

The Peer Review Report

Documentation is an important part of the peer review experience. It closes the loop on the process and provides the instructor with written feedback about all aspects of the review.

Although post-review documentation should be tailored to suit the purpose of the peer review, it typically includes a common set of elements. The list below outlines the components that should generally be included in a peer review report. You can also read this sample report below for ideas on how to document a formative review.

Components of the Report

- A brief overview of the **review procedures** (e.g., instructor and course, dates of the initial meeting, observation, and final meeting).
- A statement about the **reviewer's qualifications** to conduct the review.
- A summary of information gathered during the initial meeting regarding the **review purpose and/or goals**.
- Detailed **observations** that relate to the review purpose, goals, and/or evaluation criteria.
- A **summary of outcomes** from the post-observation meeting (e.g., recommendations, mutually-determined solutions for enhancing the class, etc.).

Remember: Formative consultations are strictly confidential. Any documentation and/or outcomes from a formative review should be shared only with the instructor.

Sample Report

To: Ivan Instructor
From: Rhonda Reviewer
Re: Peer Review
Date: February 5th, 2020

Dear Ivan,

I had the privilege of conducting a formative peer review for your course, CLASS 101, which involved an initial meeting, a classroom observation, and a post-observation discussion. I based my peer review on the principles outlined in the CELT Peer Review Handbook along with my 10 years of experience as an instructor.

Our initial conversation occurred on January 15th. At that time, we discussed your desire to have a formative observation of your class in order to enhance your teaching. You shared a copy of your syllabus and described the course in general. You mentioned that you were particularly interested in getting feedback about whether your lectures are interesting and if students are actively engaged.

After we determined the focus of my observation, we agreed upon the date and I visited your class session on January 22nd from 3 – 4:30 PM. Using the CELT Peer Review method of formative observation, I took notes on what I observed during the class (such as student and teacher behavior and the actions that I witnessed) and then later interpreted what those observations may have meant. What follows is an abbreviation of that summary.

When I arrived, I noticed many of your students were talking casually with each other and 2 students were talking with you at the front of the class. You began the class session promptly at 3:00, welcomed students back after the weekend, introduced me, and then asked if students had any questions about the previous class discussion. No students asked questions and you began a PowerPoint presentation. The slides were clearly organized with key ideas, bullet points, and graphics.

I noticed that you would stop after about every 4th slide to ask if students had any questions. You usually waited 4-5 seconds before moving on. Throughout the lecture, about half the students regularly took notes on a handout you provided for them on Brightspace. The rest of the students did not take notes, but most did look toward you at the front of the room. After the PowerPoint, you played a YouTube video that reinforced the lecture. All of the students looked up and paid attention when the video started, but around the 4-minute mark I noticed 6 or 7 students disengaged from the video and using their phones/laptops.

After the video you asked the class several questions. The questions began with content summary and advanced to more analytical questions. Four students, all of whom sat near the front of the room, answered the questions. You then reminded students of the next day's reading and invited them to email you with any questions. The class was dismissed at 4:27 and students resumed the casual conversations that had begun before class.

On January 30th we met for the post-observation meeting in my office. You indicated that the class I observed was fairly typical and that those same 4 or 5 students tend to answer most questions. We discussed your desire for increased participation from the entire class and explored ideas to accomplish that goal.

First, we noted that your syllabus includes an expectation for "participation" but does not define what "participation" means. I shared an idea from the syllabus of my colleagues, which specifically outlines what participation means, including staying awake, asking questions, coming to class prepared, actively discussing ideas with classmates in groups, etc. You agreed to consider what participation looks like and to consider adding this information to your syllabus.

You also mentioned that you were thinking of using small group activities to foster more participation. We discussed using "think – pair – share" activities. For example, I suggested that you could first have students write down their individual thoughts about a given question or PowerPoint slide, then discuss their ideas with a partner, then each pair could share with another pair, and so on. In this way, more of the non-responsive students can contribute to the discussion and gain confidence with speaking up in class. This activity is a common CELT practice and one that can be very helpful in initiating classroom discussion. I also suggested using a one-minute paper and/or the "Clear/Cloudy" activity about the day's lecture. We discussed the merits of taking the time for these quick but effective means of assessing students' understanding of the content.

We also discussed how the PowerPoint slides are effectively constructed, but could be designed to solicit more participation. I suggested incorporating some online polling activities, such as Poll Everywhere, whenever you naturally might stop to ask if students have any questions. You seemed to like this idea and thought it might help you gauge how well students are learning and avoid moving on too quickly.

Taking all these elements into consideration, I was impressed by the fact that you used a variety of teaching strategies to deliver the course content and promote engagement. You moved around the room, you asked questions and invited students to ask you questions, and you used multiple modes to deliver the material. Your initial questions about engaging the students and using effective pedagogical approaches were addressed and I hope our conversation provided you with some viable options to consider.

Thank you again for the opportunity to conduct this formative review. I hope our work together has helped you accomplish some of your teaching goals.

Sincerely,

Rhonda