

Methods of Evaluating Teaching

Evaluation of teaching can have many purposes, including collecting feedback for teaching improvement, developing a portfolio for job applications, or gathering data as part of personnel decisions, such as reappointment or promotion and tenure. Most of the methods described below can be used for all of these functions. In general, efforts to collect information for improvement can be informal and focus on specific areas an individual instructor wishes to develop. Information for job applications involves presenting one's best work and meeting the requirements outlined in job ads. However, when the purpose of evaluation is personnel decision making, it is important to use a comprehensive and systematic process. Because there are many dimensions to pedagogical work, it is best to use multiple measures involving multiple sources of data to evaluate the range of instructional activities, which can include the following:

- Instructional Delivery (including quality, amount, and level of classroom instruction)
 - Course Planning (including development of course materials, course revision, development of new courses)
 - Grading and Assessing Student Learning (including appropriate level of assignments, exams, grading standards)
 - Course Management (including supervision of GSIs)
 - Oversight of Independent Studies, Honors Theses, Prelims, Dissertations
 - Support for Student Internships, Experiential Learning, Service Learning
 - Department and Curricular Work (including participation in curriculum revision, departmental efforts to focus on teaching)
 - Advising and Mentoring
 - Professional Development and Innovation Around Teaching
- What follows are multiple methods for collecting information about instructors' activities, accomplishments, and effectiveness in teaching, in the classroom and beyond. While this list includes best practices for using student ratings, it also offers suggestions for ensuring that student ratings are not the only source of evidence used to assess instructional effectiveness, an approach consistent with research. In addition, detailed resources are available on the topics of **student ratings of instruction**, **peer review of teaching**, **course portfolios** ^[1], and **teaching portfolios** ^[1].

To set up an appointment with a CRLT consultant to discuss teaching evaluation methods, complete our [consultation request form](#) ^[2].

Overviews of Approaches to Evaluating Teaching

How to Evaluate Teaching (Felder & Brent, 2004) [3]

This article offers a brief outline of a process for obtaining a comprehensive evaluation of the quality of a faculty member's teaching using multiple sources of data.

IDEA Paper #36: Appraising Teaching Effectiveness: Beyond Student Ratings (Hoyt & Pallett, 1999, IDEA Center) [4]

This paper describes direct and indirect benefits of several sources for evaluating teaching effectiveness, including ratings from students, colleagues, and the department chair. It also details specific schedules for evaluating different types of teachers, such as first year faculty, non-tenured, and tenured (see p. 6). Evaluation and report templates are found in the appendices.

Obtaining and Giving Feedback to GSIs (from CRLT Handbook on Departmental GSI Training) [5]

This resource discusses several ways faculty coordinators can provide GSIs with feedback on their teaching, both for improvement and for personnel decisions. Methods include student feedback, self evaluation, peer observation, viewing a videotape of your teaching, and consultation with a CRLT staff member.

Evidence That Can Be Collected From Students

- Student ratings
- 1. U-M Office of the Registrar: U-M Online Student Ratings System [6]
- 2. Using Ratings Results for Improvement or Decision Making
- 3. Overviews of the Research on Student Ratings
- **Midterm Student Feedback** [7] to provide information for improvement (generally not recommended for personnel decisions unless an instructor chooses to include results in a portfolio)
- Student letters, solicited from the whole class by the department
- Examples of student work that show what students accomplished in the course (e.g., samples of A, B, C work along with a grade distribution; comparisons of student work at the beginning and end of term to document growth)
- Online surveys, such as SurveyMonkey, designed by individual instructors, departments or units (possibly done as alumni surveys: "...Now that you've completed your course...")
- Feedback from advisees (including MA and PhD students, as well as undergraduate research assistants)

Evidence That Can Be Collected From Colleagues/Chairs/GSIs

- **Peer Observation Guidelines and Recommendations** [8]
- **Classroom Observation Instruments** [9]
- **Reviews by colleagues of course materials** [10] (e.g., syllabi, assignments, activities)(pdf) [10]
- Letters from GSIs who have been supervised by the instructor

Evidence That Instructors Can Collect on Their Own

- **Reflective statement** ^[11] on a particular course with short sections on the goals of the course, teaching methods used, and the effectiveness of the course in helping students achieve goals
- **Scholarship of teaching and learning projects** ^[12] or other research efforts undertaken to assess student learning
- Professional development efforts around teaching (e.g., attending **workshops** ^[13] and seminars, **consultations** ^[14] on teaching, **midterm student feedback** ^[15], etc.)
- Description of work on curriculum development, GSI training, or other aspects of the department's educational mission

Faculty, Departmental, and School Responsibilities

To ensure that the evaluation system adopted is credible and acceptable, faculty members must have a strong hand in its development. Before departments and schools adopt teaching evaluation systems, the faculty members should determine their criteria for effective teaching. Departments and schools can then take responsibility for developing their own evaluation methods and evaluation criteria that can be flexible to accommodate diversity in instructional methods (e.g., lecture, discussion, lab, case study, small group interaction, practicum, studio, field work, clinical work, etc.).