The Australian National University

PEER REVIEW
and
SELF-EVALUATION

A
TOOLKIT
Resource Booklet
for the
Improvement of Teaching and Learning

Centre for Educational Development and Academic Methods
(CEDAM)

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Introduction to
The TOOLKIT Booklets

The Activity

These booklets are about an activity:

"improving teaching and learning by recording, interpreting, and acting on information gathered from students, colleagues, other people and oneself".

Where The Activity Takes Place

The ideal context, the most supportive "culture" or "environment" for the activity, is one in which teaching and learning, and ways of evaluating and improving teaching and learning, are spoken about freely and knowledgeably by teaching academics.

The actual context is often far from ideal.

The belief prevails that one's ability to teach, like one's ability to establish and sustain a relationship, is a private thing, and that discussion of what one does with respect to that ability is better kept private. Hence, faculty members who work to increase their own effectiveness and satisfaction as teachers and their students' effectiveness and satisfaction as learners frequently do so in isolation.

These texts are written in the beliefs

- that, while one's unique, personal ability to teach *is* in many respects like one's ability to establish and sustain a relationship, teaching itself is a complex, public, professional activity which *can* benefit from being reflectively observed, actively improved *and* openly discussed in forums ranging from teachers' meetings, to departmental seminars, conferences *and* academic journals

- that a good way to help reflection, action and discussion to occur is to provide teachers with information about evaluation and improvement that's easy to use, whether in individuals' isolated attempts or in concerted and collaborative programs of evaluation and improvement of teaching and learning

- that the activity will generate its own context.

These booklets, then, are intended to help teachers become familiar with a variety of methods of student-, peer-, and self-evaluation of teaching and learning, and of recording, interpreting, and acting on the information gathered during evaluations.

The dominant hope is that individuals, groups and even whole departments will explore the evaluation methods in these booklets, will identify the ones they're comfortable with, will tailor them to their needs, and weave them into a personal or a collective tradition of evaluation practices. The department that has such a tradition will have an almost unbeatable quality assurance mechanism in place and will be very well placed to describe the ways in which it monitors, maintains and improves the quality of its teaching.

ANUSET, TOOLKIT and CEDAM

CEDAM provides two evaluation services: ANUSET and TOOLKIT.

Evaluations are usually considered to be primarily summative or primarily formative. That is, the information they yield is primarily used for purposes of summation or change.

"Primarily" is the key word. No evaluation activity is "exclusively" or "entirely" summative or formative. All evaluations have a summative and a formative value, and most information gathered by the evaluation methods outlined in these booklets can be used both "summatively" and "formatively".

Summative Evaluations

Evaluations which are conducted at or near the end of a teaching and learning experience, and which provide a retrospective view of the overall value of that experience are usually thought of as "summative". They yield information of particular value in identifying areas in need of large-scale, long-term development - development which will probably not take place until the following semester or the following year. The information yielded by "summative" evaluations is often thought to be essential in personnel decision making.

Formative, or Focused Developmental Evaluations

Evaluations which are conducted during a teaching and learning experience are often called "formative", or "focused developmental" evaluations. The information gathered by these means is of particular value in improving or maintaining the quality of the teaching and learning experience from day to day, or week to week. It may also be used to supplement or complement information gathered expressly for summative purposes.

ANUSET, TOOLKIT and Triangulation

ANUSET data is *primarily* used for *summative* purposes.

Information gathered using TOOLKIT's focused developmental evaluation methods is *primarily* used for *formative* purposes.

The principal virtue of using these formative or focused developmental evaluation methods is that they make it possible for you, sometimes quite quickly and easily, to get a far greater volume and range of information to use when maintaining or developing the quality of your teaching than instruments like ANUSET are able (or designed) to gather.

Another virtue is that, using ANUSET and two or more TOOLKIT methods enables you to "triangulate", i.e. to use the information gathered by TOOLKIT methods to contextualise, supplement, complement, confirm, moderate, or simply shed light on the information gathered by ANUSET.

Such triangulations are of considerable assistance when presenting a case for promotion, tenure, or any award based on merit.

About Interpretation:

Peer review and the Eight Part Question

Peer review is a collegial, mutually beneficial process in which information about teaching and learning is formulated, exchanged, challenged, tested and re-formulated by both (or all) parties, as a standard part of professional practice.

Interpretation (i.e. the business of coming to understand the possible meanings and values in something that's said or written) is part of the process. Peers individually interpret what they say or write to each other, simply so that they can respond to each other appropriately. They also join together to interpret things said or written by other people.

In the academic context interpretation can be a spontaneous, almost intuitive process. It can also be a testing exercise in scholarship. As Graham Webb has recently pointed out (Webb 1995), the scholarship of interpretation - hermeneutics - is highly complex.

For the hermeneutic scholar, interpretation involves a high degree of informed as well as empathetic, intuitive awareness on the part of the interpreter, of all the aspects, and all the relationships between all the aspects, of the thing being interpreted, the forces and circumstances that brought the thing into existence in the first place, and the forces and circumstances that prevail while the interpretation is taking place. And given that the interpreter is *of* and *among* the forces and circumstances, this kind of interpretation requires him or her to have a high degree of *self*-awareness *as* interpreter *and* as participant.

There is, of course, a way of patterning the process, of outlining it in such a way as to make one's initial entry to it seem relatively easy.

Think of the thing you want to interpret as an act of communication. To find out **what** the communication has to tell you, first know **who** is making the communication, **whom** the communicator thinks they are talking or writing to, **why** they made the communication, **how** the communication is shaped or expressed, what considerations of **time** and **place** you need to take into account in order to understand the communication fully, and **what effect** the communication has on you while it's happening *and* afterwards, as you bring your prior knowledge and understanding to bear on it.

These considerations constitute an eight-part question which looks like this:

Who is communicating

To Whom,

How,

When,

Where,

Why,

To What Effect -

and in the light of all this, **What** meaning does the communication ultimately have for you?

Unpacked, this question suggests that your choice of peer review strategies will be more appropriate, and your interpretation of the information that comes to hand will be better if you know

… **who** stands behind the statements you're paying attention to - e.g. what their linguistic, cultural and educational backgrounds are; whether their expectations or experience of university teaching and learning are like or unlike yours; how aware or well-informed they about their own practices and their own progress as teachers etc.,

… **to whom** they think they are giving their information - e.g. to you direct; to somebody else through you; to you as a less experienced colleague; to you as an equal; to you as a better informed or better placed colleague; or not to you at all, but to some other specific or generalised audience; whether they believe there is a relationship of trust, or a mutually beneficial arrangement of some kind, or no relationship at all between them and you or their other intended audience

… **how** they communicate - i.e. what form(s), manner(s) or style(s) of delivery they've used on this occasion, compared with those they are given to using elsewhere; how formal or informal, studied or spontaneous, distilled and structured or elaborative and exploratory their communications are

… **when** the communication was composed, transmitted and received; what temporal considerations (amount of time taken, allowed or required; time of day; time of year etc.) influenced the composition, transmission and reception; how much time elapsed between the request for information and the response; how much time the communicator believes will elapse before you get back to them

… **where** the communication was composed, transmitted and received; what considerations of space or place (confined, comfortable, appropriate, inappropriate, familiar, not familiar) influenced the composition, transmission and reception

… **why** the communication is as it is - e.g. whether the information is shaped by established knowledge or by the pressure of circumstances or the rush of a conversation; whether it's motivated by anger, a passionate commitment, a desire to persuade, a willingness to share in an exploration and a discovery, or a need to have the communication over and done with as quickly as possible; whether it's being offered in the expectation of a reward or a response, in the hope that it will be acted on quickly, in the knowledge that it will be discussed thoroughly and acted on slowly, or in the belief that it may never be discussed or acted on at all

… **what effect** the communication has on you as you receive it, and subsequently, after reflection - i.e. whether it confirms or challenges your previously established understandings, or causes you to develop, clarify, strengthen or abandon them; what effect the communication has on others

… in the light of all this, precisely **what** can the communication add to your understanding of the thing you are reviewing, what new steps does it enable you to take, what strength does it add to your stand-point?

Recording and acting on feedback

Documenting your activities

Keeping a record of your activities and insights from seeking feedback on your teaching and units is an essential aid to your reflection, particularly over time as memory inevitably dims. Such records help you in going through the cycle of clarifying your teaching goals, identifying strengths and weaknesses in achieving these goals, narrowing down any areas for improvement, devising courses of action for improvement, and reflecting on these changes as they are put into practice.

Any documentation should include information on:

- Aspects of your teaching/units on which you have sought feedback
- Why those aspects were chosen for evaluation, i.e., the aims of the evaluation
- How you gathered the feedback, i.e., what activities were engaged in
- The nature of the feedback - any strengths and weaknesses identified
- Your reflection on what the feedback means
- Changes made or planned as a consequence of the feedback
- Areas identified for *no* change and why.

There are many ways of keeping such a record, including a journal of your reflections, audio tapes of discussions or interviews, written summaries (by you or your colleagues) of discussions/observations (perhaps using the items above as a guideline or proforma for the summaries), etc.

Using your Teaching Portfolio

Such records would form important entries in your Teaching Portfolio. Your Teaching Portfolio is a collection of material that serves as a record of your teaching experience and achievements, and your attempts to monitor, maintain and improve the quality of your teaching over time. It is a particularly useful source of information when applying for teaching positions or seeking tenure or promotion. It is now recommended by the University that you make a summary or profile of material from your Teaching Portfolio and include it in your Record of Activity when applying for promotion or tenure.

For advice and assistance in developing your Teaching Portfolio, contact CEDAM on ext. 4594. The Centre provides workshops on preparing Portfolios as well as a complimentary booklet, "Profiling Quality in Teaching: A Guide to the Teaching Portfolio".

Part 1

Introduction to Peer Review

Using colleagues as a source of feedback and evaluation

Peer review of academic practice is commonplace in universities. It is a well accepted source of information for development and assessment in the realms of research and publication.

Unfortunately, there is a tendency to think that peer review of teaching works in the same way as peer review of research and publication. It is this misapprehension of peer review in teaching that associates it so strongly (and so exclusively) with the *assessment* of teaching. There is an assessment function for peer review in teaching, of course, with Heads of departments being a major source of information for tenure and promotion at the ANU and elsewhere. Its greater virtue, however is in the *development* of teaching.

Memo to a colleague:

You're the third person this week to ring and tell me you've been asked to act as a "peer reviewer", and write a letter of reference in support of a colleague's application for promotion.

I'm in no position to advise you on what to do; but I'm not surprised that the request has left you feeling uncomfortable. Peer reviews of teaching normally *don't* result in the peers writing testimonials for each other. The best thing I can do, I think is to send you the text of the email I sent to the other two people who rang me with the same problem.

Here it is:

First thoughts: Beware of casting any of your colleagues in the role of "assessor". In particular, beware of drawing colleagues into making a last minute retrospective evaluation of your work for the sake of an application for promotion.

WHAT IS PEER REVIEW OF TEACHING?

Peer review involves informed and formative exchanges between colleagues on every aspect of what they do to help learning to occur. Peer reviewers work together to improve the way they work individually with and for students.. Under ideal conditions they do this collaboratively over a period of time.

WHAT MOST OF OUR COLLEAGUES FIRST THINK OF, WHEN THINKING OF PEER REVIEW, IS PEER REVIEW *BY LECTURE OBSERVATION*.

For what it's worth, my explanation of the process of peer review *by lecture observation* goes as follows:

Informal peer reviews by observation of teaching constitute only one aspect of developmental evaluation. Written accounts of observations and/or of the conversations that follow them are usually intended to serve as memory joggers, or draft reference points for further conversations or (in ideal circumstances) for the planning sessions that follow. They constitute a record of the persistence or consistency with which the peer review and collegial developmental process has been kept alive over time. Where they record evaluative information collected during the process, they also serve to supplement or contextualise data derived from other

Continued ->

Peer reviews by observation occur when one teaching academic asks another to sit in and observe some of his or her classes, and to engage with him or her in a discussion of the teaching (or some specified aspect of the teaching) they're observing. Sometimes the peer is also asked to help devise or carry forward an action research project or some form of developmental work with respect to the teaching they've observed.

Some observers are invited primarily for their understanding of the subject matter being dealt with in the classes. Some are invited primarily for their understanding of learning styles and teaching methodologies. Some are invited because they have a good understanding of the subject being taught, learning styles and teaching methodologies in general, and the ways these things inform each other in the context of a particular discipline.

All observers should have an understanding of what their colleague is trying to achieve in the classes being observed, and of how he or she is trying to achieve it. It's important that this be discussed prior to the observations being undertaken.

The invited observer's role is first to watch, and subsequently to describe and discuss, what actually happens in the class. While it's important for the observation to be informed by the observer's own understandings and attitudes and beliefs, it's even more important for the observer not to let those understandings etc. cause him or her to be judgemental or prescriptive in the conversations that grow out of the observations.

MODELS OF GOOD TEACHING

There's usually a model of good teaching implicit in the peer reviewer's comments as well as in the reviewee's performance.

It's best for both models to be made explicit at some point in the observation-feedback process. Making these models explicit may result in the creation of some kind of document - a record of your current understanding of teaching and/or of what best helps learning to occur. This document should go into your Teaching Portfolio. It may provide you with an early draft of the Teaching section of your official Record of Activity.

USING THE LITERATURE OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

It's been rare, in the past, for teaching academics to draw on the literature of research into effective teaching when articulating their understanding of what best helps learning to occur. However, things are changing . . .

The literature of research into learning and teaching is extensive. It includes many summaries of the characteristics of "good teaching" and many evaluation instruments and checklists which itemise these characteristics, and which seem (for better AND worse) to sanctify them.

The literature of peer review is less extensive. However, it commonly recommends that no *single* summary, instrument or checklist should be used as the basis for observation, description or discussion. It also declares that understandings derived from a wide reading of the literature and a familiarity with a broad range of such summaries, instruments and checklists is far more likely to provide suitable touchstones and reference points for the observations, descriptions and discussions that the peer review of teaching requires. It also recommends that academics joining with their colleagues in peer reviews of teaching have as broad a familiarity as possible with this literature, and that what they say to each other, and write down as a consequence of their conversations, be informed by it.

Continued ->

WRITING THINGS DOWN

With respect to writing things down, however, this last point is well worth noting: If the observation is a one-off, casual thing, with no underlying intention of carrying on over time, or of developing a plan of action from it, there would probably be no written account. Chances are the observations would be discussed over coffee, and if anything were to be written down it would be a sketch of whatever action research project (if any) emerged from the conversation - and the observee would be the one to write it down.

When you *and* your colleague begin writing things down it does tend to imply a slightly more serious, long-term undertaking . . .

I hope this is of some help.

Best wishes,

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End Note:

More information about peer review by observation is to be found later in this booklet, especially under the heading "Observation of Classes" below.

The documents included under the heading "Aids to Reflection" below all have implicit models of "good teaching" embedded in them. These models are worth bringing into the light to see whether and in what ways they are like or unlike your own model.

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Why seek feedback from colleagues?

Unfortunately, colleagues are often a wasted resource as far as the development and feedback on teaching are concerned. As teachers, we frequently work in isolation from each other and seldom talk about what we do.

Our colleagues are potentially the richest source available to us of information, inspiration, and wisdom drawn from experience. But the potential can only be fully realised and the benefits fully felt if we take the first step - if we begin to engage our colleagues (including our Heads of Departments, who are required to comment on the quality of our teaching when writing in support of our applications for promotion and so on) in the practice of becoming familiar with, and giving and receiving feedback on, the huge array of things we do to help learning to occur.

Feedback from colleagues (like information drawn from individual reflection and properly evaluated action research into teaching and learning) provides an important supplement to the kind we get from student evaluations of teaching.

In fact, without the evidence that derives from peer review, collegial feedback, and reflective action research, student evaluations tend to acquire a disproportionate significance.

Our peers are in the best position to comment on the content, materials and intellectual standard of our courses, as distinct from students, who are in the best position to comment on class delivery, clarity of requirements and their own perceptions of their comprehension.

Also, colleagues are in a better position to engage in active discussion and idea generation than are students.

In summary

- Due to their subject knowledge and experience, academic peers are in a much better position than students to comment on certain aspects of teaching, such as, selection of text and reading lists, whether material is up-to-date, appropriateness of course objectives, standards of marking and assessment, etc.

- The Head of department is the only academic colleague routinely consulted at the ANU during tenure and promotion procedures, etc. Collecting and documenting feedback from other colleagues gives you the opportunity to take greater control over assessment of your teaching by providing additional perspectives in areas *you* regard as important.

- Scholarship in teaching is enhanced when it is treated with the same concern and respect that scholarship in research demands. Peer review of research activities and products is commonplace; so should it be with teaching activities and products.

- Many academic staff feel isolated around their teaching activities. Discussing teaching issues with colleagues, especially in a reciprocal format, can help reduce such isolation.

- Where peer feedback arrangements are reciprocal, you have a double opportunity for development of teaching, both through feedback and reflection on your own activites as well as through the chance to observe and reflect on one another's approach to teaching.

A note of caution

It is important to select colleagues with whom you feel comfortable. You should also discuss at the outset issues of confidentiality and provide them with direction on the type of feedback you are seeking. Ways of doing this will be discussed further in the 'Approaches to try' section.

While peers can give useful feedback on your teaching presentation within the classroom, their views in that area may be less valid and reliable than those of students, who are after all in the best position to know what impact your teaching has had on them. Furthermore, colleagues typically attend fewer classes than students, provide a smaller sample size, and may distort your teaching by their presence. On the other hand, colleagues are in a better position to comment on the preparation, design and management aspects of your teaching, such as aims, materials, assessment, standards than are students.

Which colleagues to ask?

As well as choosing colleagues whom you trust and with whom you feel comfortable, it is important to select those who can best comment on the areas in which you are most interested. Categories of colleagues and the areas on which they can best comment include:

Colleagues from the *same* discipline

Due to their subject knowledge and experience, these staff are in a good position to comment on selection of text and reading lists, whether materials are up-to-date, appropriateness of course objectives, standards of marking and assessment, etc., as well as generic aspects of your teaching preparation and presentation.

Head of department

Given the departmental perspective of Heads, they can well comment on the degree to which course objectives match departmental and degree objectives, how well the course prepares students for future courses, etc. Potentially they can also take on the same role as any other colleague within your department, as above.

Colleagues from *other* disciplines

The focus of these staff would be on pedagogy rather than subject knowledge. Staff from other disciplines are more likely to bring a different perspective to teaching than those within the same discipline, so can be particularly useful when looking for innovative ideas. They can also comment on generic aspects of teaching such as clarity of aims, choice of teaching methods, relationship between aims, teaching methods and assessment, value of support materials, etc.

CEDAM staff

CEDAM staff can play a similar role to colleagues from other disciplines, but in addition bring a broad background of scholarship in the theory and practice of university teaching and learning.

Tutors, demonstrators or lecturers assisting in the teaching of your courses

Other staff involved in your courses are in an excellent position to comment on how well students are managing in different areas, the usefulness of support materials, pace of the course, etc.

Special Interest Group (SIG) members and Email contacts

It's now possible to establish or to join special interest groups - groups of people with similar interests to your own, and with the willingness and ability to work with you in amutually beneficial peer review relationship - by email.

Suggestions:

As a first step, discuss peer review privately with a trusted colleague in your department. Ask for his or her help in revising your teaching and assessment methods, course materials and so on - and be prepared to offer the same in return.

As a second step, ask a few “other-institutional” colleagues at your next conference whether they would mind

- reading and commenting on what you’ve written or what you’re planning to do about teaching and assessment methods, or
- test-flying some of your newly developed course materials with some of their students and so on.

And be prepared to offer the same in return.

As a third step, consider raising the question of peer review - or at least of the occasional class-room observation and structured discussion - with your Department Head . Your Department Head’s particular interest in the quality of the teaching and learning in their department may often make them excellent colleagues to engage with. More to the point, however, there will be times when your Department Head will be called on to comment on the quality of your teaching. Give her/him the chance to comment from first hand experience.

Your Department Head’s ability to engage in peer review activities may be severely limited by his or her administrative work load. When this is the case it may only be possible to raise with them issues in your teaching that affect the department as a whole, and to have these issues dealt with in departmental meetings or at a policy level. Accept what it’s possible for these colleagues to give. Seek further engagement from those who are better positioned to give it. And always be prepared to return the favour.

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Setting ground rules: clarifying needs and expectations

It is important to ensure that all those involved meet in advance to clarify what is wanted from the review. The feedback you receive is likely to be more useful, and both you and your colleague(s) are likely to feel more comfortable, if you provide some guidelines in advance as to what you expect and would like to focus on. Furthermore, having clear expectations and guidelines will increase the comfort of all concerned, and extra insights into teaching goals and practices can be derived from these meetings alone.

The type of issues you should consider clarifying include:

- The nature of the peer review activity, i.e., what you would like your colleague(s) to do
- Any particular aspects of your course, teaching, materials, etc on which you would like them to concentrate, plus any areas to ignore
- How much time, over what period you anticipate the review activity would take for your colleague, plus when and how often you would expect feedback from him/her
- Any background material you can provide to help give a context for the activity, e.g. course outline, student grade distribution, student feedback from previous years, your motivation or aim in requesting feedback, etc.
- How you expect your colleague to provide her/his feedback to you, e.g. informally over coffee, more formally in writing, etc.
- How you intend to use the feedback given
- Issues of confidentiality of the information - both yours and theirs
- Whether your colleague(s) would appreciate you offering a reciprocal feedback service to them

Anecdote 1:
Aaron S. asks peers to review a new Sylviculture unit

Aaron S. wanted to create a new third-year unit in Sylviculture for inclusion in the Forestry Department's calendar.

The calendar was going to press in eight months' time.

He wrote to two friends - one in Monash and the other in James Cook University - and asked them if they would act as peer reviewers of his unit's proposed content, structure and supportive material resources. He said he had a complete draft of the unit documentation, and outlines of the other units in the Forestry course into which his new unit was expected to fit, together with information about pre-requisites and co-requisites, and could send it all to them straight away if they agreed to help him. To make sure they knew what they would be saying "Yes" to, he told them he would like to have their initial comments in writing within two months, and that he would like to respond to those initial comments within a month of receiving them by sending them a revised draft for further and final comments. He had previously acted as peer reviewer of the JCU friend's unit in Rainforest Ecology, and was, in fact, only asking for the same help he had already given.

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The friends did as Aaron asked.

During the review process, both friends showed interest in Aaron's approach to group project work - especially the pattern of teacher-individual and teacher-group consultations surrounding the self- and peer-assessment of the projects.

The unit was taught and evaluated.

In the light of the evaluation, Aaron thought it appropriate to modify the unit, so he ask his friends for help with a second round of peer reviewing. They both said "Yes", as long as he would tell them in detail how his group projects and his assessment scheme had worked - and if he would let them test out their own versions of his model in their own units.

By the end of the following year the three colleagues had drafted a joint paper on "consultation and negotiation in the assessment of group projects in undergraduate Earth Science courses". The peer reviewing of Aaron's Sylviculture unit continues.

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Tailoring feedback to your needs:

Matching approaches to aims

Your need for feedback will vary depending on your particular concerns at this time and the stage of development and delivery that the relevant course is currently at. This section is designed to help you find approaches to peer review which are relevant to your current needs, though you may also find useful ideas in other sections. All ideas and approaches presented in this booklet are illustrative only and should be modified to suit your particular goals and circumstances.

This section addresses 8 topics:

Course design/redesign

If you are currently involved in designing or redesigning a course, see topics 1, 2 and 8.

Review of materials

If you are at the stage of preparing or reviewing course materials and assessment, see topics 1, 2 and 3.

Assessment and marking

For ideas on gathering peer feedback on assessment and marking, see topics 2, 3 and 8:

Presentation and delivery

If your main concern is currently with course delivery and presentation, see topics 4, 5, 6, 7:

Tailoring feedback to your needs:

Some approaches to try

1. Review of course materials

Colleagues could be asked to comment on your course teaching materials, in much the same way as you would ask for comment when preparing teaching materials for publication, such as a textbook. Materials provided could include:

- Unit outline or course guide
- Reading list
- Lab manual
- Lecture notes or handouts
- Audio visual materials
- Assessment materials

Ask peers to comment on aspects such as:

- Appropriateness of the reading material e.g., relevance, breadth of coverage, representativeness of materials in the area, up-to-dateness, level of difficulty, required background knowledge

- Amount of reading expected of students

- Guidance provided to students, e.g., indication of expected workload or input outside class, distinction between material of greater and lesser importance, information to help in selecting particular reading materials from the list

- Clarity of unit objectives and what is required or expected of students within the unit

- Appropriateness of the emphasis and time given to each topic in the lecture schedule

- Organization and ordering of topics

- Selection and use of media

- Clarity of objectives in terms of what students are expected to learn or achieve by the end of the unit.

- Appropriateness of objectives, taking into account the level of the course, the broader objectives of the department overall, and integration with objectives of preceding and following units

- Consistency between unit objectives, methods for teaching and learning, assessment and content

- Guidance provided to students as to the standards or criteria associated with different grades

- Validity of the assessment tasks as ways of assessing the levels of skill and knowledge the students are expected to acquire in the unit - i.e. would the assessment test achievement of the unit objectives?

- Value of assessment as opportunities for enhancing learning, not just grading performance - i.e. would the assessment help students achieve unit objectives?

- Opportunities for feedback to aid students in their development during the unit; appropriate timing and weighting of assessment.

Anecdote 2:

Petra J. asks peers to review course materials on assessment in a Family Law uit

Petra J., a lecturer in the Faculty of Law, wanted to pilot some help formulating a statement about assessment to include in her Family Law unit's course materials.

Fortunately, there were two colleagues in rooms just down her corridor with whom she was on particularly good terms, socially *and* professionally. One of them had taught the Family Law unit a few years before. Both of them, like Petra, were unconvinced that the assessment methods they were using actually tested what their students learnt.

They all had their own ideas about hos to make things better, but decided that they should find out what the students thought before they put anything on paper. So, with their help, Petra drafted some statements outlining what she expected the students to learn in the unit. She gave these statements to her students in the second last week of semester and asked them to comment on four things:

(1) whether they had, in fact, learned what she had expected them to;

(2) if they hadn't learned all the things on her list, what *hadn't* they learned;

(3) what *had* they learned from the unit that *wasn't* on the list; and

(4) what they thought were appropriate ways of showing (for assessment purposes) what they had learned and how well they had learned it.

Most of the students said, one way or another, that they had learned what the unit guide had told them to learn, no more and no less - and most of them opted for an essay and a formal exam, or for a formal exam but no essay.

Some of them said they didn't mind having their tutorials assessed. Some of them said they would like the chance to formulate exam questions on the tutorial topics they had concentrated on. They thought the exam questions themselves could be assessed as they would indicate how well they had understood the key points or the significant relationships in their topics. They also said that Petra might modify and include some of the better questions in the actual exam.

Four of the students said that they had learned a lot about the law itself, about where to go to get the best resources, about the psychology of interviewing clients who were embroiled in Family Law matters, and about bringing the wisdom of Solomon to bear in their chambers *and* in court. They thought they would like the chance to respond to difficult hypothetical cases by actually locating the most useful precedents, justifying their usefulness, indicating what advice they would provide to their clients, and by explaining how they would conduct the case, or how they would recommend that it be conducted.

One of the four said she thought the hypothetical case could be dealt with by writing down all the appropprite information under formal exam conditions. The other three said they would prefer less formal conditions, but would be satisfied if they could respond to the hypothetical cases as if they were researching and preparing for an actual case, and if they could do it in half a day in the Law Faculty Library.

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Petra wrote these ideas and some of her own into a draft assessment program and rationale, and asked her two friends to talk through the draft with her over coffee a couple of times to help her build it into an assessment program that would really give *all* her students a fair chance to show what they had learned and how well they had learned it. She explicitly asked for two one-hour coffee discussions, two weeks apart, so that she could revise her draft in the light of what had been said, and have the revised draft discussed once before she committed herself to it. Her colleagues agreed.

Together, they came up with a very lucid statement about how they were trying to make the assessments useful as learning experiences and more closely related than conventional examinations usually are to professional work practices. They included this statement and an outline of four suggested assessment methods in the materials to be distributed to the next batch of students.

Of the assessment items they finally offered the students, these were the two the students settled on

* two post-tutorial summaries , each with a suggested exam question on the tutorial topic attached: 30%

* one exam, to be written in eight hours or less, under supervision, inside the Law Faculty Library, with the first half of the exam requiring students to choose and deal with 1 of 5 hypothetical cases, and the second half of it requiring students to answer 2 out of 6 conventional essay questions: 70%.

Petra conducted and then evaluated the pilot.

She found that the students were relatively pleased with the method of assessment, but that some students still preferred (a few of them quite strongly) to be assessed by means of a formal exam and a conventional essay.

She presented and discussed the evaluation in a Faculty Meeting during the semester break. Two of her colleagues showed sufficient interest in what Petra was doing to join her and her two friends as a five-person group with a special interest in assessment in law education. The special interest group is now a functioning peer review pool.

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2. Review of student achievement assessment methods, and marking standards

Peer review of grading standards is a bit like second marking. Second marking is already an accepted practice in many departments. Frequently it is used to get a second opinion on outstandingly good, outstandingly bad and borderline assignments. Used in this way it can become a regular source of feedback on each others' assessment procedures and standards.

Consider asking colleagues to review samples of student work in your unit and to comment on the grades and the feedback you give to your students. Select samples from varying types of assessment representing varying levels of achievement. (If you would also like feedback on the assessment materials themselves, see the preceding section on 'Review of course materials' for further ideas.)

Some questions you might like to ask your peers to respond to:

- Do the students seem to be performing at an appropriate standard - i.e. does it look like the students are being properly prepared to progress to the next level of study in the area, or to a higher level of learner-autonomy in the subject?
- Are the grades assigned at an appropriate standard - i.e. does it look like the cut-off points between Fail, Pass, Credit, Distinction and High Distinction are appropriate?
- Does the assessment actually look like it would test the discipline-specific, profession-specific or generic knowledge this unit is supposed to help the students to acquire?
- Do the assessment tasks actually ask the students to use the discipline-specific, profession-specific or generic skills I'm attempting to help them develop in this unit? i.e. would it be more appropriate to ask these students for an expository, argumentative or descriptive discourse; an analytic report; an oral presentation of some kind; responses to short answer or multiple choice questions; a demonstration of their problem-solving ability; an actual performance; in the field; under exam conditions; in simulated or actual work circumstances?
- Does the assessment look like it would stimulate or provide an opportunity for further learning?
- Does the marking and feedback seem to be consistent across students and items of assessment?
- Is the manner in which feedback is provided to students - orally, as written comments, via email, via a checklist, via cassette tape, individually, as a class... - appropriate?
- Do you think the feedback I'm giving would be helpful to the students?

Some questions your peers might like to ask you to respond to:

- Does the assessment program indicate that all, most, some or very few students are achieving the unit's objectives? And if so what do you do about it?

- Does the students' submitted work reveal problem areas in the unit or course? And if it does, what do you do about it?

Anecdote 3:
Martin L. asks a peer to help him create a set of marking criteria for an English unit.

Martin L. was a new tutor in the English Department. He wasn't sure how his colleagues went about deciding on the grades they gave to their students, i.e. what their marking standards were. When he asked some of them, seeking guidance on how *he* might go about it, he discovered that there was no consistent advice to be had. He did discover, however, that consensual agreement about implicit standards were often reached in markers' meetings in which essays that were thought to be of Pass, Credit, Distinction and High Distinction standard were read out and the reasons for the grades were discussed.

He acknowledged that these markers' meetings constituted a kind of peer review of assessment standards; but he wanted something he could actually give to his students *before* they wrote their essays. So he modified a set of criteria he found in a "Manual on Tutoring and Demonstrating" and asked one of his colleagues to work through it with him.

They worked through it three times, refining it each time.

Their conversations produced the criteria document included below. It also produced a determination in both of them (1) to use the criteria outlined in the document, (2) to present and explain the criteria to their students, (3) to explain in their feedback how they had applied the criteria when grading the students' essays, and (4) to ask the students at the end of the semester how useful it had been to have the criteria spelled out for them in that way. They also undertook to evaluate the experiment and to report on it to the Department in the following February.

Here's the document:

A set of criteria for
Honours Year English Students

Please note: Criteria are NOT rules to abide by. They are guidelines for you to use when revising your early drafts, and for your tutor to refer to when reading and responding to your work. Please feel free to discuss your tutor's or lecturer's assessment criteria with them- *especially* if what you write is written with different criteria in mind.

A **Pass** mark assumes:

1 correct spelling, punctuation and grammar (which might mean thorough proof-reading before submission)
2 that the wording of the set question or topic has been understood and addressed
3 that the required or contracted reading or research has been done
4 an awareness and a basic understanding of major relevant theories/theorists
5 justification of interpretations by explicit reference to the text(s) being studied
6 sufficient organisation of thought and expression to allow the reader to follow without effort
7 correct referencing

A **Credit** mark assumes all of the above, plus:

1 evidence of *some* additional reading or research (as per the provided reading guide)
2 identification and discussion of issues within the topic
3 evidence of *some* awareness of historical context and relevant intertextuality *(For "intertextuality" read "deliberate or involuntary, explicit or implicit reference or allusion to one text in another)*
4 comparison of major relevant theories/theorists as they pertain to the topic and/or the issues within the topic
5 organisation of thought and expression which logically aids the arguments being presented

Distinction and **High Distinction** marks assume all of the above, plus:

1 evidence of *extensive* additional reading or research (going *well* and *imaginatively* beyond the provided reading guide)
2 personal analysis of issues within the topic
3 *extensive* awareness of historical context and relevant intertextuality, *and* the ability to justify interpretations by explicit reference to the text *and* to what's known about the text's historical context and/or relevant intertextuality
4 application of the principles and theories inherent in the material being studied to issues within the topic, with appropriate evidence to support or refute arguments

5	application of the principles and theories inherent in the material bein studied to broader issues, with appropriate evidence to support or refute arguments

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A variant set of criteria for First Year English Students

At first-year level, similar, but less extensive criteria usually apply. They might be represented as follows.

Please note: Criteria are NOT rules to abide by. They are guidelines for you to use when revising your early drafts, and for your tutor to refer to when reading and responding to your work. Please feel free to discuss your tutor's or lecturer's assessment criteria with them- *especially* if what you write is written with different criteria in mind.

A **Pass** mark assumes:
1 correct spelling, punctuation and grammar (which might mean thorough proof-reading before submission)
2 that the wording of the set question or topic has been understood and addressed
3 evident awareness of the issues involved in the question or topic
4 evidence that the required reading has been done
5 justification of interpretations by explicit reference to the text
6 sufficient organisation of thought and expression to allow the reader to follow without effort
7 correct referencing

A **Credit** mark assumes all of the above, plus some or all of the following:
1 evidence of some additional reading (e.g. as per the provided reading guide)
2 some discussion of the issues involved
3 evident awareness of relevant historical context(s) and/or relevant intertextuality
4 organisation of thought and expression which logically aids the arguments being presented

Distinction and **High Distinction** marks assume all of the above, plus some or all of the following:
1 evidence of additional reading that goes beyond the provided reading guide
2 some analysis of the issues involved
3 justification of interpretations by explicit reference to the text *and* to what's known about the text's historical context and/or relevant intertextuality
4 strong cogency and coherence of argumentation

A note on "originality"

In this discipline, originality might mean:
- freshness of expression
- "uniqueness" or "unusualness" of ideas, evidence, argument, approach to and/or execution of the set task
- different but appropriate and effective methods of addressing, engaging, and maintaining the interest or attention of the known or assumed reader
- effective use of creative or lateral thinking when drawing an argument to a conclusion

or any number of other things.

It's a mistake to require it, or to include it in a list of criteria designed for the discipline of English Studies

In this discipline, originality is appreciated and rewarded when it occurs, as long as it's achieved without loss of quality due to abuse of, or disregard for, or ignorance of the conventions of "correct" or "effective" communication.

They distributed, explained and applied the criteria, and then evaluated the effect of doing so, according to plan. In their report to the Department they indicated that using the criteria had not constrained them, but had enabled them far more effectively than before, to justify to themselves the grades they wanted to give, and to explain to the students what it was about their work that might be improved.

They also acknowledged that they weren't completely satisfied with the way they had worded the criteria, and that they would continue to peer review each other's assessment and feedback procedures with the intention of giving a progress report to the Department again in a year's time.

Their peer review process is still going on.

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3. Feedback from tutors and demonstrators

Tutors and demonstrators are in an excellent position to provide feedback on areas of student difficulty with a course. Due to the typically lower staff-student ratio and more discussion oriented nature of these classes, student difficulty in developing particular skills, approaches or concepts is more likely to become apparent in these settings than in lecture settings. Furthermore, tutors and demonstrators may be marking student work, reading texts and course materials, plus attending lecture classes, making them excellent candidates to provide feedback to you on assessment, reading materials, other course materials and lecture presentations.

Requests for feedback could be made individually or, where there are a number of demonstrators or tutors, at a group meeting. Comments and suggestions could be gathered verbally or in writing. However, it will be important to ensure they feel comfortable about giving frank feedback, especially where there is a status difference between you and your tutors/demonstrators. Consequently, you might like to provide for anonymous feedback.

Guidelines for gathering feedback and tailoring it to your needs can be adapted from those given in other sections of this booklet for student assessment and course materials. However, for feedback on areas of student difficulty in particular, you might like to consider the following areas:

- Topics or sections of the unit with which students had particular difficulty
- Common types of misconceptions or confusion experienced by students
- Sections which needed more (or less) lecture or tutorial time
- Any related areas not covered in the unit in which students showed interest
- Areas of the text or reading list which were particularly helpful or difficult to understand
- Items of assessment with which students had difficulty
- Whether the assessment provided a fair test of students' ability
- Whether the assessment increased students' learning
- Whether the assessment highlighted for students important areas or issues in the unit
- Timing of assessment, especially in terms of students' need for feedback

Anecdote 4:
What happened when Brenda H. asked her tutors to help her identify and deal with students' difficulties

Brenda H. gave the lectures in a unit called Utilitarian Politics in the Twentieth Century. As coordinator of the unit she traditionally held fortnightly meetings with her tutors. She made a point of asking her tutors at these meetings whether their students had any notable misconceptions or confusions relating to the topics covered in her lectures, or any identifiable difficulties with the set readings. Whenever the tutors said "Yes", and identified misconceptions, confusions or difficulties that seemed to be shared by numbers of students she would try to get a discussion going on what could or should be done about it. She usually acted promptly on the suggestions that grew out of these discussions.

Two years ago Brenda had a new tutor (Jan) on her team - someone who was new to university teaching as well as to the Department. Jan had difficulty joining in these discussions. Brenda believed that Jan was working well with her students, and had heard on the grapevine that she was having a lot of her time taken up with individual student consultations outside of class time.

Brenda said later that she thought she needed to bring Jan into the discussions, partly because the discussions were part of the teaching and learning "culture" she had built into the unit, and she thought it was part of her job to induct newcomers into that "culture"; and partly because she thought Jan was dealing all by herself with some of the difficulties it would be easier to deal with as a team.

She tried a number of things without success. Eventually, she began to sense two things: that Jan though most of the difficulties she was dealing with in her one-to-one consultations stemmed from Brenda's lecturing; and that she didn't know how to say this in any of the meetings without giving offense. Being a straight-talker, Brenda asked Jan privately if this was the case. Jan finally said yes.

Brenda had put a lot of time and effort into the shaping of the lecture-tutorial schedule. The tutorials followed rather than anticipated the lectures, and while the suggested tutorial topics were clearly related to the lecture topics she did not require her own tutorials or those taken by her tutors to be tied too tightly to the lectures. She gave all the lectures herself, but it was known that she was not defensively territorial about them. So she asked her tutors if, over the next two weeks, they would talk with some of their students about the lectures, tutorials and the relationships between them, and come to the next meeting ready to discuss what they had discovered.

The meeting revealed **four things** . **First**, the students enjoyed the lectures. **Second**, some students found that when they moved from being the passive receivers of informative entertainment to being active participants in lively discussions, *that shift alone* was enought to cause the tutorials to wander away from the suggested topics. The tutorial discussions gave them the chance to voice and test their own growing perceptions and understandings of the subject, and doing this took precedence over "learning what the topics they were 'supposed to' discuss were 'supposed to' teach them". The lectures sometimes gave them things to test their perceptions and understandings against, but while they were *useful*, they weren't actually *necessary* for that. **Third**, that some students (regrettably in the majority in some classes - in two of Jan's classes in particular) wanted to continue being passive receivers of informative entertainment when they moved from lectures to tutorials - and that they were the ones who complained that the lectures and the tutorials weren't well enough linked, or didn't provide them with 'the answers'. **Fourth**, most of the "difficulties" the students talked about arose in the tutorials rather than the lectures, and seemed to stem primarily from the fact that the more interactive tutorials were only meeting the expectations of the "active participants" while the less interactive tutorials didn't meet the needs of the "passive receivers" as well as the lectures did.

Of the few students who actually knew what use they most often put the lectures to, most said they used them to get broad-brush pictures of the subject, and of the history and current state of research into the subject. One said she came to the lectures having identified the issues she wanted clarified, and spent her time listening for the clarification. Most students, however, seemed less able than these few to put their perception of the value of the lectures into words. They just enjoyed them.

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The next two meetings were spent discussing “passive reception” and “active participation” and how to use the lectures *and* tutorials to maximise the opportunities for both. By the third meeting they had begun a peer-review of the wording of the suggested tutorial topics which resulted, by the end of the semester, in a decision to abandon the topics altogether and to create a set of instructions and suggestions about possible tutorial activities - ways of discovering and bringing to the surface what the lectures, the set readings, and the students’ own readings and life experience caused the students to understand “Utilitarian Politics” to mean.

Jan found these discussions much easier to join in because they were creative and didn’t put her in the position of seeming to criticise Brenda. She also discovered that the discussions were pretty effectively modelling the tutorial activity they were supposed to design.

The tutors’ meetings are now constituted as full-on peer review sessions, focusing on interactive breaks in lectures and instructional breaks in tutorials. Rightly or wrongly, they figured it was better to provide for the “passive receivers” in the tutorials than to try to turn all the students into active tutorial participants.

They report that the need for out-of-class consultations seems to be dropping.

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4. Observation of classes: pre-observation guide, classroom observation guide, and post-observation guide.

Please Note: Some of the material below has been adapted from "An Approach to Colleague Evaluation of Classroom Instruction" by M.D. Sorcinelli, (1984) *Journal of instructional Development* 7(4), p. 16., cited in L. Keig and M. Waggoner (1994) *Collaborative Peer Review: The Role of Faculty in Improving College Teaching* ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 2, The George Washington University: Washington, DC.

Implicit in the material is a model of "good teaching". This model may or may not be appropriate to the teaching of your discipline or subject area. It may or may not be acceptable to you, given your own understanding of what best helps learning to occur in your students. It's our recommendation that, as you work through this material, or figure out how to use it, you bring its implicit model to the surface and make it explicit in your own words. Doing this may make it easier for you to make your own preferred model of good teaching explicit, and to modify the guidelines and reframe the questions that follow to suit that model should you wish to do so.

Some academics may feel uncomfortable about being observed by colleagues while teaching, and also about commenting on others' teaching. This is unfortunate as it leads to many wasted opportunities for interaction and development. As fellow university teachers, colleagues are in a position to comment on aspects of our teaching and to share ideas and strategies derived from their own experience in a way that students are not.

The best ways to increase comfort and confidence in the process is to ensure that all those involved meet in advance to clarify expectations (see 'Setting ground rules'), to engage in such feedback regularly so that it becomes a normal part of practice, to give and receive feedback in a productive frame of mind, and to exchange opportunities for feedback in a mutual way.

Further below is a fairly comprehensive list of various aspects of classroom presentation from which you can select those which are of greatest interest to you at this particular time. The alternative to requesting detailed feedback in specific areas is to use a simple generic formula.

As a general rule, it's appropriate to

- Provide your colleague with a list of your main aims for the class/course
- Say how you intend to achieve those aims
- Ask for general comments on whether your colleague felt you achieved your aims and what worked well/not so well. Then probe for more detailed explanation or ideas to try or suggestions for change as desired.

After which you might choose to use the more detailed guides and checklists outlined below, or to modify them to suit your own requirements:

Pre-Observation Meeting Guide:

(A checklist of questions to ask when you are preparing to play the role of observer)

1. Briefly, what will be happening in the class I will observe?
2. What is your goal for the class? What do you hope students will gain from this session?
3. What do you expect students to do in the class to reach stated goals?
4. What can I expect you to do in class? What role will you take? What teaching methods will you use?
5. What have students been asked to do to prepare for this class?
6. What was done in earlier classes to lead up to this one?
7. Will this class be generally typical of your teaching? If not, what will be different?
8. Is there anything specific on which you would like me to focus during this class?

Classroom Observation Guide:

(A checklist of questions to ask while playing the role of observer)

Students' and Teacher's Attitudes and Behaviors Before Class Begins

1. Do students arrive noticeably early or late?
2. Do they talk to each other?
3. Do they prepare for class, take out books and notebooks?
4. When does the instructor arrive?
5. What does he or she do before class (write on board, encourage informal discussion with students, sit behind the desk)?

Teacher's Knowledge of Subject Matter

1. Does the instructor exhibit knowledge and mastery of the content?
2. Is the depth and breadth of material covered appropriate to the level of the course and this group of students?
3. Does the material covered relate to the syllabus and goals of the course?
4. Does the instructor present the origin of ideas and concepts?
5. Does he or she contrast the implications of various theories?
6. Does he or she emphasise a conceptual grasp of the material?
7. Does he or she present recent developments in the discipline?
8. Does he or she present divergent points of view?
9. Is there too much or not enough material included in the class session?
10. Is the content presented considered important within the discipline or within related disciplines?

Teacher's Organization and Presentation Skills

A. Engaging Student Interest

1. Does the instructor prepare students for the learning that is to follow by assessing what they know about the topic through use of analogy, a thought.provoking question, reference to a common experience, etc.?

B. Introduction

1. Does the instructor provide an overview of the class objectives?

2. Does he or she relate the day's lesson to previous class sessions?
3. Does he or she use an outline on the board or overhead projector?

C. Organisation and Clarity

1. Is the sequence of covered content logical?
2. Is the instructor able to present content in a clear and logical manner that is made explicit to students?
3. Does he or she provide transitions from topic to topic, make distinctions between major and minor points, and periodically summarise the most important ideas?
4. Does he or she define new concepts and terms?
5. Does he or she use illustrations and examples to clarify difficult ideas?
6. Does he or she use relevant examples to explain major points?
7. Does he or she provide handouts when appropriate?

D. *Teaching Strategies*

1. Are the instructor's teaching methods appropriate for the goals of the class?
2. Is he or she able to vary the pattern of instruction through movement around the class, gestures, voice level, tone and pace?
3. Does, or could, he or she use alternative methods such as media, discussion, lectures, questions, case studies, etc.?
4. Is the use of the board effective? Is the board work legible, organised?
5. If appropriate, does he or she use students' work (writing assignments, homework assignments, etc.)?
6. Are the various teaching strategies effectively integrated?

E. *Closure*

1. Does the instructor summarise and integrate major points of the class session at the end of the period?
2. Does he or she relate the class session to upcoming class sessions or topics?
3. Are assignments presented clearly, hurriedly or drawn out?
4. Are assignments appropriate to class goals and course level?
5. Are students attentive until the class session ends? Or are they restless (talking, closing notebooks, etc.) before the class ends?
6. What happens after class? Are there informal discussions among students or between the instructor and students after class?

Teacher's Discussion and Questioning Skills:

A Introduction to Discussion

1. How is discussion initiated?
2. Are the purposes and guidelines clear to students?
3. Does the instructor encourage student involvement?

B. Types of Questions

1. Are questions rhetorical or real; one at a time or multiple?
2. Does the instructor use centering questions (to refocus students' attention on a particular topic), probing questions (to require students to go beyond a superficial or incomplete answer), or redirecting questions (to ask for clarification or agreement from others in the class)?

C. Level of Questions

1. What level of questions does the instructor ask? (Lower level questions usually have a fixed or "right" answer and require students to recall, list, or define principles or facts. Higher level questions ask students to generalise, compare, contrast, analyse, or synthesise information in meaningful patterns.)

D. What Is Done with Student Questions?

1. Are questions answered in a direct and understandable manner?
2. Are questions answered politely and enthusiastically?

E What Is Done with Student Responses?

1. How long does the instructor pause for student responses (formulating answers to difficult questions takes a few minutes)?
2. Does he or she use verbal reinforcement?
3. Does he or she use nonverbal responses (e.g., smile, nod, puzzled look)?
4. Does he or she repeat answers when necessary so the entire class can hear?
5. Is he or she receptive to student suggestions or viewpoints contrary to his or her own?

Teacher's Presentation Styles

A Verbal Communications

1. Can the instructor's voice be clearly heard?
2. Does he or she raise or lower voice for variety and emphasis?
3. Is the rate of speech appropriate? Too fast or too slow? Appropriate for note taking?
4. Are speech fillers (e.g., "you know" or "in fact") distracting?
5. Does the instructor talk to the class, not to chalkboard or ceiling?

B. Nonverbal Communication

1. Does the instructor look directly at students?
2. Does he or she scan the class when asking or responding to questions?
3. Does he or she focus on particular students or sides of the room?
4. Do facial and body movements contradict speech or expressed intentions?
5. Does the instructor use facial expressions (such as raised eyebrows), body posture (sitting, standing, folding arms), or body motions (proximity to students, clenched fists, pointing) to sustain student interest?

Students' Behaviors

1. What are the note taking patterns in the class? (Do students take few notes, write down everything, write down what instructor puts on the board, lean over to copy others' notes in order to keep up?)
2. Are students listening attentively, leaning forward, slumped back in desks, heads on hands?
3. Do students listen or talk when other students or the instructor are involved in discussion?
4. How actively are students involved (asking questions, doing homework, doodling on notebooks, looking out the window)?
5. Are there behaviors that are out of the mainstream of class activity (random conversations among students, reading materials not relevant to class, passing notes)?

Post-Observation Meeting Guide:

(A checklist of questions for the observer to ask after the class is over)

1. In general, how do you think the class went?
2. What do you think about your teaching during the class?
3. Did students accomplish the goals you had planned for the class?
4. Is there anything that worked well for you in class today that you particularly liked? Does it usually go well?
5. Is there anything that did not work well that you disliked about the way the class went? Is this typically a problem area for you?
6. What were your teaching strengths? Did you notice anything you improved or any personal goals you met?
7. What were your teaching problems - areas that still need improvement?
8. Do you have any suggestions or strategies for improvement?

Anecdote 5

Claus P. seeks to correct a misapprehension

Claus P. regularly gave half of the lectures in a second year Physics unit. He received what he *and* his Head of Department considered to be unsatisfactory ratings on his lecturing in the department's end of semester summative evaluation. Almost half of his students indicated that they found his somewhat formal method of instruction too severe for their liking, and some of them said so quite emphatically.

Claus believed that his teaching style was both appropriate and effective.

He had seen the list of questions we've included above, and knew that they covered much more ground in much more detail than the questions included in the department's summative evaluation instrument - so he asked his Head of Department to observe three of his lectures, and to go through the full regime of pre-, during- and post-observation questions as outlined above.

The exams in this Physics unit were marked by a panel of staff members. Knowing that his students had good pass rates, and that his exam questions actually did test what he had taught, and were designed to give his students the sensation of learning something more about the material in the unit (as distinct from simply remembering the material and writing it down) he also asked that the exam questions he set, and his students' examination results be used as further evidence of the appropriateness and effectiveness of his teaching.

It worked. The Head of Department accepted Claus's invitation. He discovered that Claus was thoroughly prepared and crisply articulate in the pre-observation meeting, that he scored extremely well on almost every question in the classroom observation guide, and that he and Claus saw almost eye-to-eye in each of the three the post-observation meetings.

By the time the three observations were over the Head of Department was able to attribute the negative feedback the students had given Claus squarely to two factors. Claus was able to focus his students' attention on his subject matter, and was able to lead them through it with care, patience and a willingness to be as iterative as he felt he had to be to get *all* his students to the same high pitch of understanding,; but he was almost entirely humourless, and made it very plain that he required his students to work very, very hard - much harder than anything in their backgrounds had prepared them for.

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The Head of Department was able to point this out. Claus received the information soberly. He couldn't tell jokes. For some reason, whenever he tried to tell one no-one laughed. And he was committed to the idea that success only came from hard work. So he chose not to alter his teaching style but, in consultation with his Head of Department, to work out an introduction to his block of lectures that made his expectations of the students and his manner of lecturing and examining very clear. He also devised alternative routes through the material he intended to cover in his lectures - research and problem-solving tasks that would enable a small number of students to learn what they had to learn without attending the lectures. These students would be required to meet with him at designated times, to use him as a learning consultant. With his Head of Department as his peer reviewer, Claus is now piloting these strategies.

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Anecdote 6

Katie C. finds limits to the usefulness of these guides and checklists

Katie C. used this observation guide, and one or two others like it, as means of structuring her reflections on her own teaching. She did this for a number of years, and seemed quite comfortable with what her reflections told her about her teaching. Then, quite suddenly, she became involved in the development of some instructional software and an interactive multi-media package for one of the units in which she taught.

She was seconded to the developmental project for a year. At the end of the year she was given the task of helping to integrate the new software and the multi-media package into the units for which they had been designed.

The method of integration had been planned in detail as part of the developmental project. Information about the software and the multi-media package (and how to access and use it) was distributed. The software itself was given to students in IBM and Macintosh format. The multi-media package was installed in a lab to which the students had 24 hour access. Katie's task was to ensure that all the students in the unit were able to use these new resources effectively in preparation for a series of lectures and workshops that occurred late in the first semester, and for projects that were due mid way through the second semester. Katie was to deliver some of the lectures and to convene some of the workshops.

Her intention was to run familiarisation sessions and then a series of what she called "master classes" during the first part of the semester, before her group of lectures and workshops began. She would then use the software (slowly and with explanations to begin with) in her lectures, and would ensure that the lectures prepared the students well for the workshops that followed.

She arranged for the unit coordinator to observe the familiarisation sessions, the "master classes" and her lectures and workshops, and to use the pre-observation meeting guide, the classroom observation guide and the post observation meeting guide as a way of structuring the process.

She was confident that the software would be easy for the students to accept as an enhancement of the lectures and a time-saving aid to their learning. What she didn't anticipate was the number and variety of student responses to the new resources. The range of the students' technical competence ran from the pre-novice to the intuitive genius class.

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Students in the pre-novice category tended not to attend the first of the familiarisation sessions. Those sessions were attended by students who were already familiar with the technology. The students' behaviours toward Katie in those sessions ranged from the interested and courteous to the arrogantly dismissive, with the most dismissive of the students being quite irrationally avid for contact with the technology - almost as if there was some kind of challenge the students had to meet, and they could only meet it by somehow *defeating* or *overcoming* the technology on their own terms. Almost all of them however, seemed unable or unwilling to make and keep eye contact with Katie - they focused almost exclusively on the screen and the keyboard.

It quickly became obvious that many of the questions in the classroom observation guide were not appropriate.

Later familiarisation sessions were attended by students who were less familiar with the technology. Their behaviours ranged from the tentative to the fearful. They, too made little or no eye contact with Katie, and seemed far less inclined to communicate verbally with her than she thought normal.

Given that the students focused on screen and keyboard, there was little or no value in Katie's non-verbal communications, and given that for most of these students the technology seemed like a labyrinthine mystery, there was little chance of structuring their learning experiences in the way she was accustomed to doing, or of bringing them to a satisfactory closure. For these students there was no question of closure, only of further causes for fear or unease.

The "master classes" were no better. If anything, the familiarisation sessions had caused the split between the novices and the intuitive geniuses to widen as the geniuses were far quicker to learn than the novices.

She found herself thinking that perhaps she needed the strategies of a music teacher and the ability to deal with the students one-by-one, each at his or her own level. At any rate, a whole new approach to teaching, and an entirely new observation guide needed to be found or created.

That work has become the focus of a quite intense peer review process involving Katie, the unit coordinator, two of their colleagues from Deakin University, and a couple of mature aged and technologically advanced students from the original group who turned out to be ex-TAFE teachers with an interest in making things work.

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5. Video recording of class presentation

Videotaping of classes or of a sample of teaching presentation provides a specialised form of classroom observation. Use of video provides a unique opportunity to see oneself in action. Additional advantages are that feedback on particular aspects can be illustrated through the video, more in depth analysis of teacher and student behaviour in the classroom is possible, one can focus on a particular aspect or segment of the class without watching the whole, and the video can be played when convenient.

The videotape could be of a real class in action or of a mock class. The former provides greater realism and representativeness. The latter enables greater flexibility. A service provided by CEDAM is facilitation of video feedback sessions on mini-lectures, tutorials or seminars. These are workshops in which a small group of staff (5-6 participants) presents in turn a mini-presentation of 5 minutes duration which is videotaped. Feedback on the presentation, illustrated through the video replay, is then given by all participants (including the presenter) as well as the CEDAM facilitator. You might like to get together a group of colleagues who would be interested in requesting such a session.

An alternative is to hire a video operator and equipment to tape one or more of your classes. You can then review it with one or more of your colleagues or with someone from CEDAM (or, indeed, on your own or with the relevant class of students). Again, it would be useful to clarify first which aspects of your teaching you would like reviewed.

Anecdote 7:
Carla V. gets videoed, gets upset, gets videoed again, and speaks well of the process

Carla V. broke into tears when she saw herself on video for the first time. It was a video of a five minute micro-lesson. It had been made in a micro-teaching workshop and the other five workshop participants were all quick to provide comfort and encouragement.

She had been getting mediocre student feedback on her lecturing, and in spite of her colleagues' comfort and encouragement she was convinced that she had seen why her students "didn't like her". One of the men in the workshop didn't quite know how to respond to this, so he offered to be videotaped while Carla collected herself. He also submitted himself to the feedback of the other participants and then went through the routine procedure of watching and commenting on his own performance. He said that he found the process illuminating. and recommended it to Carla as something that wouldn't hurt a bit.

By that time, Carla had calmed down. She had opted to see her video before letting the others talk about her presentation. Now she said she was ready to hear what they had to say. Unfortunately, her tears had so unnerved the group that they were more inclined to be complimentary than honest. The workshop leader was less unnerved, and strongly inclined to let Carla see her presentation through his eyes. He saw virtues in the preparation and the presentation that Carla herself had been unable to see, and in describing these virtues he laid the ground for comments on what might be improved. These comments, when they came, consisted mainly of observations about the accent, pitch, pace and volume of the oral delivery, and the making of eye contact. When it was all done, Carla was able to see that her presentation had not been the disaster she thought it had been - and she had discovered that she had five specifically identified things to concentrate on.

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All things considered the video feedback session had not been a very successful experience for Carla, and it took some time for her to be able to have a second try. When she was almost ready, she called one of the women from the workshop (Christine) and asked her if she would sit in on one of her lectures and talk with her afterwards about the five things the workshop had identified as warranting attention. When the time came for Christine to talk about what she had observed, she was honestly able to say that she had heard and understood every word Carla had said, had been able to follow the alternating drift and drive of her presentation, and had been pleased by the fact that the lecture had been more like a series of micro-lessons with breathing spaces between than a fifty-minute monologue.

This last observation surprised Carla somewhat, because she had not consciously structured the lecture in that way. She had simply allowed time for students to catch up, transcribe overheads, or figure out whether they had any questions to ask.

Carla began to sense that she had the makings of a natural lecturing style, that it seemed to appeal to at least one of her colleagues, and that it now seemed like a good idea to ask for a whole lecture to be videotaped so that she could see herself in action as if she were one of her own students.

Resources being what they are Carla was only ever able to get one lecture videotaped. In a remarkable display of generosity, Christine sat through the lecture and then sat through the tape and discussed it with Carla. After that, Carla watched the tape once more by herself.

The experience was a total success. Between them, Christine and the workshop leader had enabled Carla to identify in her won way what was good and what was improveable about her lecturing - and she was plainly capable of making the improvements.

Christine sat in on one more of Carla's lectures and they talked about it for a while, but by then the process had pretty much run its course. Carla now gets all the feedback she wants from her students, but says that one day soon she'll have her Head of Department sit in on one of her lectures and talk with her about it. She says she's almost brave enough, and that he's probably almost ready for the experience.

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6. Sustained collaboration: some models in practice

The value of any observations and the comfort both colleagues feel about giving and receiving feedback will be enhanced by requesting a number of observations over time, perhaps over 2 or 3 units. You may also like to offer the same service to your colleague - or to 2 or more of your colleagues. Why limit the benefit to only one? A group of colleagues helping each other in this way is likely to be even more beneficial because of the broader range of experience involved.

Collaboration and review with selected colleague(s), which is both regular and maintained over a substantial period of time, provides far greater opportunities for mutual teaching development and appropriate use of the teaching expertise of our colleagues than any one-off review could possibly do. It also involves a greater investment of time and reflection, which is part of what makes the activity so valuable.

Called by various names - critical friends, peer mentors, partners in learning, the buddy system, etc. - following are some examples taken from universities in the USA which illustrate different approaches to sustained peer review in practice.

One way review, in pairs

One method of peer review in place at the University of New York, Stony Brook, is for lecturers to work in pairs for one to three semesters, where one lecturer acts as observer of the other's classes, attending at least one class per week. In addition, both interview three students individually each week about how and what they are learning. They then meet weekly to discuss their observations from classes and student interviews. At the end of each semester, both lecturers write up their reflections on what they have learned about teaching and student learning.

Mutual review, in teams

At the University of Cincinnati, lecturers engage in mutual collaboration and observation in groups of three. In class, each observes and is in turn observed by the other two. The classroom observations are preceded by a meeting in which each lecturer clarifies their objectives for the class to be observed, the desired focus of the feedback from observations, and how the feedback will be gathered and reported. After each round of visits, the three meet again to discuss the process before scheduling another round.

Participant review

In one program at the University of New York, Cortland, colleagues from *different* disciplines attempt to observe each other's teaching from a student's point of view. As a novice to the subject, they attempt to take on the role of a student by attending all classes and completing assignments and exams. They also talk informally with students about the course and provide feedback to the teacher aimed at increasing student comprehension. In a similar program at New York University, participants keep a notebook of their observations and perceptions and meet weekly for an hour to exchange notes.

Designated, rotating mentor

At Evergreen State College one member of staff is released from teaching each quarter to be available to visit the classes of any other member of staff who requests it. Visits last for one week per member of staff, including all teaching activities occurring within that week. The activities include a pre observation discussion to set the agenda for the visits as well as a post observation discussion of what had been observed.

For more information on these or other examples of peer review in practice, see:
Keig, L. and Waggoner, M. (1994) *Collaborative Peer Review: The Role of Faculty in Improving College Teaching* ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 2, The George Washington University: Washington, DC.

Suggestion:

Consider working with one or more colleagues through a number of these methods with an eye to developing a tradition of methodical self-help and mutual benefit through systematic peer observations.

As a quality assurance mechanism, an established repertoire of such methods would be hard to better.

A department that had such a repertoire would soon find itself remarkably well equipped to describe its method of monitoring, maintaining and improving the quality of its teaching.

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7. Structured discussion after classes

There is much to be said for the value of simply exchanging ideas and experiences with colleagues. However, although such informal discussion with colleagues can be helpful, it is even more beneficial to provide some structure to such discussions.

This need not take away from an informal atmosphere. There is room for you both to ask unplanned questions, to probe more deeply on interesting issues and to make suggestions about what has worked or not worked in your experience under similar circumstances.

Reflection and documentation will be enhanced by recording answers briefly in some way, either during or just after the discussion. This will also help to identify any issues which arise consistently plus developmental changes over time.

For instance, you might ask your colleague to answer the following questions following attendance at a class, while you respond reflectively to her or his observations.

Alternatively, you could ask your colleague to address these questions to *you* and then respond to your comments. The latter approach can be used without him/her having attended the class; it still provides you with an opportunity to reflect on the class in a structured way and seek ideas and reactions from colleagues based on their general teaching experience.

Structuring the Discussion:

(A checklist of questions to use when structuring after-class discussions)

These questions are posed as if the observer were asking them of you - or as if you were asking them of the colleague whose class you had just observed. You might also ask them of yourself, of course, as prompts to structured reflection.

- In general, how do you think the class went?
- What were the objectives - were they (should they have been) understood in advance by the students - were they met - what makes you think so?
- What do you think students gained from the class - how do you know - what did you do to find out?
- Is there anything that worked particularly well - what makes you think so?
- Is there anything that did not work well - what makes you think so?
- What might be done differently next time?
- Does this raise issues to be addressed in student evaluations/feedback? If so, what issues are raised?

Anecdote 8
Robert McD. looks for a new language

Robert McD. wrote to me about the questions listed above. He said: "Those questions are generic. Answers to such questions are likely to be based only on the most vague and general knowledge of what makes a learning experience work. A colleague with a heightened knowledge of how learning happens in your discipline, and what helps it to happen best, may be able to answer these questions with some really useful information; but as long as one of the cultural factors we have to contend with is a disinclination to strive for any kind of expertise in teaching, our chances of finding such a colleague and engaging her in conversation about teaching is pretty low."

When Robert McD. asked his friend Jim to sit in on one of his lectures and tell him what he thought about it he didn't really know what he was asking for. Jim, who was also lecturing in the unit, but who didn't really know what level of expertise he was being asked to bring to bear on the task, agreed to do it. The fact is, as Robert said later, neither of them really knew that there were any levels of expertise other than those you reached by teaching for a while in the ways you had been taught when you were an undergraduate.

Robert gave Jim a list of questions like the ones listed above, and they agreed to use them as a framework for the conversations that followed. In the event, Jim's answers to the questions went like this:

1 **In general, how do you think the class went?** Pretty well. Everybody was in and seated within ten minutes of the start. Nobody walked out. There wasn't much background talk.
2 **What do you think the students got from the lecture?** I don't know. It's hard to tell. They got your lecture notes and copies of your overheads. They were annotating them like fury most of the time. I guess they got what you told them. It was clear enough.
3 **Did anything work particularly well?** What sort of "anything"? It was all of a piece, I thought. You got up there and talked. You've got a pleasant voice. You don't talk too fast. You tell a joke now and then. They pay attention. They write What else is there?
4 **What didn't work well?** Same answer.
5 **What might be done differently next time?** I wouldn't change anything. It seemed to go alright.

Robert wasn't satisfied. He had asked Jim to come in because he had begun getting ANUSETs done and the ANUSET results weren't as pleasing as he had hoped they would be. He wanted to up his game before going for tenure. Jim was Robert's immediate superior, he was friendly, and he already had tenure. He had looked like a sensible choice, but when Robert tried to find something in Jim's feedback to act on, there wasn't much to find. Jim wasn't all that surprised when Robert said this; but he responded pretty quickly by asking Robert how he would answer his own questions. Robert had hoped that Jim's answers would teach him how such questions were answered - or how they were answered in their department at least. Then, when Jim said to him: "OK then, what were you trying to achieve in the lecture?" he realised that the only answers he had came straight out of the Motherhood book.

Robert decided that his conception of his job, like his ability to find words to describe what he was trying to do as a teacher, was somewhat limited. Over the twelve months that followed he discovered that there had been a fair bit of research into such things as:

- different styles of teaching and learning that were more or less appropriate to different disciplines or subject areas;

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- approaches to learning that had been described as "passive-receptive", "interactive-creative", "surface", "strategic", "deep" and so on;
- aproaches to lecturing and tutoring that encourage and reward each of these different approaches to learning
- the effects of preparing the lecture material and structuring the lecture experience so that students are able to distinguish more clearly between what's essential, what's complementary, supplementary or illustrative, and what's merely a digression
- unobtrusive ways of finding out what students get and don't get from lectures
- levels of complexity in students' reports, assignments and responses to questions - and how to recognise and respond to them
- taxonomies, inventories and hierarchies of educational objectives which enable teachers to be quite specific about the cognitive skills or mental processes they are trying to model for, and develop in, their students

and so on.

Then he began to discover that he was talking "educationese", which made him feel uncomfortable, so he started to find his own way to talk about these things - that is, his own way of breaking the learning and teaching process down into things that could be named and looked for and commented on in future observations.

Jim showed some interest in what he was doing. Robert's last report was that he and Jim were peer-reviewing the original checklist of questions . "Once we've done that", Robert says, "we'll have another go at watching each other work and talking about what we see".

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8. Structured discussion of course design

These discussions should take place throughout the course-design period. They should involve teachers of pre-requisite, co-requisite and subsequent units or subjects. If possible, they should also involve teaching colleagues in cognate areas in your own or nearby departments, *and* professional colleagues from other institutions. When this occurs from the outset of the design process, structured discussion of course design sets the scene, in a most congenial and thorough-going way, for subsequent peer review of the course.

Structuring the Discussion:

(A checklist of questions to use from the very beginning of a course-designing or re-designing exercise)

- What are your primary goals for students' learning? - What changes in students' knowledge, skills, understanding and/or attitudes do you expect as an outcome of the course?

- How will you know whether students have achieved the desired learning outcomes?

- How will these goals and expected learning outcomes be conveyed to students?

- Are the goals and outcomes appropriately supported by the proposed choice of:
  - content
  - proposed readings and other course materials
  - teaching strategies
  - assessment?

- Is there any risk that the proposed assessment program will draw students away from learning toward cramming for marks, or test things that haven't been taught, or cause students to focus on "academically appropriate" skill development to the exclusion of "professionally appropriate" skill development?

- Is the proposed workload appropriate to the year-level or academic maturity of the students?

- How will you guarantee that the intellectual challenge of the course will be appropriate to the year-level or academic maturity of the students?

- Have the likely backgrounds, expectations and experience of students been considered?

- Have the goals and standards of all pre-requisites been taken into account?

- Have the workload and schedule of co-requisites and the requirements of subsequent units or subjects been taken into account?

- Does this new design take into account what has worked well, and not so well, in previous courses? - Do you have any feedback from previous

- How will you gauge the success of the course? - What summative and formative evaluation procedures do you plan to write into the course's program?
- What sort of feedback will you need before, during and after the course to help keep it on track?

Suggestions:

On not starting from scratch

The structured discussion outlined above is appropriate for curriculum revision as well as for original curriculum design. In fact, if you or other members of your department are intending to start a curriculum design project with a structured discussion you might be well advised to try it out first in a curriculum revision project.

First we suggest that you follow Robert McD.'s example (see above, Anecdote 8) and find your own way of asking these questions and phrasing your answers.

Having done that, you should begin by asking and answering your questions with respect to a unit or course you are responsible for. If you do this in company it will be a structured discussion. If you do it alone it will be a structured reflection. Either way, doing it now will make it easier to do it in the curriculum design exercise later on.

Next, you should make a record of what your answers reveal about that unit or course, and what you think it's appropriate to do in the light of those revelations. Turn your intentions into an action plan.

Then,

- put your record, complete with action plan, into your teaching portfolio - it's good evidence of what you're doing to monitor, maintain and improve the quality of the units or courses you're responsible for over an extended period of time
- indicate to your colleagues that you've begun a curriculum development project
- offer to show your colleagues how you've gone about it, so that your example might help to shape or develop your department's tradition of methodical curriculum development and revision. Such a tradition could be come a key part of the department's quality assurance program, and would enable the department to indicate what it has done, over an extended period of time, to monitor and maintain or improve its curricula.
- carry out your curriculum revision exercise and report on it to your department at a department meeting or an informal seminar. Indicate to your department that what you are doing might be thought of as a skill development exercise that it would be appropriate for other department members to go through before the curriculum design exercise gets under way.

Finally, once your curriculum revision exercise is done, offer your list of questions as a starting point for the curriculum design project. Structuring the initial curriculum design discussion will be a lot easier if someone in the department has already broken the ground.

Part 2

Introduction to Self Evaluation

Reflective Practice:
What do we Reflect On?

Self evaluation usually begins with a fresh discovery of the self that's to be evaluated.

This means focusing for a while on your self *as a teacher*, and this will probably cause you to re-conceptualise teaching itself.

Consequently, what follows is designed to help you clarify your own perception of what the word "teaching" means, and what you think you should and can do in order to be the teacher you most want to be.

First, however, we make the suggestion that you try using self evaluation as a way of enhancing peer and student evaluation. The gist of this suggestion is that you try out on yourself whatever student and peer-evaluation strategy you intend subsequently to use with others. Take note of your own responses, and lay them beside the responses you get from the students or colleagues you are seeking information from. The similarities and differences between your responses and theirs can be remarkably instructive.

Responding to checklists and other documents is another way of helping your less conscious understandings of teaching come to the surface. Hence, a number of documents are included below, each of which is included as an aid to reflection and a way of sharpening the focus of the reflection once it staryts to happen.

The first document is an account of "the PPIR Cycle in Context" which speaks of "teaching" as encompassing everything we do to help learning to occur. The things we do are grouped under the headings of Preparation, Presentation, Interaction, Reflection and the Management of Contextual Factors.

The second is the "AVCC Guidelines for Effective Teaching".

The third is HERDSA's "Challenging Concepts of Teaching: Some Prompts for Good Practice".

The fourth is a teaching goals inventory - the self-scoring version.

The fifth is an excerpt from a book which contains 55 checklists, each one on a different aspect of teaching.

The sixth is a checklist for the self-evaluation of classes you have had video-taped.

The seventh is a syllabus checklist recommended by the University Teaching Centre at the Carnegie Mellon University.

These items are included to indicate something of the variety of checklists that are available in the literature of self-evaluation. You may wish to photocopy and use them just as they are. Our hope, however, is that they will encourage you to consider devising checklists of your own, as a way of testing your own understanding of your own practice.

Assistance in using these documents as bases for discussion in your department might be had from CEDAM staff.

Using self evaluation to enhance peer and student evaluation

Even where the primary source of feedback on your courses and/or teaching is your students or your colleagues, adding a component of self evaluation can enhance the potential benefits and impact of feedback from others.

For instance, one way to enhance student evaluation by questionnaire - be it ANUSET or an instrument specially devised for you - is to take the time to complete the questionnaire yourself, *in advance* of the students. Consciously trying to see yourself from the students' perspective, and committing your view to a number on a scale and to a written comment in response to an open-ended question, has the following potential benefits:

- Increasing the meaningfulness of students' questionnaire responses, as you have gone through a similar evaluation process yourself;
- Making any similarities and discrepancies between your expectations and the feedback you receive more obvious, thus encouraging further reflection on the feedback;
- Helping you reflect on the causes and reasoning *behind* student responses, particularly behind their fixed-choice (tick-the-box) responses, where no explanation may be possible;
- Helping you to clarify the strengths and weaknesses of your courses/teaching in your *own* mind, separately from the views of others.

Similar benefits will accrue with non-questionnaire based feedback, whether from students or colleagues. In fact, it is always valuable to attempt wherever possible to answer in your *own* mind any questions you put to others *before* receiving their responses. For example, structured discussion with a colleague after classes (an approach to peer evaluation which is described in the Peer Review section of this booklet) would also lend itself to you trying to answer such questions in advance, by trying to take on your colleague's perspective.

Aids to Reflective Self-Evaluation

1
The PPIR Cycle in Context

Introduction

The "PPIR Cycle in Context" formulation describes the teacher as "one who, in the best interests of the students and the community the student will live and work in, can create, evaluate, reflect on and develop curriculum, syllabus and learning experience, and can facilitate, manage and assess the learning that's recommended or required by the curriculum or syllabus, and that results from the learning experience". The formulation suggests that educational development centres like CEDAM assist academic staff members to address the full spectrum of functions in the reflective university teacher's role by addressing Preparation, Presentation, Interaction, Reflection and the Management of Contextual Factors:

Preparation

of self (and other members of teaching team) as teacher
of materials
of students

> ***. . . with this preparation being informed by***
> - *reflection on evidence of learning achieved, evaluation findings and assessment results gathered in the interaction phase of the previous cycle*
> - *reading, theoretical/practical course work, group discussion, and reflection on personal experience*
> - *knowledge of contextual factors*

Presentation

of prepared materials
to prepared students
by prepared teacher

Interaction

of prepared students
with each other
with prepared materials
with prepared teacher
for the inter-related purposes of
learning
evaluation and
assessment

Reflection

of prepared teacher
on evidence of learning achieved
on evaluation findings and
on assessment results
in anticipation of the next preparation phase of the cycle

Management of contextual factors

as facilitated by such things as:
- *ability to communicate effectively in English*
- *ability to perceive, analyse, evaluate and find appropriate ways to modify the teaching & learning environment*
- *ability to maximise confluence of teaching-team-members" expectations of students and approaches to teaching*
- *ability to cope with available technology*
- *knowledge of how to secure appropriate teaching venues and timetable slots*
- *knowledge of how to access up-to-date student enrolment and student progress data*
- *knowledge of students' backgrounds, expectations and approaches to learning*
- *knowledge of available financial, human, technological and material resources, and the ability to access them*
- *knowledge of institutional or departmental traditions and attitudes re. qualities and qualifications of student intake, curriculum content and structure, teaching & assessment methods, innovation, use of information technology etc.,*
- *knowledge of limits of available infrastructure support*
- *ability to achieve a balance between teaching and research*
- *etc., etc.*

Preconditions

The precondition to successful completion of the cycle is an appropriate state of readiness in oneself *and* in those:
- for whom one prepares
- to whom one presents
- with whom one interacts

to plan, act, evaluate, reflect and plan anew.

Catch 22

There's a Catch 22 to all of this, in that part of what one does in presentations and interactions is to prepare students for presentations and interactions. If this gives you pause, jump straight to the passage headed "The PPI Field", below.

The Phases of the Cycle

1. Preparation

In the PPIR formulation, preparation includes preparation of teacher, materials *and students.* Some teachers only prepare themselves and their materials. Either by oversight or as a matter of principle (believing that students should come already prepared) they do nothing overt to ensure that their learners are prepared for what's to come from lecture to lecture, week to week, month to month, semester to semester . . .

In this formulation the teacher is not considered to be fully prepared unless s/he is able

- to gauge the readiness of her/his students for the learning that is required of them, and
- to provide an appropriate induction for those of them who are *not* ready.

For the teacher, preparation involves scholarly and experiential learning, reflection and revision re.:

a. the different ways people learn and how best to help "desired learning" to occur in different students
b. ways of *selecting or creating* information, materials or appropriate technological aids that will
   - help the teaching/learning process to work effectively *and*
   - shed light on the subject content to be dealt with in the teaching/learning experience
c. ways of *presenting* information and material (using or not using appropriate technology) that will
   - ensure the effectiveness of the teaching/learning process *and*
   - ensure that as much light as possible is shed on the subject content to be dealt with in the teaching/learning experience
d. ways of preparing or inducting learners
e. ways of slipping out the role of "teacher" and into that of "co-learner", or "learning consultant" - and back into the "teacher's" role as circumstances or the needs of the learners require
f. ways of stimulating, sustaining and managing effective interaction between
   - learners,
   - learners and information or material,
   - learners and teacher
g. ways of assessing learning outcomes
h. ways of evaluating and revising
   - student induction programs,
   - teaching and learning processes,
   - assessment methods
i. ways of creating and maintaining a record of attempts and achievements in all these areas (reflective journals and teaching portfolios serve this purpose)
j. ways of developing reflective practices, (aided by and recorded in journals and portfolios as mentioned above).

2. Presentation

In this formulation, in-class presentations aren't seen as ends in themselves. Presentations provide transition between preparation and interaction. The primary objective of any individual presentation, or of any series of presentations, is slowly but surely to bring prepared learners, prepared materials and prepared teachers together so that interaction between them might have the best possible chance of taking place and being fruitful.

The Catch-22 mentioned above makes it plain that the learner may not be sufficiently well prepared to deal with information or materials until partway through a presentation - or until some time has past after a presentation. The learner does need to be appropriately prepared, however, before juxtaposition with the prepared teacher, other prepared learners and the prepared information and materials can prove fully fruitful.

Sometimes, in a particularly inspiring presentation, interactions can begin to occur straight away - questions will be asked, challenges made, dialogues begun. Dull presentations, however, particularly *long* dull presentations, often end up alienating learners to the extent that, even though the learners are physically in the same room as the teacher and the information and materials, there's no meaningful juxtaposition, and no ignition, no spontaneous *or* delayed combustion of any kind.

N.B. The juxtaposition that any presentation, or any series of presentations, aims at is the juxtaposition of *prepared* teacher, *prepared* information and materials, and *prepared* learners. It often takes quite a long time to achieve.

3. Interaction

In this formulation, assessments and evaluation exercises are not thought of as ends in themselves. They are not thought of simply as after-the-event measurement exercises. They are thought of, primarily, as interactions which are part of the teacher's and the student's learning experience. They are intended to yield information on which teachers and students alike might reflect and base revisions when entering their next preparation phase.

The interaction phase begins whenever prepared learners engage (a) with each other, and/or (b) with prepared information and materials, and/or (c) with the prepared teacher, in ways that are likely to produce:

a. a heightening of the learners' understandings of the information and/or material presented
b. a heightening of the learners' ability to make evaluative and creative responses to, or effective manipulation or use of, the information and/or material presented
c. a heightening of the teacher's understanding of the evaluative, creative and manipulative responses made by the learner to the information and/or material presented
d. assessments which inform teacher and learner of the learner's progress, and
e. feedback and evaluations which give learner and teacher information to think about when going into the next preparation phase - when preparing for the next lesson, the next task, the next round of teaching and/or learning . . .

4. Reflection

The reflection phase provides transition between the interaction phase that precedes it and the preparation phase that follows it. It's spent sifting through the evidence of learning achieved, the evaluation findings and the assessment results gathered in the interaction phase. It recognises feelings, and generates ideas, hypotheses, goals and objectives that the next preparation phase will formulate into new plans of action.

Management of Contextual Factors

These contextual factors might include:

- the availability of appropriate or sufficient financial, material or human resources;

- the variety and strength of established teaching and learning styles and the matches or mis-matches of teachers' and learners' expectations that may be present in any given class ;

- the quality of the physical setting, the learning climate, or the institutional or departmental social and cultural environment.

Contextual factors need always to be taken into account, and the work a teacher does to overcome or reduce deleterious contextual factors or to enhance beneficial ones becomes a significant but frequently unrecognised aspect of all phases of the PPIR Cycle.

Management of contextual factors is not a “phase”. It’s something teachers need to do at all points in the cycle. It ranges from re-arranging the furniture to spending half one’s professional life fighting for funding and dealing with administrivia. Its aim is to achieve circumstances that are as conducive as possible to learning and to the effective demonstration that learning has occurred - and it requires a lot of time, patience, energy and imagination.

The PPIR Chain

The cycle is iterative and developmental for the reflective teacher; but what happens when the teacher teaches the cycle to a student so that the student can better help learning to occur in other students? When that happens, the “cycle” replicates itself and begins to produce a “chain”.

Examples

Example 1: Students are asked to “lead” tutorials in second-year Biochemistry. Teacher runs prep. sessions for students in which they learn how to lead tutorials effectively,

- by preparing materials that will have a good chance of interesting, challenging and/or informing their fellow students
- by preparing tutorial activities that have a good chance of engaging their fellow students in an exploration of the material
- by presenting the material and the activities in a way that will turn the “good chance” into a “*very* good chance”
- by engaging the members of the tutorial group (in the last moments of the tutorial, or in a post-tutorial written summary) in a review of what they got out of the experience

Link 1: the teacher prepares, presents and interacts with the student in ways that help the student develop an understanding

- of specified subject matter - Biochemistry -*and*
- of preparations, presentations and interactions that are appropriate to the development of that understanding.

Link 2: following the teacher’s example and precepts the student prepares, presents and interacts with fellow students in ways that help those fellow students develop *their* understanding of the same specified subject matter - Biochemistry.

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Example 2: An information systems teacher helps a third year information systems student understand how to prepare a computer-based learning module which first year information systems students will subsequently use to acquire a developed understanding of one specific aspect of their subject. Using an application that’s familiar to the first-year students, the third-year student prepares the module which presents first year students with interestingly illustrated and logically laid out information, graded problems to solve, guidance for those who do not solve the problems, rewards for those who do, a request for feedback on the module, and the means for the feedback to be delivered.

Link 1: teacher helps third-year student understand how to help learning of an aspect of the first year information systems curriculum occur in first-year students.

Link 2: third-year student helps that learning (and an awareness of that learning) to occur in first-year students.

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It is possible but very difficult to sustain a chain beyond two links.

Teachers might wish to consider whether their teaching - or any part of their teaching - is, or should be, intended to help learners become people who help learning to occur in others.

The PPIR Field

(a shift from the model toward the reality.)

PLEASE NOTE: Anyone can see that this separation of teaching into four labelled "phases" is artifical.

Reality isn't like that.

The images conjured up by "cycle" and "chain" don't even begin to do justice to the complexity of the teaching/learning process.

When we set ourselves up as teachers of specific skills and/or subject-content what actually happens is that we create a fuzzily delimited "field" or a "space" within which a complex of relationships occurs - through which various intersecting and non-intersecting experiential trajectories are continuously being inscribed.

What's more, the activities grouped together above as separate aspects of a four-phase cycle persistently overlap, feed into and out of one another, and breed other activities not even mentioned here - and at any moment, any of the players in the teaching/learning game may be *simultaneously* doing any number of the things mentioned: preparing, presenting, interacting, evaluating, assessing, reflecting . . . .

For these reasons, it often proves difficult to contemplate (or write reflective journal entries about) preparation, presentation, interaction, reflection and the management of contextual factors as discrete aspects of teaching - or as distinct and separate focuses for reflection and revision.

Also for these reasons, most reflective teachers end up devising their own ways of representing the full complexity of their teaching. The PPIR formulation is only one way among many of representing this complexity.

Their journals often record their attempts to figure out how to do this.

Suggestions:

1 that you try to figure out your own way of representing the full complexity of your teaching

2 that you break the picture down into areas of activity

3 that you devise a plan of action, evaluation, reflection, revision and new action in the area that most interests you

3 that you sustain the action-evaluation-reflection-revision-action cycle until you've achieved and can maintain the quality you want in that area - and that you then do the same in the *next* area that interests you

4 that you make a practice of recording what you do in each area of activity, and of putting the records in your teaching portfolio.

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2
The HERDSA Prompts

The HERDSA Prompts were first published in 1992. They were devised by members of the HERDSA Executive over a period of two years. The first drafts were in the form of statements. However, it was concluded part way through the drafting process that questions would be more likely than statements to prompt reflection. The final draft, reproduced below with the permission of HERDSA, contains 47 questions. The idea is to read through the questions, to answer them, and then to reflect on your answers to discover whether they indicate about your practices in 7 areas: "designing for learning", "relating to students", " teaching for learning", "assessing and giving feedback", "evaluating teaching", "developing professionally", and "influencing the context of your institution".

Some of the questions ask you whether or not you do something with respect to a certain issue or concern. These questions appear to invite a "yes/no" response; but we believe they are designed to prompt consideration of whether or not *you* believe you*can* or *should* do something - if so, what? if not, why not? Other questions appear to be based on the assumption that you *can* and *should* do something with respect to the issue raised, and ask you to consider what you do or how you do it. In the end, it's your responses to the prompts rather than the prompts themselves that should become the focus of your reflection.

Inevitably, there is a perception of "good teaching" implicit in the HERDSA questions. A further suggestion, then, is that you to try to detect this perception and compare it with your own.

What follows is the full text of the prompts as published by HERDSA in December 1992.

HERDSA
Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia

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Challenging Conceptions of Teaching: Some Prompts for Good Practice

In recent years, considerable attention has been paid to the quality of teaching in higher education, and indeed Governments and institutions have channelled large amounts of money into improving practices. In 1989, HERDSA (a professional association dedicated to the improvement of teaching and learning quality) published a Checklist of Valuing Teaching, but its focus was on the responsibilities of institutions, rather than individual academics.

This present document has been prepared with the needs of individual teachers - mainly undergraduate lecturers, tutors and demonstrators - in mind. Based on a large body of research literature, and on considerable 'hands on experience' in higher education institutions, this checklist consists of a number of self-check questions - or prompts - that can be used by individual teachers or by course teams and other groups to think about ther practice, not just in the classroom, but across the range of teaching-even when they are relevant, they have to be interpreted in your particular context. Similarly, these questions cannot possibly be exhaustive; not only are there a variety of perspectives on good teaching but a lot more is known about effective teaching than can be conveyed in a few pages.

Despite these reservations, the quesions should provide a useful and, it is to be hoped, non-threatening introduction to undergraduate teaching in higher education. Some academics who commented on earlier drafts stated that they felt “overwhelmed”, “intimidated” or even “guilty” when they thought about all the things they failed to do; others reported that they were unsure whether, or how, they could build these practices into their own teaching. There are two responses to these concerns. First, although the questions are ‘leading’, this is not an evaluation test; it is just an opportunity to challenge yorself or jog your memory. Second, there is usually help available, either from HERDSA publications (such as the Green Guide series) or from bibliographies and reading lists, or from staff developers and other colleagues.

The important thing now - whether individually or as a group - is to set aside a time to read through the prompts themselves and, when you encounter an area in which you would like to improve, resolve to do something about it. At the heart of all good teaching is student learning, and your students can only benefit if you actively seek ways to assist them to become better learners.

Designing for learning

A large part of learning is influenced by the ways that students perceive the course/subject and the expectations of the teacher. Formal course/subject requqirements, content, teaching methods, assessment policies and practices and the provision of learning resources are all aspects of the teaching design which will have an impact on student learning. Students learn most effectively when these aspects fit together coherently for them, and when they perceive that course content is related to their own interests and values and to their longer term goals.

1 What do you do to inform students of course/subject requirements and to help them to understand the reasons for them?

2 When you can, do you find out about students’ expectations of your subject and use this information to adapt your curriculum?

3 How do you build upon students’ life experience in your subjects and in your teaching?

4 Do you ensure that there is consistency between your subject objectives, the ways you teach and the ways you assess?

5 What opportunities do you give students to choose aspects of course work or assessment which are relevant to their interests and experience?

6 How do you encourage students to make effective use of libraries and other learning resources?

7 Do you take note of the gender, ethnicity and other characteristics of students in your classes and respond to their learning needs?

Relating to students

Learning is not a purely intellectual activity. It also involves ethical and personal development. For such development to occur there needs to be a climate of mutual respect, trust and open communication in which ethical and personal beliefs can be examined without anxiety. Students need to be able to discuss concerns and misunderstandings with their teacher and other students.

8 How do you indicate to students that you respect their values and beliefs without necessarily accepting those values and beliefs?

9 In what ways do you assist students to reflect on the values they hold and to develop ethically?

10 What do you do to encourage students to become aware of the potential for learning from each other and of the benefits of working in groups?

11 In what ways do you provide personal asistance to students, and/or refer them to the range of resources and agencies which are available to assist them?

Teaching for learning

Students' learning and skill development may be enhanced in many ways. However, in order to learn and develop skills and understanding in a subject or profession students must actively engage themselves. Active engagement is assisted by such things as appropriate role models, precisely structured learning activities and by encouragement to think about learning processes.

12 How do you show students your enthusiasm in the subject?

13 Do you make a consious effort to be an effective role mopdel for thinking and practice in your profession or discipline?

14 What approaches do you use to induct students into research and other forms of active scholarly involvement?

15 What steps do you take to extend the range of learning activities that you draw upon in your teaching?

16 How do you allow for students preferring to learn and participate in different ways?

17 What approaches do you use to help students to reflect upon their own learning intentions, behaviour, and practice, and to develop effective skills for lifelong learning?

18 What strategies do you adopt to help students look critically at accepted knowledge and practice in your discipline or profession?

19 What work do you include to make explicit the forms of thinking and writing in your discipline, and to help students develop competence in these?

20 How do you frame questions to help students learn effectively?

21 How do you encourage questions from students and respond in a way that facilitates their learning?

22 How do you check that your explanations are clear to students?

23 How do you respond when students indicate difficulties with content, pace, emphasis, or style?

24 If necessary, how do you find out about the causes of disruptive behaviour and remedy them?

Assessing and giving feedback

Students' approaches to learning are directly affected by the type of assessment that is used. If assessment allows for inappropriate rote learning, then some students will respond accordingly. Effective assessment strategies encourage students to engage deeply with the content material of the course. Such strategies need to provide constructive feedback to students as quickly as possible as well as being valid and reliable measures of achievement.

25 How do you help students develop habits of routinely assessing their own work?

26 What strategies do you use to provide immediate feedback to students to help them improve their performance?

27 Do you identify for students the specific strengths and weaknesses of their performance and offer precise feedback about how to improve?

28 In what ways do you ensure that your assessment methods accurately assess the learning outcomes that you intend?

Evaluating teaching

Evaluation of teaching and subjects/courses for purposes of development involves collecting information from a range of sources by a range of methods and using that information to make changes. The information collected should include more than outcome measures. Since the quality of student learning is related to the way students learn, information from the students on their learning processes can be an important component of evaluation.

29 What forms of information about your teaching and your subjects do you collect on a regular basis?

30 How do you change your approaches to teaching and/or your design of your subjects in the light of the information obtained?

31 How do you find out about the approaches students take to their learning and the ways your teaching and/or your subject design affects that approach?

32 How do you use the information obtained from student assignment and examination work in evaluating your teaching and/or your subjects?

Developing professionally

For the quality of teaching and learning to improve staff should actively extend their knowledge and skills not only in their discipline or profession but also in their teaching. This may involve discussing teaching and learning issues with colleagues, reading about teaching strategies, participating in teaching development activities, reflecting upo teaching practice and engaging in research in relation to it. For senior staff members it may also involve providing developmental support for more junior members teachiung in the course and also valuing their ideas.

33 What do you do to keep your expertise in your own field up to date?

34 How do you stay in touch with developmemnts in teaching in your own discipline or profession?

35 What opportunities do you make to discuss aspects of learning and teaching with colleagues?

36 What opportunities do you make to receive feedback on your teaching from colleagues?

37 How do you go about developing your skills and expertise as a teacher?

38 What strategies do you employ to reflect upon your teaching practices and identify areas for development?

39 Do you participate in seminars, courses, or conferences which focus on learning and teaching?

40 What reading or what research relating to teaching and learning do you do?

41 In what ways do you ensure that your more junior colleagues receive your help and support?

Influencing the context of your institution

Some aspects of teaching and learning are influenced by the institutional, political and social contexts in which they occur. Good teaching involves recognising these influences and responding at the departmental/institutional/community level to enhance teaching and learning.

42 What opportunities do you create to discuss with students the wider conditions that affect their learning?

43 In what ways do you contribute to decision-making processes in your institution in order to enhance learning and teaching?

44 In what ways do you maintain and develop communication with your colleagues who teach related subjects in your department/division?

45 How do you ensure that your institution is using a comprehensisve approach to teaching achievement for the purposes of tenure, promotion and developmental review?

46 Do you make use of your professional association to raise issues of curriculum concern for the discipline?

47 In what ways do you maintain your familiarity with national or local policy directions, monitor effects on teaching and learning, and voice your concerns in appropriate forums?

HERDSA is a professional association for those involved in teaching and/or research and development in higher education. HERDSA is committed to the improvement of the quality of teaching and learning.

HERDSA welecomes comments and debate on the issues raised by these prompts. Correspondence should be addressed to The President, Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia, c/- The HERDSA Office, PO Box 516 Jamison Centre, ACT 2614. Phone: (06) 25663 4242. Fax: (06) 253 4246. Email: herdsa@peg.apc.org

Suggestions:

1 work through the prompts privately until you've figured out what perception of good teaching underlies them, and how it compares with your own perception.

2 reflect on *your responses to* the prompts, and use your reflections to help you decide how best to develop and/or improve your teaching practice - and how the changes you'd like to attempt might be reflected or recorded in your teaching portfolio

3 bring the prompts to the attention of your departmental colleagues

4 suggest that department members work through the prompts, individually or in groups, as a way of raising and clarifying issues before your department's next planning retreat or curriculum review.

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3
The AV-CC Guidelines

In April 1993 the Australian Vice-Chancellor's Committee published a seven-page document called "Guidelines for Effective University Teaching".

The document begins with a five-paragraph comment on the AV-CC's commitment to effective teaching. This introduction is followed by three sections, the first on "The University Teacher and Effective Teaching Practice", the second on Departmental EncourAgement of Effective Teaching, the third on "Institutional Valuing of Effective Teaching". Each of these sections contains a prose account of its topic followed by numbered statements.

We are referring here to the first section of the document. The full document (or further information about the full document) may be had from The Executive Director, The Australian Vice-Chancellor's Committee GPO Box 1142, Canberra, ACT 2601.

The idea is to read through the statements, to respond to them, and then to reflect on your responses to discover whether they indicate about your practices in 3 areas: "student learning", "teaching and assessment" and "subject management".

Unlike the HERDSA prompts, which are couched as questions, the AV-CC's guidelines are couched as statements. While the prompts ask you to consider what you can, might and should do to help learning to occur, the guidelines declare what the AV-CC believes should be done. In the end, however, it's your responses to the guidelines rather than the guidelines themselves that should be the focus of your continuing reflection.

Student learning

While indicating that "all university teachers have a professional responsibility to teach their subjects in such a way that all students, regardless of their background or characteristics, have an equal opportunity to learn and to demonstrate that learning, in accordance with the aims of the subject" (p.2), the AV-CC allows that the teaching practices that most effectively cause this to happen will inevitably vary in relation to:

(a) the context in which the particular component of the course are offered, e.g. cooperative education, clinical teaching, laboratory teaching, skills training, or distance education;
(b) the disciplines and their particular concerns
(c) the students, e.g. school-leavers, special admission students, mature-age students, part-time students, overseas students, students with disabilities, students from non-English speaking backgrounds;
(c) the level and standards commonly agreed to, e.g. first year undergraduate, Honours, graduate level.

The guidelines themselves, however do not address the reasons for variation in good teaching practices. They focus on the aims and principles that the AV-CC identifies as being common to all effective university teaching. The first of these aims is "to enable students to reach their highest possible level of learning during their time of enrolment, and to prepare them for lifelong learning" (p.2). To this end, the AV-CC recommends that effective university teachers

1 provide students with opportunities to be involved in the structuring of their own learning experiences, and encourage them to take control of their own learning;

2 develop students' confidence by setting assignments which are challenging and relevant to subject aims, and by providing constructive and timely feedback;

3 develop students' analytical and critical thinking skills by demonstrating these skills by demonstrating these skills, and by providing students with tasks appropriate to the development of these skills;

4 provide learning experiences that will enable students to develop both individual initiative and the skills needed to work cooperatively with their peers

5 assist in the development of students' communication skills by providing opportunities for oral, graphic and written presentations and for feedback on their performance;

6 encourage and enable students to evaluate their own and each other's work critically;

7 make time available for giving advice to and for supervising individual students.

It's to be noted that, while items 1-5 focus on the facilitation of learning in students, items 6 and 7 point directly toward peer review and the facilitation of learning among teachers.

Teaching and Assessment

With respect to the wide range of activities encompassed by the words "teaching" and "assessment", the AV-CC recommends that effective teachers

1 select from a wide range of teaching approaches and teaching media those which will help students to meet subject and their own learning objectives most effectively;

2 select from a range of assessment methods for each subject, a combination of methods which meets the criteria for validity, fairness, and appropriateness for subject goals and specify these clearly and unambiguously;

3 provide constructive and timely feedback on each students' achievement and progress;

4 communicate to students their enthusiasm for the subjects they teach and arouse students' curiosity and creative interest in the subject;

5 draw on students' life and work experiences in their teaching and, wherever possible, make the subject relevant to students' career goals and link theory with professional practice and societal concerns;

6 keep abreast of developments in their disciplines, and/or profession, and in higher education teaching and learning, ground their teaching in their own insights from and experience in research and consultancy, and revise their subjects and teaching accordingly.

In particular, the AV-CC recommends (p.3) the following understanding of assessment:

> Assessment provides an evaluation of the students' competence in meeting specified objectives. But it is also an essential part of the teaching and learning process. Properly selected assessment tasks signal the importance of particular content, concepts and skills, influence approaches to study and help students to allocate their time appropriately. Constructive and timely feedback on assessment helps students to gain a sense of achievement and progress, an appreciation of the performance and standards expected in a particular discipline or professional area, and to learn from their endeavours.

Subject management

With respect to "subject management", the AV-CC recommends that effective university teachers

1 select content, skills and learning experiences in the subjects they design or teach which will foster students' intellectual and personal growth, and meet the requirement of the relevant profession;

2 express subject aims and objectives in the context of what students chould expect to gain from their overall learning experience

3 before enrolment, make available to students the aims and objectives of the subject, as well as assessment methods and timing, and the relative weight and number of assessment tasks so that students have guidance in subject choice and, once enrolled, can monitor their own progress towards the achievement of aims and objectives;

4 organise subject content coherently and at a level appropriate to the student group and level of study;

5 where appropriate, integrate field work and other off-campus activities such as industrial placements into the curriculum and organise them to enhance student learning;

6 liaise with colleagues teaching pre-requisite and subsequent subjects to ensure coherence in the course;

7 make use of other expertise, where appropriate, to provide breadth of course content;

8 discuss with colleagues, particularly part-time staff who are teaching in the subject, the aims of the subject and how teaching and assessment are designed to help students to realise subject aims;

9 encourage part-time staff teaching in their subject to make use of available professional development opportunities;

10 monitor teaching and assessment by part-time staff teaching in their subjects;

11 make sure that all resources which students are asked to use for effective learning in a subject are available, e.g. library books, computer terminals, audio-visual materials, laboratory equipment, and placements;

12 review regularly the content and focus of a subject, make revisions as required, and reflect critically upon their own teaching using feedback from a variety of sources to ascertain to what extent they are being successful in helping students realise their own as well as subject aims.

You might be prompted to modify some of these statements in responding to them - especially if, for example, you feel that *all* staff (not just part-time staff) should be encouraged to make use of available professional development opportunities; or if you believe course coherence depends on liaison between teachers in *all* subjects in the course, or in co-requisite as well as pre-requisite and subsequent subjects; or if you wish to make specific reference to information technology in points which refer to teaching and learning resources.

Suggestions:

1 work through the guidelines privately, noting your responses to each statement as you go

2 reflect on your responses to the guidelines. Use your reflections to help you decide how best to develop and/or improve your teaching, assessment and/or subject management practices - and how the changes you'd like to attempt might be reflected or recorded in your teaching portfolio

3 bring the existence of the guidelines to the attention of your departmental colleagues

4 suggest that your department secure copies of the complete document, and that department members work through it, individually or in groups, as a way of raising and clarifying issues before your department's next planning retreat or curriculum review.

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4
A teaching goals inventory: the self-scoring version

This teaching goals inventory is drawn from Angelo, T. A., and Cross, K. P. (1993) *Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers.* Second edition. Jossey Bass: San Francisco, pp. 20-22.

It is included in this booklet as a further aid to reflection. The purpose of the inventory is to help teachers become more aware

• of what they want to accomplish in individual units or courses, and

• of whether their teaching in those individual units or courses is likely to accomplish those things.

Directions:

Please select ONE course you are currently teaching. Respond to each item on the inventory in relation to that particular course. (Your response might be quite different if you were asked about your overall teaching and learning goals, for example, or the appropriate instructional goals for your discipline.)

Please print the title of the specific course you are focusing on.

Please rate the importance of each of the fifty-two goals listed below to the specific course you have selected. Assess each goal's importance to what you deliberately aim to have your students accomplish, rather than the goal's general worthiness or overall importance to your institution's mission. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers; only personally more or less accurate ones.

For each goal, circle only one response on the 1-to-5 rating scale. You may want to read quickly through all fifty-two goals before rating their relative importance.

In relation to the course you are focusing on, indicate whether each goal you rate is:

(5)	Essential	a goal you always/nearly always try to achieve
(4)	Very Important	a goal you often try to achieve
(3)	Important	a goal you sometimes try to achieve
(2)	Unimportant	a goal you rarely try to achieve
(1)	Not Applicable	a goal you never try to achieve

Rate the importance of each goal to what you aim to have students achieve in your course

1.	Develop ability to apply principles and generalisations already learned to new problems and situations	5 4 3 2 1
2.	Develop analytic skills	5 4 3 2 1
3.	Develop problem-solving skills	5 4 3 2 1
4.	Develop ability to draw reasonable inferences from observations	5 4 3 2 1
5.	Develop ability to synthesize and integrate information and ideas	5 4 3 2 1
6.	Develop ability to think holistically: to see the whole as well as the parts	5 4 3 2 1
7.	Develop ability to think critically	5 4 3 2 1

8.	Develop ability to distinguish between fact and fiction	5 4 3 2 1

9.	Improve skill at paying attention	5 4 3 2 1
10.	Develop ability to concentrate	5 4 3 2 1
11.	Improve memory skills	5 4 3 2 1
12.	Improve listening skills	5 4 3 2 1
13.	Improve speaking skills	5 4 3 2 1
14.	Improve reading skills	5 4 3 2 1
15.	Improve writing skills	5 4 3 2 1
16.	Develop appropriate study skills, strategies and habits	5 4 3 2 1
17.	Improve mathematical skills	5 4 3 2 1
18.	Learn terms and facts of this subject	5 4 3 2 1
19.	Learn concepts and theories in this subject	5 4 3 2 1
20.	Develop skill in using m,aterials, tools, and/or technology central to this subject	5 4 3 2 1
21.	Learn to understand perspectives and values of this subject	5 4 3 2 1
22.	Prepare for transfer or graduate study	5 4 3 2 1
23.	Learn techniques and methods used to gain new knowledge in this subject	5 4 3 2 1
24.	Learn to evaluate methods and materials in this subject	5 4 3 2 1
25.	Learn to appreciate important contributions to this subject	5 4 3 2 1
26.	Develop an appreciation of the liberal arts and sciences	5 4 3 2 1
27.	Develop an openness to new ideas	5 4 3 2 1
28	Develop an informed concern about contemporary social issues	5 4 3 2 1
29.	Develop a commitment to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship	5 4 3 2 1
30.	Develop a lifelong love of learning	5 4 3 2 1
31.	Develop aesthetic appreciations	5 4 3 2 1
32.	Develop an informed historical approach	5 4 3 2 1
33.	Develop an informed understanding of the role of science and technology	5 4 3 2 1
34.	Develop an informed appreciation of other cultures	5 4 3 2 1
35.	Develop capacity to make informed ethical choices	5 4 3 2 1
36.	Develop ability to work productively with others	5 4 3 2 1
37.	Develop management skills	5 4 3 2 1
38.	Develop leadership skills	5 4 3 2 1
39.	Develop a commitment to accurate work	5 4 3 2 1
40.	Improve ability to follow directions, instructions, and plans	5 4 3 2 1

41.	Improve ability to organize and use time effectively	5 4 3 2 1
42.	Develop a commitment to personal achievement	5 4 3 2 1
43.	Develop ability to perform skillfully	5 4 3 2 1

44.	Cultivate a sense of responsibility for one's own behavior	5 4 3 2 1
45.	Improve self-esteem / self-confidence	5 4 3 2 1
46.	Develop a commitment to one's own values	5 4 3 2 1
47.	Develop respect for others	5 4 3 2 1
48.	Cultivate emotional health and well-being	5 4 3 2 1
49.	Cultivate an active commitment to honesty	5 4 3 2 1
50.	Develop capacity to think for one's self	5 4 3 2 1
51.	Develop capacity to make wise decisions	5 4 3 2 1

52. In general, how do you see your primary role as a teacher?
(Although more than one statement may apply, please circle only one.)

1 Teaching students facts and principles of the subject matter

2 Providing a role model for students

3 Helping students develop higher-order thinking skills

4 Preparing students for jobs/careers

5 Fostering student development and personal growth

6 Helping students develop basic learning skills

Scoring:

1. In all, how many of the fifty-two goals did you rate as "essential"? ____________

2. How many "essential" goals did you have in each of the six clusters listed below?

	Cluster number and name	*Goals included in cluster*	*Total number of "Essential" goals in each cluster*	*Clusters ranked from 1st to 6th by numbers of "Essential" goals*
I	Higher order Thinking Skills	1-8	__________	__________
II	Basic Academic Success Skills	9-17	__________	__________
III	Discipline-Specific Knowledge & Skills	18-25	__________	__________
IV	Liberal Arts and Academic Values	26-35	__________	__________
V	Work and Career Preparation	36-43	__________	__________
VI	Personal Development	44-52	__________	__________

Scoring continued over page ->

Scoring: (continued)

3. Compute your cluster scores (average item ratings by cluster) using the following worksheet

	A	*B*	*C*	*D*	*E*
	Cluster number and name	*Goals included in cluster*	*Sum of ratings given to goals in that cluster*	*Divied C by this number*	*Your cluster scores*
I	Higher order Thinking Skills	1-8	______	8	______
II	Basic Academic Success Skills	9-17	______	9	______
III	Discipline-Specific Knowledge & Skills	18-25	______	8	______
IV	Liberal Arts and Academic Values	26-35	______	10	______
V	Work and Career Preparation	36-43	______	8	______
VI	Personal Development	44-52	______	9	______

Suggestions

1 that you make a photocopy of this inventory and work through it with one specific unit or course or subject in mind.

2 that you consider how well the final cluster scores you achieved with this unit or subject in mind harmonise with your prior perception of your goals in that unit or subject - and how well the scores harmonise with the answers you gave to question 52

3 that you reflect on the harmonies or disharmonies that become apparent in the process, and consider whether/how you might achieve a better match between your teaching goals and your teaching methods in that unit or subject

4 that you repeat the exercise from time to time with other units or subjects in mind, and record the reflections the exercise gives rise to in a journal

5 that you introduce a colleague to the inventory and swap notes on what you discover when you use it.

6 that you consider how else you and your colleagues might clarify or strengthen your understanding of your teaching goals in your respective units or subjects, and how else you might discover whether or how well you are achieving those goals.

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5
The Brown and Race Proforma

Checklists take many forms, but all have the one thing in common: they itemise aspects of the activity being reviewed or evaluated, and offer the reviewer/evaluator the opportunity to make prescribed judgements about them. The prescribed judgements are usually in terms of the frequency, clarity, accuracy or perceived effectiveness with which something is done, or the desirability of doing something better.

On the next page you will find a ten-item checklist which focuses on the activity of negotiating learning agreements with your students. It's laid out in a proforma which gives you room to comment on the frequency with which you do something, your ability to do something and your intentions with respect to doing something related to learning agreements. It's drawn from Brown, S. and Race, P. (1995) *Assess Your Own Teaching Quality.* Kogan Page: London, pp. 98-99.

Brown and Race reproduce this proforma in their book 55 times - once for each of 55 activities associated with teaching. The complete list of identified activities is as follows:

1 Coordinating teaching with large groups
2 Lecturing to large groups
3 Asking rather than telling
4 Providing a frame of reference for learners
5 Handling questions from large groups (part 1)
6 Handling questions from large groups (part 2)
7 Inducting students
8 Using the blackboard or markerboard
9 Using overhead projectors
10 Preparing overhead projector transparencies
11 Using and designing transparencies
12 Designing handouts (part 1)
13 Designing handouts (part 2)
14 Assembling study guides
15 Preparing open learning materials
16 Annotatd bibliographies
17 Using libraries and information sources
18 Using e-mail and computer referencingt
19 Using multimedia and hypertext
20 Setting independent study tasks
21 Providing learners with written feedback
22 Giving learners written feedback on marked work
23 Giving learners face-to-face feedback
24 Helping learners to value groupwork
25 Organising groupwork
26 Organising learners to peer-assess
27 Organising learners in peer-assessment
28 Assessing groupwork
29 Assessing large groups
30 Invigilating fairly and kindly
31 Getting to know learners' names
32 Being a personal tutor (part 1)
33 Being a personal tutor (part 2)
34 Being available to learners
35 Working with learners from overseas
36 Helping learners to solve problems
37 Suipervising projects
38 Setting up proctoring
39 Begotiating learning agreements
40 Giving references for further study and employment
41 Team teaching
42 Being a good collaborative colleague
43 Mentoring new colleagues
44 Valuing support staff
45 Contributing effectively to meetings
46 Coping with difficult people
47 Dealing with difficult colleagues
48 Ensuring effective communication with learners
49 Keeping good records
50 Equal opportunitiesww
51 Continuing to learn about learning
52 Identifying personal strengths and weaknesses
53 Developing personal scholarship
54 Preparing to be appraised
55 Planning for future development

Each version of the proforma contains 10 statements about the named activity. This means that there are 550 statements in the book, each one identifying a function or a process associated with teaching. Put together they constitute an implicit concept of teaching as an integrated complex of activities.

The Brown and Race Proforma: negotiating learning agreements

	I do this often	I do this from time to time	I can do this when needed	I can't yet do this	I'd like to be able to do this	I don't intend to do this	I don't need to do this	Action plans and comments
I identify parts of the curriculum where it's appropriate for learners to have some choice over what they learn, and at what pace								
I select areas of the curriculum which allow learners to choose how they prefer their learning to be assessed, and at what time								
I help learners to formulate or select theirlearning objectives or intended outcomes, providing specimen outcomes to assist them infinding an appropriate level								
I help learners work out details of the evidence they should accumulate to demonstrate their achievement of their chosen objectives								
I encourage learners to choose their own time-scales for the work they will do as part of their learning agreements								
I provide proformas and examples of completed agreements, so that learners can draw up theirown particular learning agreements								
I negotiate with learners as necessary, to ensure that their learning agreements are of an appropriate standard and level, trying to leave learners with as much ownership of their plans as possible								
I ensure that each learner has a signed, dated copy of the agreement, and that I keep a copy								

I encourage learners to renegotiate their learning agreements whenever necessary, rather than fall behind schedule and give up working toward their agreements								
I help learners build into their learning agreements review times and dates so that timescales and targets can be adjusted on an ongoing basis								

Suggestions:

1 that you start with a table like the one Brown and Race have used to describe negotiated learning agreements

2 that you select the one aspect of your teaching that you would most like to monitor and reflect on

3 that you break that thing down into areas of activity

4 that you write down the features of each area of activity in one of the cells in the left hand column of the table

5 that you figure out whether you are intending to reflect on the frequency, clarity, accuracy or perceived effectiveness of each feature, (or on something else altogether)

6 that you then devise measures of satisfaction (with respect to frequency, clarity, accuracy, perceived effectiveness or something else) to write in the cells across the top of the table

7 that you use your newly devised checklist periodically as a way of monitoring your consistency or your modification of the selected aspect of your teaching over time.

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6
A checklist for self evaluation of videotaped classes

Much can be learned from watching yourself in action. Firstly, it gives you the opportunity to see yourself from another perspective, that of the learner (i.e., the students), rather than solely from your own perspective (i.e., that of the teacher). This is an illuminating exercise in its own right, and also provides the opportunity to further investigate and understand any feedback you have already received from students or colleagues on your teaching.

Opportunities for being videotaped may arise automatically, as part of the normal conduct of classes, wherever it is standard to provide videotapes of classes for students to borrow from the library. Alternatively, you may choose to hire a video operator and equipment to tape one or more of your classes -- it would obviously be beneficial to tape a variety of class types, but resources may be an issue here.

Suggestions for observing videotapes of classes assisted by feedback from your peers are given earlier in this booklet, in the section on Peer Review. However, you may prefer not to involve a colleague in the process, or you may choose to precede or follow up such peer feedback with observation on your own.

It is important to bear in mind that watching oneself on video is a personal experience, where it may be easy to become distracted by factors irrelevant to the teaching and learning process (e.g. your personal appearance); similarly, it may be tempting to focus too much on certain aspects of the class (sometimes solely on the weaknesses) rather than take a broad view of the process. In order to assist you in taking a balanced perspective when viewing a tape on your own, it is useful to structure the process. This could be by way of preparing a checklist of issues to consider, a series of self-questions or a self evaluation questionnaire.

Examples of checklists and questions you can pose to yourself may be taken from the Peer Review section of this booklet, as it is a similar process to preparing and guiding a colleague to provide appropriate feedback. Two examples of self evaluation questionnaires, which you might like to modify for your use are included below.

VIDEO SELF ASSESSMENT

My evaluation of the class, in terms of:

Content ____

____

Organisation ____

____

Achievement of my goals

The best aspect the class was

The weakest aspect the class was

For the future, I will improve by

SELF ASSESSMENT FOR DEVELOPMENT

A. Consider your INTRODUCTION to the class --

To what extent did you achieve the following:

	To a large extent	*To a fair extent*	*To a small extent*	*Not at all*
GAINED STUDENT ATTENTION?	L	F	S	N

How was this done?

Suggestions for improvement

AROUSED INTEREST IN THE TOPIC? (by connecting with student interests, previous classes, etc.)	L	F	S	N

How was this done?

Suggestions for improvement

CLEARLY STATED THE TOPIC AND MAIN PURPOSE(S) OF THE CLASS?	L	F	S	N

How was this done?

____

Suggestions for improvement

____

____

PROVIDED AN OVERVIEW OF THE CLASS?	L	F	S	N

How was this done? ____

____

Suggestions for improvement

____

____

SHOWED CONNECTIONS WITH PREVIOUS OR FUTURE TOPICS/CLASSES?	L	F	S	N

How was this done? ____

____

Suggestions for improvement

____

____

B. Consider the MAIN BODY of the class --

To what extent did you achieve the following:

	To a large extent	*To a fair extent*	*To a small extent*	*Not at all*
MAINTAINED STUDENT ATTENTION?	L	F	S	N

How was this done? ____

____

Suggestions for improvement

____

____

HIGHLIGHTED THE MAIN POINTS?	L	F	S	N

How was this done? ____

____

Suggestions for improvement

____

____

SUPPORTED EACH MAIN POINT WITH EVIDENCE/EXAMPLES?	L	F	S	N

How was this done? ____

____

Suggestions for improvement

____

____

MADE THE STRUCTURE CLEAR?	L	F	S	N

How was this done? ____

____

Suggestions for improvement

____

____

MADE THE MATERIAL EASY TO UNDERSTAND?	L	F	S	N

How was this done? ____

____

Suggestions for improvement

____

____

C. Consider your CONCLUSION to the class --

To what extent did you achieve the following:

	To a large extent	*To a fair extent*	*To a small extent*	*Not at all*
SUMMARISED MAIN POINTS OF THE TOPIC/CLASS?	L	F	S	N

How was this done? ____

____

Suggestions for improvement

____

____

SHOWED CONNECTIONS WITH PREVIOUS OR FUTURE TOPICS/CLASSES?	L	F	S	N

How was this done? ____

____

Suggestions for improvement

____

____

Suggestion:

1 that you modify this checklist to suit your own specific situation and purposes, and use it periodically to monitor the auality of your classes - whether you are observing them on video-taped , or just recalling them from memory.

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7
A Syllabus Checklist from Carnegie Mellon

To an instructor, a syllabus may serve simply as a list of dates and assignments. However, to a student, a syllabus provides at least two additional vital services. First, the syllabus directly reflects the teacher's goals, direction, commitment, and organisation. Second, the syllabus directs the students' study for the length of the course.

The list below describes the major elements of a complete syllabus. As you examine your own syllabus, make a check in the appropriate column on the left hand side of the page. You can then add any items which are missing. If you are using the checklist to provide feedback to a colleague, make suggestions on the right hand side of the page or on the back of the page for any items which are missing or which seem unclear or incomplete to you.

Yes	**No**		**Technical Information about the Course /Unit and the Teacher**	**Comments**
[ ]	[ ]	1	The name, number, and classroom meeting place of the course	
[ ]	[ ]	2	The name of the University	
[ ]	[ ]	3	The units of credit which the course/unit earns	
[ ]	[ ]	4	The date by semester and year	
[ ]	[ ]	5	A list or co- or pre-requisites, if any	
[ ]	[ ]	6	The name of the lecturer(s), tutor(s) and markers (if appropriate) with their office locations, phone numbers, email addresses, and office hours	
			Course/Unit Description	
[ ]	[ ]	7	A brief course/unit description which provides an overview of the subject matter	
[ ]	[ ]	8	A brief explanation of why a student might want to take the course. For example, might it relate to future courses/units, a future job, or current understanding of "real world" situations? How will students benefit from the course/unit? Is it a pre-requisite for other courses?	
[ ]	[ ]	9	A brief explanation of how the parts of the course fit together. Why do some topics precede or follow others? Why are some topics included and others not included?	
[ ]	[ ]	10	A list of course/unit goals. Are the goals easily measured because they are stated in terms of what students chould be able to do at the end of the semester?	

[ ] [ ] 11 Information about the learning activities for the course/unit, including readings, homework assignments, papers and projects.

[ ] [ ] 12 Information about policies established for the course/unit, including policies son attendance, cheating and plagiarism, late work and make-up work, and class procedures such as expectations for student roles in discussion or group projects.

[ ] [ ] 13 A list of required texts, readings, or information about other course materials such as where reference materials are located or what other materials need to be purchased for the course/unit.

[ ] [ ] 14 A course/unit calendar which includes (to the extent possible) a list of dates for such activities as homework assignments, readings, quizzes, tests, papers and projects.

Information About Grading/Marking

[ ] [ ] 15 Information about how the grades will be determined, including the percentage of the grades for each major element of the course/unit.

Examples of Optional Components

[ ] [ ] 16 Information about using written or other materials to which students have had little exposure, for example, for courses/units utilising case studies, perhaps questions which serve as guides to the major issues in the case or, for first year students, suggestions on note-taking from sources other than textbooks.

[ ] [ ] 17 A caveat which indicates that parts of the course are subject to change to meet the needs of the students in the course. This allows the instructor to slow down or speed up the pace of the course if students show a need.

Suggestion:

1 that you modify this checklist to suit your own specific situation and purposes, and use it periodically to monitor the quality of your syllabus statements

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Using a Reflective Journal

Keeping a Journal doesn't necessarily mean writing a diary.

In this context "journal" may be used loosely to name any way of keeping track of the information you receive from students, colleagues, other people and yourself, and of your reflections on that information.

It carries the suggestion of successive entries; but that's appropriate, as the idea of developing a habit of evaluating and attempting to improve teaching and learning only makes sense if you keep a record of your attempts and achievements *over time*.

As is suggested above, you will need to make *some* of the entries in your own hand. For example, if you intend to keep any kind of record of the information you get from using the QC method, or Post-Session Debriefs, or Individual Interviews you will need to make them yourself. Other methods will yield notes written, by you or others, on overheads or butcher's paper, which you may need to transcribe or rationalise or enlarge. Others will give you material written by your students, and as well as keeping them you may wish to annotate them or write your own comments or reflections on them.

Regardless of the shape your "journal" takes - a box, perhaps, or an expanding file, or a loose-leaf folder - its *function* is to store, in logical or chronological order, the information you've gathered and the reflections you've made. The attempts you make to monitor, maintain or improve the fit of your teaching methods to your students' learning needs - and to your own goals and purpose - should grow from these reflections. And the record you keep of these attempts should form a distinct part of your Teaching Portfolio, and should eventually come to deserve a reference in the Portfolio Extracts you write in support of your applications for new employment, tenure, promotion or awards.

As Ballantyne and Packer (1995) indicate, it's common for reflective learning journals to be used to reflect on significant personal events, relationships and emotions as well as on learning of the more scholarly kind. They speak of students using journals in this way, but it is equally true of teachers who are seeking feedback and reflecting on their attempts to help learning to occur. Recognising and coming to terms with our own feelings may be seen as a prerequisite to listening to and accepting others' feelings in counselling or feedback situations.

Further information about the nature and use of reflective journals might be obtained from the following works . . .

About "learning journals"

Ballantyne, R. & Packer, J. *Making Connections* (1995) HERDSA Gold Guide No 2

The focus of the Guide is on the value of using student journals as a teaching/learning aid. It is a very good introduction to the subject. The arguments about the benefits to be derived from keeping a journal also apply to this course. It contains useful background on how assessment criteria are linked to established taxonomies of learning, including Bloom's taxonomy to promote learning and assessment at higher cognitive levels and Bigg's SOLO taxonomy scales [pp.25–31]

White, Leon. Writing Journals as Part of the Learning Process, Appendix D, Part 4 in Kemmis, S & McTaggart, R (eds), *The Action Resarch Planner,* (1988), Geelong, Victoria:Deakin University, pp. 144-150

Wetherell, J. & Mullins, G. The Use of Study Journals by 4th Year Dental Students, HERDSA Proceedings, Vol 15, 1992, pp. 558-561

This paper describes the introduction of a journal of reflection into a 4th year dentistry course at the University of Adelaide. The authors describe how, to create a productive learning environment, an "umbrella of trust" must be set up early in the course. An open constructive working environment is essential for problem-based learned to occur, otherwise students will not feel free to say what *they think.* "This is creating *student-centred* learning instead of *teacher-centred* learning, and involves facilitating learning instead of dispensing knowledge." The paper goes on to describe how, in these conditions of trust, the principles of experiential learning using the Kolb Learning Cycle are used as a model. In this context, journal writing is taken as a tool for reflection, analysis and introspection.

Their experience shows that some students do not like the idea of keeping a journal initially, but as the year progresses they see its value and become self-directed towards it. The aim is to create knowledge through the transformation of experience, i.e. students experiences in the clinics are transformed by the records in their journal.

Authors see the role of journals as providing

- a reflection process, an essential part of the Kolb Learning Cycle
- an anxiety outlet for personal feelings
- a time for feedback about a student's progress
- feedback to the teacher about the course
- the student with a precis of the year's work which can be used for further study
- a scientific basis for the learning process

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