

Getting and Giving Feedback

It may go without saying that the giving and receiving of feedback is essential to the peer review process and, thus, deserves some special attention.

Though easier said than done, accept critical feedback with grace and remember that teaching is also a process of learning and developing. If, in the initial step, you prepared yourself to receive critical feedback, you'll find it easier to discuss those observations with more detachment and objectivity (and it will help your reviewer feel more comfortable in giving that critical feedback). Authors Alabi and Weare (2014) helpfully suggest choosing a lower-stakes peer observation activity if you are not quite ready for critical feedback, such as involving the reviewer in the planning and reflection, but not the actual observation, of a class (p. 189). Also remember to hear the positive feedback and weigh it equally in your own mind with any suggestions for change.

Before the post-observation meeting reflect right away on your own thoughts about your teaching as this should help prepare you for receiving the reviewer's feedback. After the post-observation meeting, schedule some additional time to reflect on the feedback given and on your own observations during the class. Create a document for these notes and reflections that you can reference the next time around. As the teaching dossier is the central instrument through which to present holistic evidence of effective teaching, keeping a record of your reflections will assist in the writing of a comprehensive teaching dossier.

To give relevant and constructive feedback in a collegial manner, revisit the reviewee's goals and purposes for the review before you attend a post-observation meeting or write a feedback letter, such that your feedback is tailored to those categories of assessment most important to the reviewee. In addition, provide your feedback in whichever forms that were requested—a full-length letter or notes appended to an observation checklist, etc. Keep in mind that this is a “peer” review and, ideally, both parties walk away from the experience having learned something. Share both your positive and critical feedback but, also, consider sharing with the reviewee what you learned about your own teaching through the experience of observation. A reviewer can similarly set aside some time for their own reflection.

A feedback letter or report might include these categories (adapted from Hubbell & Clarke, 2011).

- Statement of the original goals and purpose of the observation as discussed at the pre-observation meeting
- A description of what was observed
- Description of what will happen at the post-observation meeting
- Strengths of the teaching observed (in relation to each goal)
- Areas of growth observed, or potential areas in which to grow (in relation to each goal)
- Self-reflection by observer: What did you learn about your own teaching from watching?

References:

Alabi, J., & Weare, J., William. (2014). Peer Review of Teaching: Best Practices for a Non-Programmatic Approach. *Communications in Information Literacy*, 8(2), 180–191.

<https://doi.org/10.15760/comminfolit.2014.8.2.171>

Hubball, H., & Clarke, A. (2011). Scholarly approaches to peer-review of teaching. *Transformative Dialogues: Teaching and Learning Journal*, 4(3).