

Department of Sociology & Anthropology

Plan for Formative Assessment and Summative Evaluation of Faculty Teaching

Departmental Policy regarding Formative Assessment and Summative Evaluation

- Formative assessment is aimed at improving faculty teaching, while summative evaluation is focused on judging or determining the value of faculty teaching.
- Formative assessments will be confidential, with no written documents that are circulated to persons other than the faculty member evaluated.
- Summative evaluations will include documents made available to other tenured faculty in the department.
- Formative assessments will be performed by a tenured faculty member (including the department chair) on the basis of agreement between the untenured and tenured faculty members. Tenured faculty will be given significant service credit for a thoroughly done formative evaluation. The department chair may be asked to help identify tenured faculty to help with formative evaluations so as to spread the work around.
- Summative evaluators are to be selected, generally on a rotating basis, by the department chair in consultation with the tenured faculty.
- Formative assessment and summative evaluation of faculty teaching are not required to be included in PARFs or in Tenure and Promotion packets, although all or part of the documentation could be included if the faculty so desired.
- Formative assessment for untenured faculty can be done annually during years 1-3 and year 5. Formative assessment of tenured faculty will be done at the request of the evaluated faculty member or at the behest of the chair.
- Summative evaluation of untenured faculty will be done in year four and year six. The year four evaluation should be completed by October 15th of that year in order to be included in the COLA's third year review of untenured faculty. The year six evaluation should be done by Sept. 30 of that year in order to be included in the tenure review. If the faculty member decides to go up for tenure early, a summative evaluation will be performed by Sept. 30, as if that were year six.
- Summative evaluation of tenured faculty should be done every 6 years (in the fall semester) as part of each tenured faculty's sixth year review.

General Guidelines for Performing Formative Assessment and Summative Evaluation

- Attention should be paid to both classroom instruction and to course construction (e.g., syllabi, exams, paper assignments, etc.).
- Other evidence, including student evaluations, self-assessments, participation in teaching workshops, will also be considered when available.
- Evaluations should pertain to all courses taught in the fall and spring semesters of the academic year, even if there are multiple sections of the same course. However, classroom observations may be made in either fall or spring semester, except when required in fall of years 4 and 6.
- Observations may emphasize certain courses that the faculty regularly teaches or is expected to teach on a regular basis.

- More specific guidelines for peer observation may be found in “Peer Observation and Assessment of Teaching” (CETaL & ISS) or in the attached “Guidelines for Peer Observation”

Guidelines for Peer Observation¹

STEP ONE: Meet with the instructor of the class to be observed at least a day before the scheduled class meeting.

The purpose of this meeting is for you to learn as much as possible about the instructor’s intentions, and to identify his/her objectives. The discussion should create a context for the class to be observed. Some questions to ask might be:

- How does this class fit into the course syllabus?
- What are the specific goals of this class meeting?
- How does this class meet one or more of the course objectives?
- What will have happened in the previous class meeting?
- What have the students done to prepare for this class?
- What will you do in class? What methods or strategies will you use?
- What would you like for me to focus on when I observe?

At this meeting, if you have not already done so, collect a copy of the syllabus and any handouts or assignments to be used in the observed class meeting. Share a copy of the checklist with the instructor, but underscore that the observation will be much more holistic than the checklist.

STEP TWO: Visit the class.

Arrive early and take a seat in an inconspicuous part of the room. Bring a watch and a note pad. The most important thing to remember about the class visit is that your primary goal is to observe and record as accurately as possible the events that transpire. Consider it your job to write an “ethnography” or “case study.” Take the point of view of a student in the class, and try to make observations that reflect the learning, rather than the teaching process. Record what students see, hear, say, and do. Also record what the instructor does, but do so from the student’s perspective. In the left margin of your note pad keep track of time. Indicate the time and activities at least every 5 minutes, or whenever something significant occurs (change in strategy, change in behavior, etc). This gives you a regular “snapshot” of the class at more-or-less set intervals.

STEP THREE: Reflect on your experience as an observer.

Reread your notes and identify several items that you can discuss with the observed instructor. You should include things that went well, and that you will want to reinforce in your post-observation meeting. You should also identify places where you could make

¹This set of guidelines and checklist are adapted from Reimers, C and Roberson, W (in press): Peer Observation and Assessment of Teaching: A Resource Book for UTEP Faculty, Administrators, and Students Who Teach.

constructive suggestions in how the class was managed. Complete the checklist that accompanies the ethnographic portion of your observation.

STEP FOUR: Meet with the observed instructor.

Start by asking the instructor how he/she felt about the class. Was it a typical class? Were the objectives reached? What went well? Did he/she feel that there were any problems? Keep in mind that an important goal of the observation is to give the instructor a snapshot of his/her class – free of judgment. Offer to read sections of your notes where interesting, particularly good, or problematic things occurred. Your ability to recapture the class in detail helps your credibility as an observer. The transcript will also give you something concrete to use to demonstrate a point you wish to make about a moment of the class. Make sure that you indicate to the observed instructor the things that worked. Then limit your suggestions or recommendations for change to just a few. Too many suggestions may leave the instructor less confident as a teacher and uncertain about what to change.

STEP FIVE: Write a written summary for the observed instructor.

A written analysis (or summative report) is very helpful to the instructor for reflecting on the feedback provided from the observation. This written feedback should include the items you discussed in the post-observation meeting, a summary of your ethnography or case study, and the checklist.

Peer Observation Checklist

Faculty _____ member _____ being _____ evaluated: _____
 _____ Course _____ and _____ CRN: _____
 _____ Location: _____
 Observer: _____ Date: _____
 Length of class: _____ Number of students present: _____

In-class delivery	YES	NO	NI	NA
Material is organized, presented in a clear and concise way	YES	NO	NI	NA
Instructor exhibits knowledge and mastery of content	YES	NO	NI	NA
Level of material is appropriate to course and students	YES	NO	NI	NA
Material is tied to the course goals	YES	NO	NI	NA
Instructor challenges the students intellectually	YES	NO	NI	NA
Instructor ensures understanding of material (reviews material, provides more than one example)	YES	NO	NI	NA
Instructor notes (overhead, chalkboard, PowerPoint) are clear and legible	YES	NO	NI	NA
In-class activity directions given are clear and concise	YES	NO	NI	NA
In-class activity is tied to class content	YES	NO	NI	NA
Visuals and handouts effectively accompany verbal presentation	YES	NO	NI	NA
Instructor is organized (time, needed materials)	YES	NO	NI	NA
Instructor speaks loudly enough to be heard throughout classroom	YES	NO	NI	NA
Instructor speaks at rate appropriate for note-taking	YES	NO	NI	NA
Teaching strategy is appropriate to the goals of the class	YES	NO	NI	NA
Students have an opportunity to apply new concepts during class	YES	NO	NI	NA
Discussion stays focused on class goals	YES	NO	NI	NA
Discussion points summarized during class	YES	NO	NI	NA
Out of class preparation	YES	NO	NI	NA
Syllabus is well-developed	YES	NO	NI	NA
class assignment instructions are clear and concise	YES	NO	NI	NA
assignment is tied to lecture content	YES	NO	NI	NA
Student-instructor interaction				
Students seem comfortable asking questions	YES	NO	NI	NA
Instructor welcomes/effectively answers student questions	YES	NO	NI	NA
Instructor answers student questions with respect	YES	NO	NI	NA
Instructor engages students/asks questions	YES	NO	NI	NA
Instructor uses enough "wait time" to allow for student response	YES	NO	NI	NA
Instructor moves about room periodically to maintain student attention	YES	NO	NI	NA

Students are attentive and involved during most of class session	YES	NO	NI	NA
Students take notes at appropriate times Student behavior indicates respect for instructor	YES	NO	NI	NA
	YES	NO	NI	NA

Key: Yes = it was observed; No = it was not observed; NI = it was observed but needs improvement; NA = not applicable, this item did not apply to this observation.

Up to date as of Oct. 8, 2010