Quick start: A guide for engaging in an online peer observation of teaching

This quick start is meant to guide faculty and/or departments through the process of engaging in a peer observation of teaching for an online course.

Prior to the observation

Step 1: Access (Re)designing a Peer Observation of Teaching Instrument: From Evaluation to Reciprocal Learning

Via the Center for Teaching Excellence website

Step 2: Choose a peer observer

See Step 1, Who is a Peer? in the (Re)designing a Peer Observation of Teaching Instrument: From Evaluation to Reciprocal Learning guided document.

Step 3: Consult your department and/or college's peer observation of teaching rubric and/or instrument

Review each criterion outlined in the rubric and/or instrument and the respective proficiency levels for each criterion

Step 4: Engage in inquiry-based reflection

- With your peer observer, determine how you can use your department and/or college's rubric and/or instrument to engage in reciprocal learning as outlined in the (Re)designing a Peer Observation of Teaching Instrument: From Evaluation to Reciprocal Learning guided document
- With your peer observer, engage in the inquiry-based reflection outlined in Step 2, Level 1: Inquiry-based reflection

Step 5: Reflect on the following questions specific to online teaching

1. Does my online course meet the eight (8) standards set forth by the Quality Matters Course Design Rubric for Higher Education?
    i. Course overview and introduction
    ii. Learning objectives (competencies)
    iii. Assessment and measurement
    iv. Instructional materials
    v. Learning activities and learner interaction
    vi. Course technology

     vii.   Learner support
    viii.   Accessibility and usability

2. In what ways and how often do I communicate with my students? How might instructor-student and/or student-student communication be improved to cultivate an online learning community?

3. In what ways do I engage my students in active learning? What am I currently doing well, and what are some potential opportunities for growth in this area?

4. At what levels of cognitive processing (as classified by [Bloom's Taxonomy](#)) are students currently being encouraged to reach? If the online instruction is primarily geared towards the Remember/Knowledge and Understanding/Comprehension levels, how might I encourage his or her students to reach higher levels (e.g., Apply/Application, Analyze/Synthesis, Evaluate/Evaluation, Create) of cognitive processing?

5. How are students demonstrating their learning through formative and summative assessment opportunities? What feedback do students receive from me through these opportunities? In what ways, if any, might the assessment process be improved?

6. What technology tools am I currently using for pedagogical purposes? How well are these tools being leveraged? What other technology tools might I consider?

7. How does my delivery of online instruction differ from my face-to-face courses?
    i.   Consider: Am I trying to replicate face-to-face instruction by solely lecturing online using synchronous video conferencing such as Zoom, Blackboard Collaborate, Microsoft Teams, etc.?

8. Consider additional questions and/or criterion from your department and/or college's rubric and/or instrument as well as the (Re)designing a Peer Observation of Teaching Instrument: From Evaluation to Reciprocal Learning guided document that could enhance your online teaching.

Observation

Step 6: The peer observer will conduct his or her observation

To truly get a sense of your course, it is recommended that the peer observer conduct the observation over the course of two to four weeks, particularly for an asynchronous course.

Following the observation

Step 7: Meet with your peer observer to discuss his or her feedback

With your peer observer, engage in the reflective action on teaching and learning outlined in Step 2, Level 3 of the (Re)designing a Peer Observation of Teaching Instrument: From Evaluation to Reciprocal Learning guided document.

- This process is intended for you and your peer observer to engage in a collaborative process of reciprocal learning to enhance teaching.

Step 8: Write a reflection

Reflect on the above process of peer observation and reflection on your online teaching. Consider the following questions as you write this reflection:

1. Through this process, what did I and/or my peer observer identify that I am do well with respect to my online teaching?
2. Through this process, what did I and/or my peer observer identify as areas for growth with regard to my online teaching? What actionable step(s) will I take to foster such growth?
3. How does this peer observation align with my overall reflective teaching practices?

It is recommended that following each peer observation of teaching, that the faculty member write a reflective narrative. This reflective narrative should be a separate entity included in his or her dossier for annual review. The faculty member's reflections should also be interwoven into his or her teaching narrative.