

Self Evaluation of Teaching

For more resources, see the LTO page on the Peer Review of Teaching. All of the following information was found from sources linked on the LTO website.

<http://www.ryerson.ca/lt/resources/teachingstrategies/peerevaluation/>

What is Self-Evaluation

“Self-evaluation is one of the most overlooked forms of explicit evaluation. Ideally and logically, this should precede all other forms of the evaluation of teaching effectiveness.

For professional educators, the goal is always the same: monitor and adjust instruction to increase the learning of all students. Conscientious faculty members subject their teaching strategies, instructional techniques and style to their own critical evaluation on an almost constant basis. This evaluation often does not have a formal structure but even a simple checklist can help to focus ideas.

Those faculty who are most interested in doing their best are the ones who tend to take self-evaluation most seriously and may share their critiques and seek advice from colleagues on how to improve the effectiveness of their teaching.

Self-evaluation of teaching can range from personal reflection to formal assessment intended for promotion or tenure.

Self-evaluation can assist you to:

- improve the educational experiences you provide for your students
- identify the professional education you need to further develop your capacity to teach well
- prepare for your performance review with your supervisor
- assess your readiness to apply for promotion and tenure”

(excerpted from “Self Evaluation,” Learning Development Centre. Warwick University, <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/ldc/resource/evaluation/tools/self>)

Methods for Evaluating Your Teaching

1. **“Self-monitoring:** Teachers monitor their own performance as they teach. Teachers should monitor themselves while teaching. After each teaching session, teachers should ask themselves (or complete a brief self-evaluation form) on whether they have met their determined goals and objectives, and evaluate the good and the to-be-improved aspects of the session. Teachers can keep a log (i.e. a teaching portfolio, or video log as described in the next section) to track their own progress and improvement over time.
 - Self-monitoring is a meaningful source of information for evaluating teaching. Teachers should take special notice of (and record) the information which is particularly important to them.

- However, self-monitoring involves self-judgment. It is often difficult to be totally fair and objective. Personal biases and misinterpretations of students' reactions may interfere with the effectiveness of the evaluation.
2. **Audio and video recording:** Teachers can audio- or video-tape their teaching sessions, which allows them to keep record of and investigate their actual teaching performance in detail. Teachers can review the records with other colleagues to discuss the areas for improvements.
- Audio and video recording provide teachers with objective information that reflects what was actually happening in the class.
 - Recording reflects the actual teaching performance, but it is meaningless by itself. For example, it does not explain whether speaking at a particular pace is good or bad. Obtain opinions from others on the strengths and weaknesses in your teaching, as well as possible room for improvements.
 - It is a good idea to arrange several recording sessions throughout the semester (e.g. one at the beginning, one in the middle and one at the end of semester) to check with the progress and improvement of specifically targeted areas.
 - Keeping a log of class video records can help you track your progress.
3. **Students' feedback on teaching:** Students' perception of learning experience in class is sometimes the most direct way to weigh the effectiveness of teaching methods. What students perceive and experience in class directly determines how effectively they are learning. Collecting students' perception of teaching should be carried out several times in the semester (at least once at mid-term and once at the end of term), to allow opportunities to correct poor practices rather than leaving them till the end of course. Two common methods to collect information about students' perception towards teaching are questionnaires and interviews.
- **Questionnaires:** This is a common method to collect students' opinion about teaching, and it has been used widely across universities as a standard practice. Standardized questions on the questionnaires collect information about students' background, general opinions about the course (e.g. the topics are interesting, course materials are difficult, too many assignments, comments given on assignments are helpful etc.), and an overall evaluation on the effectiveness of the course and the teacher, using predefined scales of quantitative scores (e.g. 1 – Strongly Agree, ..., 5 – Strongly Disagree). Some general open-ended questions such as "What do you think can be improved in this course?" and "What do you like most about this course?" are usually included in the questionnaires. Teachers can put down some specific topical questions in which they particularly would like to know about.
 - Questionnaires can collect responses from a large number of students simultaneously, which provides a comprehensive picture that reflect the opinions of the whole class (i.e. good representativeness), and can be efficiently administered in terms of time and resources. Responses in questionnaires are given anonymously, so students are more willing to freely express what they actually think and perceive about the course.

- However, the limitation of questionnaire lies at its standardized organization of questions. Questions on the questionnaires are fixed, and therefore the teachers cannot probe for further information based on the responses.
- Another limitation is that student questionnaires are more accurate when administered by someone who is not in charge of the students' grades.
- Questionnaires must be carefully designed to avoid confusion and misleading results.
- **Interviews:** Focus-group interviews with students can be conducted by the teachers themselves (if trust has been built among the teacher and students) or an outside person (if greater level of objectivity is required). Teachers can set the questions that they are interested in advance, and probe more detailed information and clarifications from students during the interview. It is obviously a more flexible option compared to large class questionnaire surveys.
 - Directly interviewing students can usually reveal students' thoughts on some unanticipated aspects, which can generate lots of useful information.
 - But interviews can usually only be conducted with a small portion of students in the class, which may not necessarily be reflecting the bigger picture.
- Besides the above methods, teachers can also deduce how well the students are learning and acquiring knowledge from the class by looking at their assignments and test results. Provided that the assignments and tests are well-designed and have high validity in measuring students' learning achievements, they can be good indicators of how effective the goal of helping students to learn has been achieved. However, teachers cannot infer from assignments and test results about what is good or bad about their teaching, and what causes students to learn better or worse.

One general limitation of assessing teaching quality based on students' feedback is that their opinions can be very biased to their own perspectives. Many students may not actually know what they should know and learn from the course. Also, students usually do not possess enough knowledge about how the course can be taught, including the possible pedagogies and course content.

It is also very important that you tell students that you are aware of and are genuinely interested in their opinions. After receiving students' feedback, describe to the students what changes are made in response to their opinions, and also explain the reasons why you choose not to change the other practices as requested by students. Students question the usefulness of collecting their opinions if you don't let them know their opinions are heard."

(excerpted from Centre for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning, University of Hong Kong. http://ar.cetl.hku.hk/evaluate_teach.htm)

Planning steps for conducting a self evaluation

1. **“Describe the teaching context:** Descriptions convey the objectives of the instructional activity, innovation or course and include information about the assessment purpose and intended uses.

2. **Identify stakeholders and their needs:** Identifying stakeholders (e.g. instructor, students, and department) and determining their needs helps to focus the assessment process so that the results are of the greatest utility.
3. **Determine the assessment purpose using central questions:** Identifying a clear purpose by using central questions helps determine how the assessment should be conducted.
4. **Identify how you will use the assessment results:** Identify how you will use the assessment results for each of your central questions. Uses should directly relate to the assessment's purpose.
5. **Create an assessment plan:** The assessment plan is a detailed description of how the research will be implemented.”

(excerpted from “Instructional Assessment Resources,” University of Texas, Austin, <http://www.utexas.edu/academic/ctl/assessment/iar/teaching/plan/steps/>)

See the Instructional Assessment Resources website for worksheets that help create assessment plans for each potential method:

1. **Classroom Assessment:** Simple but effective paper and pencil ways to get immediate student feedback about classroom activities or course content
(<http://www.utexas.edu/academic/ctl/assessment/iar/teaching/plan/method/cats/>)
2. **Document Analysis:** The systematic examination of course documents such as syllabi, exams and assignments.
(<http://www.utexas.edu/academic/ctl/assessment/iar/teaching/plan/method/doc-analysis.php>)
3. **Observation:** The systematic peer observation of classroom instruction using checklists, scales or narrative to document behavior.
(<http://www.utexas.edu/academic/ctl/assessment/iar/teaching/plan/method/observ.php>)
4. **Product Analysis:** The systematic examination of any student created objects, portfolios, assignments, or writings designed to demonstrate learning.
(<http://www.utexas.edu/academic/ctl/assessment/iar/teaching/plan/method/prod-analysis.php>)
5. **Survey:** An ordered series of questions administered to individuals in a systematic manner.
(<http://www.utexas.edu/academic/ctl/assessment/iar/teaching/plan/method/survey/>)
6. **Blackboard Survey:** Using the Blackboard course management system quizzing tool to conduct surveys.
(<http://www.utexas.edu/academic/ctl/assessment/iar/teaching/plan/method/survey-bb.php>)
7. **Official Course Surveys:** The Course Survey allows you to obtain anonymous student feedback about your teaching
(<http://www.utexas.edu/academic/ctl/assessment/iar/teaching/plan/method/survey-cis.php>)

(excerpted from “Instructional Assessment Resources,” University of Texas, Austin, <http://www.utexas.edu/academic/ctl/assessment/iar/teaching/plan/method/>)

Additional ways of getting feedback

1) From Students:

“Use any of the following techniques to determine how well students have learned, and how they feel about their learning:

- a) **One-minute paper:** Ask students to respond to the topic and concepts for the day. Ask students to respond to the use of activity-based learning. Please note: it is imperative that students see you respond to the results of this form of evaluation, or any form, in your teaching in subsequent classes.
 - b) **Quiz:** In a risk-free climate, ask students to complete a quiz on their learning—for the purposes of determining not only their success in learning, but also your success in teaching, as well as clarifying for the students what are the key topics. You may choose to make this open-book, based on their notes, or other suggestions.
 - c) **Mid-term survey:** You may want to survey your students anonymously about the learning and teaching in the course.
- 2) **From Yourself:**
- a) **Reflection:** Reflect on your teaching after each class. Compare your reflections with the comments from students.
 - b) **Research:** Continue the process of learning about teaching. Read journal articles, attend workshops, or become a part of a curriculum committee, etc.”

(Adapted from L. Dee Fink’s “Evaluating Your Own Teaching,”
<http://meds.queensu.ca/teachingdossier/assets/EvaluatingTeachingDetermineSuccess.pdf>)

Some additional self-evaluation tools:

- **Teacher's Perspectives Inventory**
(http://www.teachingperspectives.com/html/tpi_frames.htm)
The Teaching Perspectives Inventory can help you collect your thoughts and summarize your ideas about teaching. It can be useful in examining your own teaching as well as helping clarify the teaching views of other people.
- **Questions for self appraisal**
(http://www.flinders.edu.au/Teaching_and_Learning_Files/Documents/questions_for_self_appraisal.pdf)

(excerpted from “Self Evaluation,” Flinders University, Flinders University,
<http://www.flinders.edu.au/teaching/quality/evaluation/self-evaluation.cfm>)

General problem solving prompts

(<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/ldc/resource/evaluation/tools/self/questioning.pdf>)

Strengthening Your Reflective Commentary

(<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/ldc/resource/evaluation/tools/self/reflective.pdf>)

The GROW Evaluation Framework

(<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/ldc/resource/evaluation/tools/self/grow.pdf>)