providing feedback in a collegial and constructive manner. They agree to assist in one or more of the following ways: observe classes over a period of time (usually, at least two semesters) and provide feedback; review and comment on teaching materials for face-to-face or online teaching; help the faculty member assess the effectiveness of teaching strategies or pedagogical innovations. Discussions between the faculty member and the consultant are confidential. Confidentiality is essential for building trust.

4. Reciprocal Peer Review/Teaching Partners. The reciprocal peer review process is best understood as a teaching partnership in which each partner reviews and is reviewed by the other. The purpose is for peers to share their objectives and goals for growth, to observe each other in the classroom and/or review relevant course materials, to meet to share feedback, and to discuss and reflect on new ideas for teaching. If the review process involves classroom observations, each partner agrees to observe the other, usually twice or more a semester, over at least two semesters. The partners having a meeting prior to each visit to discuss expectations for the classroom visit. After each classroom observation, the partners meet to provide constructive feedback on what they observed, with assistance from a CELT facilitator. If the process involves review of materials for face-to-face or online teaching, web pages, or other activities for which classroom observation is not required, the time commitment is much more individualized. The reciprocal peer review process is confidential between the participants and the CELT facilitator. See Appendix A, page 13, for detailed information.

5. Training to Become a Peer Consultant. The purpose is to develop a cadre of peer review consultants for the campus. A faculty member interested in serving as a CELT Peer Consultant must complete the Peer Review Orientation Workshop, participate in one or more reciprocal peer review experiences supervised by a trained CELT consultant, document his/her effectiveness as a peer reviewer, and submit evidence of effectiveness as a peer reviewer for evaluation and feedback. Currently, the CELT Peer Review Committee is in the process of developing criteria for this evaluation.

6. Assistance for Improving the Summative Review Process. It is the philosophy of CELT that summative review is more credible when aspects of formative review are integrated—for example, basing the review on multiple observations, providing constructive feedback to the faculty member, and so on. Appointments can be requested with a CELT representative to advise departments that want to strengthen the summative review process they currently have in place.

Effective Practices for Classroom Visits

The best practices described here are essential for **formative** peer review. The three-part structure provides a framework for exchanging meaningful information about the classes to be observed, focusing the observation on specific teaching practices, and engaging in substantive conversations that are conducive to learning. As explained above, it is strongly recommended that these same best practices be employed for **summative** review. A summative review becomes more credible and authoritative when it is based on multiple observations that focus on areas of concern identified by the faculty member. See L. Wilkerson and G. L. Karron, "Classroom Observation: The Observer as Collaborator." *A Guide to Faculty Development*, ed. Kay Gillespie (Anker, 2002).

Framework for Classroom Visits

Step 1. The Pre-Observation Meeting
The faculty member and the colleague who will observe her/him should meet a few days prior to the planned observation visit to accomplish the following:

- Discuss the reason for the peer review: Is it motivated primarily by the faculty member's desire to grow as a teacher, or has some event or interaction prompted the decision to request classroom observation?
- Provide the syllabus, class demographics, and other information to help the peer reviewer understand the type of class this is and any challenges associated with it.
- Answer any questions the peer reviewer has about the class. Identify the context for the observation, for example: What are the objectives for the specific class meeting in question? How does this session link to the preceding one? What teaching strategies are planned? Is this a required course? Where in the major does the course fit?
- Agree on the purpose: On what aspects of her/his teaching does the faculty member want feedback? Is there any particular problem or difficulty? Is she/he looking for input about particular teaching strategies? Does she/he want an observer's sense of the classroom climate, or of the students' response to the material?
- Agree on how the observer will be portrayed to the students. A straightforward announcement that the visitor is there at the faculty member's invitation is often sufficient, but the decision really depends on what the individual faculty member is comfortable with.
- Faculty should allow 30-45 minutes for the first pre-observation meeting and should meet in person if possible. For subsequent observations, the preparation will take less time.

The pre-observation meeting provides an opportunity to develop a working relationship with your peer. Many of these activities should help foster trust and a willingness to help each other improve the teaching and learning the occurs in the classroom.

Step 2. The Classroom Observation

These guidelines are to help the observer collect the kind of information that will facilitate a productive conversation later.

- Distinguish between **observation**, **interpretation**, and **evaluation** (defined in more detail on page 11).
- Take descriptive notes of what happens in the classroom. The descriptions should be free of overtly evaluative language and focus instead on concrete actions and behaviors. For instance, one might write, “Students spoke to each other as well as to the instructor about the topic at hand” rather than “Students responded well to the discussion.” The descriptions should also exclude strictly interpretive comments. For instance, one might write, “Instructor gestures with both hands while standing in front of the class” as opposed to “Instructor gestures nervously to gain student attention.” Keeping evaluative and interpretive language out of your note-taking will help you to give descriptive feedback that can be interpreted by the faculty member himself/herself. See pages 10 for further examples.
- Remember to focus on the aspects of the class that the faculty member asked for feedback on. These should form the basis for your conversation later.
- Observe students as well as the faculty member.
- Describe aspects of the class that focus on both students and instructor, maintaining a primarily observational stance and tone. However, it is also appropriate for the observer to comment on what she or he has learned from the observation, as it applies to the particular conversation.

Step 3. The Post-Observation Meeting

The post-observation meeting should take place as soon as possible, while impressions are still fresh. Receiving timely feedback helps the faculty member to reflect on the experience and decide whether/when to implement changes. However, the observer should allow time between the observation and the meeting to review his/her notes in preparation for the meeting. Guidelines for the meeting:

- Invite the faculty member’s comments before offering your own. Sample questions are: “Was this session typical or atypical for this class?” “Did the session go more or less as you had expected, or were there some surprises?” It is important to practice active listening during this part of the conversation, which is an opportunity to collect additional information that may shed light on what was observed. Often, the faculty member’s perceptions of the class help the observer to frame her/his comments more usefully.
- It may be helpful to offer a comment to initiate conversation, such as “It was a very lively class” [or, conversely, “This seems to be a rather quiet group”]. Descriptive comments of this type provide an easy transition to the faculty member’s perceptions of the class.
- In providing feedback, the observer should first describe what he/she observed, focusing on the faculty member’s goals for the observation and using the notes taken during the class. For example, “I noticed that you invited questions from students in the last 10 minutes of the class.” A descriptive statement allows the faculty member to tell the observer whether the behavior or event described was a conscious choice or something that he/she was unaware of.

- The colleagues should take time to engage in a constructive discussion of the feedback.
- The observer should be selective in providing feedback. Especially during the first visits, when the faculty member is most vulnerable, it is best to focus on a very few points, rather than a long list of comments and suggestions that may be overwhelming.
- The observer should encourage the faculty member to relate the events discussed to the learning goals that were discussed in the pre-observation meeting.
- If requested, the observer should offer suggestions and alternatives to strategies that were observed. In so doing, the observer should provide a balance of praise and constructive criticism.

Summary List of Best Practices for Providing Constructive Feedback

- Focused on faculty member's goals, not reviewer's opinions or standards.
- Descriptive rather than evaluative.
- Specific rather than general.
- Focused on behavior rather than on the person.
- Takes into account the needs of both parties.
- Directed toward behavior that the instructor can do something about.
- Solicited rather than imposed.
- Well-timed.
- Involves the sharing of information.
- Involves the amount of information the instructor can use rather than the amount the reviewer would like to give.
- Concerns what is said and done, or how, not why.
- Checked to ensure clear communication.
- Followed by attention to the consequences of the feedback.

Source: Expanded by William H. Berquist from a list originally brainstormed by George Lehner and Al Wright in 1963. Printed in William H. Berquist and Steven R. Phillips' A Handbook for Faculty Development, Vol I (Dansville, NY: The Council for the Advancement of Small Colleges, 1975), pp 224-225.

Effective Practices for Peer Review: differentiating between observation, interpretation, and evaluation

As classroom teachers and observers, each of us observes particular phenomena and the particular patterns they take in the classroom, and assigns meaning to them. We also say how we value what we've experienced, specifically whether it fits or doesn't fit our assumptions about what is "good" teaching.

Separating out how we respond to classroom phenomena into three main strategies is a way of making them more apparent to us and thus more available for conscious application. Any information that a classroom observer gives is potentially useful, even very general impressions or associations. However, when only these aspects are reported, it is difficult for the instructor who receives such comments to learn from them, since those responses focus on the observer's own meanings and values more than on what has actually happened in the classroom.

Here are the three main strategies* we will be employing in our responses. You can start with any of the strategies then work your way towards the other two. Hint: Sometimes just giving an observation is enough information to spark a discussion.

Observation: Describe concrete, observable phenomena and patterns of such phenomena in the classroom. For instance, you notice that the instructor paces in front of the class every time she asks a question. You've observed a phenomenon—pacing in front of the class—and also a pattern—she does it when she asks a question. Another example: students answer instructor questions with little or no pause when the question asks for a personal example. In many cases, just offering an observation will cause the instructor to interpret and evaluate that observation her- or himself. The focus is on the behavior/observations.

Interpretation: Say what the observations mean—or might mean. Depending upon other phenomena you've observed, the instructor's pacing might mean she is nervous (her voice strains, her eye contact is lost) or that she is trying to gain student attention at an important moment. Offer as many interpretations as you can. You'll readily discover that your first one might not be the best. Or at least you'll have a better sense of why you interpreted the observation as you did.

Evaluation: Say how you value what you have observed and interpreted. The difference between an evaluation and an opinion is what the observer's judgment is based upon. Opinions are simply statements of an individual's preferences and tastes, while evaluations draw upon observations and interpretations to illustrate what a judgment is based upon. Evaluations have more power when they are supported by observations and interpretations. Stating the observations and asking the instructor for her/his interpretation provides and opportunity to dialogue about what is going on in the classroom.

Things to be Aware of:

- Observations are especially helpful when the observer either does not know what she/he feels about what is taking place in the classroom or has mixed feelings or even very strong feelings. Simply stating observations can help the observer sort out these feelings.
- Clarity of your observations is important since instructors may need time to interpret and evaluate what you say.
- When evaluations do not include observations and interpretations, they may be less helpful; instructors are more likely to regard them as opinions and dismiss them as merely “subjective.” Evaluation, then is more than opinion. It provides room for dialogue and negotiation between observer and instructor.
- Initially when starting out with the peer review process, one may have interpretations of what is going on but may be missing the observations. In this case, you may want to ask yourself “What led to those interpretations?” This may help you to focus on the behavior.

* Adapted by Mary Ann Cain, Dept. of English, IPFW, from *Beat Not the Poor Desk*: *Writing: What to Teach, How to Teach It, and Why,* by Marie Ponsot and Rosemary Dean (1996). Portsmouth: Boynton/Cook Publishers.

WORKS CITED

Angelo, T., and Cross, P. (1993). *Classroom Assessment Techniques*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Berquist, W.H., and Philips, S. R. (1975). *A Handbook for Faculty Development*, Vol. I. Danville, NY: The Council for the Advancement of Small Colleges.

Brinko, K. T. and Menges, R.J., eds. (1997). *Practically Speaking: A Sourcebook for Instructional Consultants in Higher Education*. Stillwater, OK, New Forums Press.

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

DeZure, D. (1999). Evaluating Teaching through Peer Classroom Observation. In P. Seldin (Ed.), *Changing Practices in Evaluating Teaching*. Bolton: MA, Anker.

Diamond, N. (2002). Small Group Instructional Diagnosis: Tapping Student Perceptions of Teaching. In K. H. Gillespie (Ed.), *A Guide to Faculty Development*. Bolton, MA: Anker.

Ponsot, M., and Dean, R. (1996). *Beat Not the Poor Desk: Writing: What to Teach, How to Teach It, and Why*. Portsmouth: Boynton/Cook Publishers.

Wilkerson, L., and Karron, G. L. (2002). Classroom Observation: The Observer as Collaborator. In K. H. Gillespie (Ed.), *A Guide to Faculty Development*. Bolton, MA: Anker.

Appendix A

Overview of Reciprocal Peer Review

Each partner must attend a Peer Review Orientation Workshop (see page 6) prior to initiating the peer review process. The steps in the process are:

1. A faculty member interested in a teaching partner relationship meets with a CELT representative for 15-30 minutes to:
   - Identify the reasons for seeking a teaching partner.
   - Discuss the peer review process, including issues of confidentiality.
   - Identify materials (e.g., student evaluations, course syllabi, etc.) that can be used for an initial assessment of the teaching area(s) to be addressed.

2. The faculty member and the CELT representative meet to review the materials (i.e., student evaluations, course syllabi, class assignments, etc.) that the faculty member is willing to share to:
   - Tentatively identify a few areas on which the peer review will focus.
   - Identify ways to demonstrate and/or document progress in these areas.

3. If the results of steps 1 and 2 indicate that a teaching partner relationship will benefit the faculty member, the CELT representative matches him/her with a faculty member who has demonstrated effective teaching and is open to learning about teaching through peer review. The match is based on compatibility of fields and/or experience.

4. Each pair of teaching partners is assigned a CELT facilitator to oversee the process. The CELT facilitator schedules a first meeting to:
   - Establish ground rules, especially regarding the role of the facilitator.
   - Identify the expectations of the two participants and the facilitator.
   - Begin the process.

   Participants are asked to commit to at least two, and preferably three, classroom observations per semester over at least two semesters. After the first semester, participants will assess the partnership. If there is any problem that is interfering with learning, a reassignment can be made.

5. The partners observe each other in the classroom (this includes a pre-observation meeting to set the agenda and a post-observation meeting to discuss what they observed) and review relevant course materials. The CELT facilitator sits in on their meetings to:
   - Identify resources available through CELT.
   - Provide support to the partners.
   - Coach the partners through the process of learning how to provide feedback that is descriptive and interpretive rather than evaluative.

6. The process repeats until the teaching partners have achieved the goals they set at the beginning of the relationship.

Appendix B

Sample Questions Prior to Classroom Observation

It is not necessary to ask every question; in fact, you will want to pick and choose among them, depending on the needs and concerns of the faculty member being interviewed. We have found that an extended initial interview can be of value both to you and to the faculty member. When asked to examine and clarify their values, attitudes, and approaches to teaching, faculty often report that they find the task both enjoyable and beneficial.

Questions about the course:

1. What course do you want to talk about? How does it fit in the curriculum? Does it count toward general education? As an elective? A requirement for the major? Are there prerequisites?
2. What do you hope students will learn in the course? What topics are included? What should students be able to do with their knowledge of those topics?
3. What do you expect students to do as preparation for the class? Do students generally come to class prepared in the way you expect?
4. What about evaluation procedures? How do you measure their learning? What are tests, quizzes, papers, and other assignments like? What counts toward their final grades? How much?

Questions about students:

1. What can you tell me about the students who enroll in this course? What about their backgrounds, preparation, majors, motivations? Do students who take this course seem fairly similar in their learning styles or are they widely different?
2. If we could eavesdrop on students describing this course, what might we hear? How do you think they'd describe the course goals and your expectations? What would they say about class meetings and assignments? What would they say about evaluation procedures?
3. Is there anything about the course that students find especially challenging? Interesting?
4. What kind of relationship with students do you try to establish? How satisfied are you with your relationships with students?
5. Have you modified your teaching in any way because of the needs of students coming here?

Questions about the instructor:

1. How long have you been teaching? What's one of the best teaching experiences you can remember? What's one of the worst?
2. How long have you taught this course? How have you changed the course since the first time you taught it? Any recent changes?
3. What do you think are your teaching strengths?
4. What would you like to improve or change in your teaching?
5. What would you like us to focus on this semester?

Questions adapted from Erickson B. L. and Sorcinelli, M. D., "The First Meeting With the Client." *Practically Speaking: A Sourcebook for Instructional Consultants in Higher Education*, Chapter 4, pages 25-28.

Appendix C

Syllabus Checklist

Two primary goals of the syllabus:

1) To impart course information
2) To create an appropriate tone for the course.

1) To impart course information:

Does the syllabus have the following information?

____ 1. Basic course information: course number, title, bulletin description, credit hours, day/s time, room, textbook, additional materials required

____ 2. Instructor information: name, office number, office hours phone, email

____ 3. Course goals, objectives, and or expected learning outcomes (this should include general education or departmental objectives where applicable).

____ 4. Course requirements: assignments, exams, due dates

____ 5. Grading policy: weight assigned to specific assignments/areas

____ 6. Course policies: late work, absences, safety issues, accommodations for special needs, withdrawals, incompletes, civility statement, academic misconduct (including plagiarism, may want to cite Part II. A. of Students Rights and Responsibilities – Academic Misconduct)

____ 7. Work submission policies: typed, APA/MLA, via email or not, etc.

____ 8. Calendar/schedule of class activities

____ 9. Support services available: Writing Center, CASA, Math Center, Services for Students with Disabilities

When constructing these aspects of the syllabus, consider section A Student Rights and Responsibilities from the IPFW Student Handbook:

Students have the right to receive accurately and plainly stated information that enables them to understand clearly:

a. The general qualifications for establishing and maintaining acceptable academic standing within a particular major and at all other levels within IPFW,
b. The graduation requirements for specific curricula and majors, and
c. The course objectives, requirements and grading policies set by individual instructors for their courses.

2) To create an appropriate tone for the course, consider:

The syllabus is the first impression students have of your course – what tone/expectations do you want them to receive from it? Consider:

____ 1. Is the syllabus clear? Well organized? Easy to figure out the main points/areas?

____ 2. Does it set the appropriate tone: serious, welcoming, rigorous, etc.?

____ 3. Is it grammatically correct?

____ 4. Is it aesthetically pleasing (similar to a resume, too much white space – seems empty, too little – seems cluttered)?

____ 5. Does it convey the appropriate expectations about the course itself:
______ a. appropriate rigor?
______ b. appropriate pacing?
______ c. appropriate assessment given rigor, objectives, teaching methods?
______ d. where it fits within the discipline/major?
______ e. what value the course has for students?

____ 6. Are expectations of students clear and appropriate?

____ 7. Are expectations of teacher clear and appropriate (teaching philosophy)?

The syllabus checklist is adapted from Chism, N.V.N. (2007). *Peer Review of Teaching: A Sourcebook.* Bolton, MA: Anker.

Example Model Syllabus (Link to Ashton's syllabus on CELT website?)

Revised 6/25/09

Appendix D

(Sample) Mid-Semester Faculty-Student Communication
Semester and Year
Course
Instructor

I would appreciate your completing this mid-term evaluation while there is time before the end of the semester to address any suggestions that you may have.

"5" is the highest rating, and "1" is the lowest rating. Since scale numbers can mean many things, comments are most helpful. <u>Feel free to write on the back.</u>

Please do not sign the evaluation.

Thank you.

1. How much are you learning in this course?
1 2 3 4 5
Comments:

Do you need additional help with your assignments? If so, please explain.

2. Have you kept up with the course assignments?
1 2 3 4 5
Comments:

What could you do to further support your learning?

3. To what degree do you feel comfortable approaching your professor and asking questions?
1 2 3 4 5
Comments:

What would help you to feel more comfortable?

4. **Do you feel comfortable in the class discussions?**

1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

What would encourage you to participate in class more?

5. **Is the degree of difficulty and depth of the assignments appropriate for this course?**

1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

6. **How effective is your professor in supporting your learning in this course?**

1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

What does your professor do that benefits your learning?

What could your professor do to further support your learning?

Appendix E

Sample Questions: End-Of-Semester Student Evaluation

What are 1 or 2 specific things your instructor does that helped you learn in this course?

What are 1 or 2 specific things your instructor does that hindered or interfered with your learning?

What did you understand to be the main learning objectives of the course?

How satisfied were you with the classroom climate? How would you describe it?

How satisfied were you with the use of time in this course? Is there a better arrangement for class time?

How satisfied were you with your professor's knowledge and attitude? Do you have any suggestions for him/her?

Are you satisfied with the amount of information you learned in this class?

Please give your instructor one or two specific, practical suggestions on ways to help you improve your learning in this course.

Other comments/concerns?

Appendix F

Overview of Small-Group Instructional Diagnosis (SGID)

SGID is a group interviewing technique for collecting student perceptions of a course. The interviewing is done by a consultant, who then provides feedback to the instructor. The format is similar to classroom visits in which there is a pre-meeting (step 1 below) and a post meeting (step 3 below) regarding the SGID.

Step 1. Setting the Stage [pre-SGID meeting]. The faculty member who wants to gather data on student perceptions meets with the consultant to review the process and make some decisions:

- Standard questions to students:
  1. What do you like most about this course so far?
  2. What do you like least about this course so far?
  3. What suggestions do you have for your instructor to improve your learning experiences in this course?
  4. What might you do to improve your own learning experiences and those of other students in the course?
- Questions generated by the faculty member, if any.
- Who will have access to the student feedback?
- When the SGID will take place, and how it will be presented to the students.

Step 2. Conducting the Interview. The faculty member is not present.

- Introduce yourself to the class and state: the intent/value of this process.
- Students are divided into groups of 6-8 students each.
- Each group receives the questions (one per page) and designates a recorder.
- Groups have 10-12 minutes to discuss the questions; recorders note responses.
- Students reconvene, recorders take turns reporting responses to questions, and all students indicate whether they agree or disagree.
  - Feedback for each responses is evaluated looking for group consensus (is this something most of the class agrees on or just a few).
  - The goal of this process is to identify the top items (1 or 2) to share with the faculty member.
- The consultant takes notes during the above process.
- At the end of the class period, the consultant collects the recorders' notes to supplement those she/he took during the discussion.
- At the end of the SGID:
  - Thank the students for their input.
  - Provide students with some sense of what will happen next – their instructor's response (set up reasonable expectations – that is the instructor may be able to modify only one or a few things at this point in the semester).

Step. 3. Organizing the Information [after SGID]. The consultant summarizes in writing:

- What students like about the course
- What students dislike about the course
- Changes the students would like to see.

Step 4. Conducting the Feedback Session [post-SGID meeting]. After the SGID the consultant meets again with the instructor.

- The consultant gives a brief review of the interview.
- The consultant and the faculty member review the summarized student feedback and discuss possible responses.

Step 5. Instructor Plan for Responding to Students [next class]. At the next class meeting the instructor, at a minimum, should thank the students for their input and comment on suggestions he/she found helpful. If any changes are going to be implemented, those are explained. If suggested changes are not to be implemented, the instructor may want to explain to the students why that decision was made.

Summarized from N. Diamond, “Small Group Instructional Diagnosis: Tapping Student Perceptions of Teaching.” K.H. Gillespie, ed. *A Guide to Faculty Development* (2002).

CELT

Center for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching

Kettler Hall, room 234 260-481-6354 ipfw.edu/celt