1. Introduction

This report offers recommendations from the 2015 University Distinguished Teaching Scholars/TILT Task Force on assessing teaching effectiveness. The Task Force considered how departments at Colorado State University might develop processes for assessing teaching effectiveness. The report builds on the report issued by the 2011 UDT/TILT Task Force on Assessing Teaching Effectiveness, which offered recommendations regarding the use of teaching portfolios, classroom observations, and reflective statements in the assessment process. This report moves beyond the 2011 recommendations by focusing on the campus-wide adoption of valid, rigorous processes for assessing and rewarding teaching activities. It provides recommendations for departments to consider as they develop processes for defining student learning outcomes, enhancing faculty teaching skills and knowledge, and evaluating faculty within the context of professional and department goals.

This report focuses on evaluating teaching effectiveness in courses. While the members of the task force recognize the important roles played in student learning by advising and mentoring outside of the context of university courses, our focus is on evaluating the teaching that occurs within the context of formal university courses.

The recommendations offered in this report build on the guidelines for evaluating teaching effectiveness found in section E.12.1 of the Academic Faculty and Administrative Professional Manual (excerpted below). The university’s periodic departmental review process, which now requires departments to establish student-learning outcomes for each of their programs, has also shaped these recommendations.

The recommendations in this report reflect an understanding among the task force members that teaching practices and conditions vary widely across disciplines and that no simple, “one-size-fits-all” approach is likely to be appropriate for all departments. It is clear, however, that several characteristics of effective teaching transcend disciplines and can ground the evaluation of teaching effectiveness in programs across the university.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Good teaching should be rewarded. In particular, evaluations of teaching effectiveness should contribute to decisions regarding compensation, promotion, retention, and recognition.
2. Teaching effectiveness should be assessed using evidence-based approaches, such as analysis of data from course management systems, analysis of student work, observation of teaching, and analysis of curricular materials.

3. Evaluations of teaching effectiveness should involve the use of multiple sources of evidence and multiple assessment tools.

4. Evaluations of teaching effectiveness should involve a peer-review process (defined later in this report) comparable to the process used in assessing research, scholarship, and artistry.

5. Evaluations of teaching effectiveness should include peer review of reflective statements from the faculty members who are being evaluated.

6. Evaluations of teaching effectiveness should entail the use of evidence-based processes and strategies that are appropriate to and recognized by scholars within a given discipline or profession.

7. Departmental evaluation processes should reward faculty members for engaging in professional development activities related to teaching and learning.

8. CSU should promote the design and implementation of additional professional development resources and scholarly research initiatives related to understanding and enhancing learning and teaching effectiveness across the institution.

2. Assumptions and Rationale

FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

The recommendations in this report reflect four foundational principles.

We are a community of teachers and scholars.

- As a university community, our teaching practices should be evidence-based. In particular, they should be informed by research on teaching and learning.
- We should value and support the scholarship of teaching and learning, discipline-based educational research, and learning science.
- We should disseminate scholarship on teaching and learning in ways that improve educational practice and student learning.
- We should support innovation in teaching and learning.
- We should recognize teaching excellence.

We should promote student learning and student success.

- Our curricula should incorporate evidence-based, high-impact practices that promote active, engaged teaching and learning.
- Recognizing that traditional forms of assessing student learning outcomes (e.g., grades, standards-based testing) are not necessarily synonymous with learning, we should adopt comprehensive, evidence-based strategies to assessing student learning.
Recognizing the importance of success beyond the classroom, we should gather information from CSU graduates that will help us identify teaching and learning strategies that have contributed to the success of alumni in the workforce and in society.

Evaluations of teaching effectiveness should be conducted within the context of faculty governance.

Section E.12.1 of the Academic Faculty and Administrative Professional Manual provides a framework within which departments and faculty shall work to assess teaching effectiveness. The section states in part:

Departments shall foster a culture that recognizes and values excellent teaching, and encourages reflective self-assessment. To that end, departmental codes should (1) define effective teaching and (2) describe the process and criteria for evaluating teaching effectiveness. Evaluation of teaching should be designed to highlight strengths, identify deficiencies, and improve teaching and learning.

Evaluation criteria of teaching effectiveness can include, but are not limited to, quality of curriculum design; quality of instructional materials (including course assessments & assignments and their fit with course objectives), incorporation of new methods in classroom teaching; achievement of student learning outcomes; effectiveness at presenting information; managing class sessions; encouraging student engagement and critical thinking; and responding to students and their work. Evaluation of teaching effectiveness must involve multiple sources of information which could include course syllabi; signed peer evaluations (of both classroom teaching and evaluations of teaching portfolios and/or curricular materials where available); examples of course improvements; development of new courses and teaching techniques; integration of service learning; appropriate course surveys of teaching; letters, electronic mail messages, and/or other forms of written comments from current and/or former students; evidence of the use of active and/or experiential learning, student learning achievement; and professional development related to teaching and learning, and assessments from conference/workshop attendance. Evaluation of teaching effectiveness should take into account the physical and curricular context in which teaching occurs (e.g., face-to-face and online settings; lower-division, upper-division, and graduate courses), established content standards and expectations, and the faculty member's teaching assignments, in particular the type and level of courses taught. The University should provide resources to support the evaluation of teaching effectiveness, such as systems to create and assess teaching portfolios, access to exemplary teaching portfolios, and professional development programs focusing on teaching and learning.

Building on the guidance in this section, the university’s periodic program review process requires departments to establish student-learning outcomes for each of their programs. These programmatic learning outcomes are expected to inform curricular design, which, in turn, must be considered when assessing teaching effectiveness.

Evaluation of teaching effectiveness requires departmental commitment and significant investments of faculty time.
Methods for evaluating teaching effectiveness vary widely across departments. In some cases, departments have established strong processes that are consistent with the guidance provided in Section E.12.1 of the *Academic Faculty and Administrative Professional Manual*. The members of this task force are aware, however, that significant barriers exist to wider adoptions of these kinds of evaluation processes. In most cases, this reflects a simple calculus: effective and fair evaluation requires significant investments of faculty time and effort. In the face of a reward system that provides significant incentives for productivity in the areas of research, scholarship, and artistry, we anticipate that many faculty members will find it difficult to justify participation in evaluation activities that reduce the time they can invest in research, scholarship, or artistry. If we are to make progress in the development of fair and effective processes for the evaluation of teaching effectiveness, our reward structures – at the department, college, and university levels – must provide incentives for participation in those processes. Those incentives might include allocating time for participation in evaluation activities and viewing participation as an important part of the activities considered during merit, promotion, and tenure evaluations.

**RATIONALE FOR SUBSTANTIVE EVALUATION**

Developing effective departmental practices for evaluating teaching effectiveness will make important contributions to the university’s efforts to improve teaching, learning, student retention, and student success. We offer three reasons for the necessity of substantive evaluation of teaching effectiveness:

1. Substantive evaluation of teaching effectiveness is fundamental to improving student learning, one of CSU’s primary missions.
2. Substantive evaluation of teaching effectiveness is a necessary first step to improving teaching effectiveness, a primary responsibility of most faculty members.
3. Substantive evaluation of teaching effectiveness should inform key review processes in a far more meaningful manner than it presently does, including those linked to salary increases, retention of faculty, tenure and promotion decisions, and consideration for recognitions (e.g., teaching awards and prestigious fellowships) within and beyond the university.

**3. Observations**

Ensuring the rigor and disciplinary appropriateness of processes for evaluating teaching effectiveness is essential to making these processes fair and constructive. Achieving rigor is likely to be both time consuming and challenging. Ensuring disciplinary appropriateness will require a capacious evaluation structure that respects disciplinary differences and priorities. To frame the recommendations that are provided later in this document, and to shed light on some of the complexities associated with developing fair and constructive departmental practices for assessing teaching effectiveness, we offer the following observations.

**A SHARED DEFINITION OF “TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS” IS ESSENTIAL TO ITS EVALUATION**

The authors of the 2011 Task Force report on assessing teaching effectiveness observed:

Teaching is bound up tightly with learning, yet it is clear that learning outcomes—what students take away from a course in terms of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and abilities—are not
synonymous with teaching effectiveness. Although they are closely linked, it is possible (albeit rare) to teach a course well without necessarily achieving the learning outcomes associated with course goals. Student attitudes and motivations (or the lack thereof), demands on student time that reduce the attention and effort they can devote to a course, and a range of environmental variables (such as problems with a course management system used in an online course or poor acoustics in a lecture hall) can affect learning outcomes in a course that is taught “effectively.” With that in mind, we concluded that any evaluation of teaching effectiveness must take into account not only what is learned by students but also, and importantly, the manner in which a course is designed, content is selected and delivered, and students are engaged in learning activities, among other issues. In addition, we conclude that any assessment of teaching effectiveness must consider the conditions under which a course is taught, for example as its role in the AUCC core or in a particular major or minor, the technology used to support the course, the physical setting in which the course is taught, and the students who typically enroll in the course, etc.

The members of this task force endorse this approach to understanding and evaluating teaching effectiveness.

**TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS AND STUDENT LEARNING ARE NOT SYNONYMOUS**

The assessment of teaching effectiveness and the assessment of learning are distinct, yet closely connected. In many cases, effective assessments of learning are still being developed. In such cases, assessments of student learning cannot be used to ground assessments of instructors’ teaching effectiveness. As we emphasize throughout this report, rigorous evaluation of teaching effectiveness cannot rely simply on single outcomes or single “data points” (the common practice of relying on student course evaluations alone, for example, is wholly inappropriate, both as a direct method of assessment and as a lone method of evaluating teaching effectiveness); additional measures of teaching effectiveness must be used. As noted below, meaningful evaluations can include methods as wide ranging as peer review of teaching portfolios, peer observation of classroom instruction, peer mentoring, instructor application of research-based techniques, reflection on available evidence of teaching effectiveness (including course survey responses), and the use of those reflections to improve course design and instructional delivery.

Nonetheless, much research reveals a consensus regarding key factors in how people learn. For example, active learning approaches, learning with understanding rather than by rote memorization, and the ability to explain and apply one’s understanding of key concepts or criteria governing their use all contribute to mastering various types of knowledge. In addition, such research shows that learning is complex; it often entails mastering conceptual, procedural, and conditional knowledge, sometimes in complicated relationships with one another. As a result, learning happens in an iterative, rather than a linear, process. When a research-based consensus on how people learn exists, this consensus should inform the development and use of teaching and student assessment practices.
TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS AND TEACHING EXCELLENCE ARE NOT SYNONYMOUS

Teaching effectiveness, as noted above, involves elements that include quality of curriculum design, quality of instructional materials (including assessments and their degree of fit with course objectives), incorporation of new methods in classroom teaching; achievement of student learning outcomes, effectiveness at presenting information, effectiveness at managing class sessions, encouraging student engagement and critical thinking, and responding to students and their work. Teaching excellence, means delivering on the elements that constitute effective teaching with excellence (as judged by the multi-method evaluation process this task force promotes). Effective teaching begins with the recognition and application of those elements that best stimulate student learning; teaching becomes excellent through effort, through iterative adaptations of and improvements in curricular material, through honest self-reflection, through the solicitation of substantive feedback from colleagues and students, and through a spirit of humility and a willingness to continue to approach teaching creatively. Colorado State University should expect effectiveness from all its instructors. Excellent teaching goes beyond effective teaching and requires continual effort to modify course materials, presentation, and activities to achieve as much student learning as possible.

STUDENT MOTIVATION, MATURITY, INTEREST, AND PREPARATION AFFECT EFFORTS TO TEACH EFFECTIVELY

Student preparation, interest, and motivation affect instructors in important ways. It is far easier to teach an upper level or graduate course that is highly relevant to the students’ programs of study than to reach a class of first semester students in an entry level AUCC course. For example, students in a capstone course in their major might be more knowledgeable, mature, interested, and motivated than students fulfilling a general education requirement in a discipline not directly in their majors. Such variance affects student learning, as well as the challenges instructors face in motivating students and demonstrating the relevance of course material. Similarly, differences in students’ preparation levels can result in substantially greater challenges for instructors in some courses. Such differences can and should be considered seriously in any evaluation of teaching effectiveness. In particular, evaluations should consider these questions:

• Does the instructor show evidence of attempting to ascertain students’ levels of preparation, motivation, and interest near the beginning of a course?
• Does the instructor show evidence of efforts to adapt content and delivery in ways appropriate to students’ preparation, motivation, and interest levels?
• Does the instructor show evidence of seeking resources to assist in such efforts, as needed?

A WIDE RANGE OF METRICS AND ASSESSMENT TOOLS CAN BE USED TO ASSESS TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS

We believe – and research and scholarship as well as our collective experience suggests – that any complex behavior is best understood through the use of multiple methods. Our recommendations are based on assumptions about the value of examining teaching effectiveness through the lens of curriculum development, instructional delivery, response and feedback, student performance, and
efforts to improve courses over time. We recognize that the effort required to implement some methods effectively is greater than the effort required to do so with others. We also recognize that significant problems arise when a single method – such as responses to a student course survey – is used as the basis for evaluation and when methods designed to promote feedback for self-improvement, rather than direct assessment (such as the course survey), are used for summative assessment. Our expectation is that departments will find value in implementing multiple methods to evaluate teaching effectiveness.

CONTEXT MATTERS

We should recognize that faculty members have different degrees of preparation for and experiences in teaching, that the preponderance of new faculty members lack experience in teaching, that faculty roles vary widely and do not necessarily encourage a focus on teaching, and that instructional contexts vary widely even within a given department. Efforts to evaluate teaching effectiveness should take into account differences in:

a. Discipline
b. Career trajectory (rank, years in rank, type of appointment)
c. Faculty role
d. Course type (seminars, labs, large or small lecture, practica)
e. Course role and purpose (foundational, service, gateway, core, major, capstone, undergraduate, graduate)
f. Students in a course (majors, non-majors, undergraduates, graduates, native and non-native speakers of English, and so on)

UNIVERSITY RESOURCES EXIST TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROCESSES FOR EVALUATING TEACHING EVALUATION

We recognize the existence of a rich array of university, college, and department resources supporting efforts to teach effectively. TILT offers instructional guides and tips as well as professional development programs such as the PDI, MTI, and Summer Conference. Other resources are available in spaces as diverse as department websites and CSU Online’s teaching blogs. We make recommendations about expanding these resources in the next section.

4. Recommendations

1. GOOD TEACHING SHOULD BE REWARDED. IN PARTICULAR, EVALUATIONS OF TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS SHOULD CONtribute to decisions regarding compensation, promotion, retention, and recognition

Teaching is central to the mission of a university and high levels of teaching effectiveness should be encouraged and rewarded. Meaningful assessments of teaching effectiveness should contribute to the calculation of merit-based salary increases, promotion and tenure decisions, retention of faculty, and consideration for teaching awards within and beyond the university.
Review processes for salary, retention of untenured instructors, and tenure/promotion should include the explicitly stated, and administratively supported, expectations that departments will use valid practices for assessing teaching effectiveness and that individual faculty members will demonstrate substantive participation in such practices. To ensure that this occurs:

- Evaluations of teaching effectiveness – using methods and tools as detailed in recommendations 2 through 6 – should contribute to the calculation of salary increases (and decreases).
- Differential performance must be recognized. If evaluations of teaching occupy a narrow range, or if most evaluations fall within the same range because, for example, no meaningful evaluation is applied by department chairs, the differential contribution of those evaluations will be small and other evaluations, such as evaluation of scholarly and research productivity, will exert a larger influence on the overall salary increase. Therefore, department chairs should use meaningful evaluations of teaching effectiveness to identify and reward teaching accomplishments.
- Participation in professional development activities should count toward teaching effectiveness.
- Involvement in curricular design activities should be counted toward teaching, not service, in annual performance evaluations.

2. TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS SHOULD BE EVALUATED USING EVIDENCE-BASED APPROACHES.

Colorado State University should make a range of evidence-based approaches to teaching assessment easily available to departments and colleges. These approaches should include, but not be limited to, analysis of data from learning management systems, analysis of student work, observation of teaching, and peer review of curricular materials. Evaluations can draw on direct and indirect measures, qualitative and quantitative data, and the exploration of relationships between measures and student learning behaviors.

3. EVALUATIONS OF TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS SHOULD INVOLVE THE USE OF MULTIPLE SOURCES OF EVIDENCE AND MULTIPLE TOOLS.

No single method should be viewed as sufficient in and of itself. In particular, student course surveys should not serve either as a direct or primary means of determining teaching effectiveness. Although these surveys can be valuable in formative assessments, they have not proven to be a valid means of assessing teaching effectiveness. Using them for this purpose can promote ineffective teaching, as demonstrated by recent research (Beleche, Farris, & Marks, 2012; Braga, Paccagnella, & Pellizzari, 2014; Carrell & West, 2010; Langbein, 2008; Stark & Freishtat, 2014; Weinberg, Hashimoto, & Fleisher, 2009).

Potential sources of evidence for evaluating teaching effectiveness might include:

- Curriculum development and course materials, including course proposals, course syllabi, assignments, lesson plans, handouts, Web-based materials, courseware, and assessments (exams, quizzes, writing projects), among others
• Evidence of dissemination of course materials
• Evidence of integration of critical thinking activities into courses
• Evidence of effective technology use in teaching and learning,
• Evidence of innovations in courses (e.g., improvements on past practices or efforts to incorporate new knowledge and processes within the discipline)
• Teaching awards
• Evidence of participation in professional development activities related to teaching and learning

4. EVALUATIONS OF TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS SHOULD INVOLVE A PEER-REVIEW PROCESS (DEFINED LATER IN THIS REPORT) COMPARABLE TO THE PROCESS USED IN ASSESSING RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP, AND ARTISTRY.

Peer review is an essential element of evaluation processes that are central to tenure, promotion, compensation, recognition, and retention of faculty members. It is widely used in assessment of scholarly, research, and artistic productivity and in assessments of contributions to service, outreach, and engagement. While the peer review processes used for these purposes share key similarities across disciplines, however, elements of the processes can vary significantly. For example, see the [peer review guidelines] prepared by [Erica’s discipline] in the appendix to this report.

While a number of departments currently use peer review processes in their evaluations of teaching effectiveness, many departments do not. We recommend that all departments do so.

The development of peer review processes (or the improvement of existing processes) should be informed by the following considerations:

• Peer review should draw on multiple forms of information, including but not limited to curricular materials, observations of teaching performance, and examples of student performance. For example, while observation of teaching performance is an important element of peer-review processes, it should not serve as the only source of information for an evaluation.
• Peer review should be rooted in discussions of evidence regarding both the impact of teaching on students and the instructor’s use of evidence of those impacts to improve instructional effectiveness and pursue curricular goals.
• Curricular materials offered for review can include, but should not limited to,
  o course syllabi (including course goals, course outlines, and course policies),
  o student assessments (e.g., exams, writing assignments, projects, and presentations),
  o in-class activities developed and deployed (student presentations, group activities, group discussion), and
  o materials that support student learning outside the classroom (e.g., homework, reflection assignments, group study).
Review of curricular materials is best served by the development and maintenance of an electronic teaching portfolio (critical and part of the 2011 recommendations), which can show development over the course of several years, curricular development, reflective statements on teaching, and more. To be meaningful, materials should be reviewed by more than one faculty colleague and reviews should provide feedback about the materials.

- Classroom observation offers benefits to both the observer and observed instructor. Tools to help the observer focus on important components of the class can facilitate the process. These include pre-observations summaries of the goals and activities for the class, department-designed observation forms, and prompts guiding the development of an observation report. To be most useful, classroom observations must be followed by debriefing and discussion between the observer and instructor. This debriefing and discussion should address observed strategies and techniques, strengths, weaknesses, and recommended modifications. Classroom observation that involves repeated and regular observations by the same colleague best serves the long-term development of effective teaching.

- Student performance can be assessed through review of student work, observation of engagement during class sessions, and analysis of data provided through various learning analytics tools. The latter can include information from a learning management system, information provided by university reporting systems, and information from the various learning tools made available by the department, college, or more generally at CSU. Examples include data from YouSeeU, Alex, MyLabs, and other commercial systems.

Peer review should result in a report suitable for annual review. Peer review should be documented in a way that allows department chairs the opportunity to easily assess teaching effectiveness and excellence. For new instructors, effective peer review can also support the development of a long-term mentor/mentee relationship in which a faculty colleague serves as a peer reviewer over the course of several years, and not simply as a one-time visitor to complete a classroom peer observation.

We recommend that CSU provide as many resources as possible to facilitate the peer review process. These resources should be made available through a central portal, perhaps on the TILT website or on the Provost’s website. See recommendation 8, below.

5. EVALUATIONS OF TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS SHOULD INCLUDE PEER REVIEW OF REFLECTIVE STATEMENTS FROM THE FACULTY MEMBERS WHO ARE BEING EVALUATED.

A central recommendation in the 2011 task force report was the “production and review of reflective statements on teaching.” We recommend that these reflective statements be a required part of any evaluation of teaching effectiveness. This statement would allow the instructor to reflect on their work as an instructor during the review period. It would also allow them to address their strengths and weaknesses as a teacher and explore areas for future improvement. It would also allow them to identify key contributions they’ve made to their departments, college, university, and
profession. Ideally, the reflective statement would be linked closely to the contents of a teaching portfolio.

Like the 2011 task force, we also support the design and implementation of professional development initiatives related to this recommendation.

6. EVALUATION OF TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS SHOULD ENTAIL THE USE OF PROCESSES AND STRATEGIES APPROPRIATE TO AND RECOGNIZED BY SCHOLARS WITHIN A GIVEN DISCIPLINE OR PROFESSION.

Research and scholarship on the evaluation of teaching effectiveness – and more generally on teaching and learning – should inform the processes used by departments to evaluate teaching effectiveness. During the development of evaluation processes, department faculty should consult scholarship on teaching and learning, discipline-based educational research, and work in learning science. Because knowledge types, subject matter, and disciplinary values and conventional practices play a key role in determining which teaching approaches are effective in a given course, teaching assessment practices must be adapted to fit discipline-specific needs.

The authors of the 2011 Task Force Report note:

Any attempt to assess teaching effectiveness must take into account institutional and disciplinary culture. Simply put, the agreed upon “best practices” in one discipline might be viewed with suspicion in another, most often because of long-standing agreements within a group about methods but also, and perhaps more importantly, because of genuine differences in content and methods across disciplines. As a result, we believe that teaching effectiveness is best assessed within a disciplinary or departmental context. This implies the central role of peer review within any assessment process and our recommendations are founded on the assumption that assessment must be grounded in agreed-upon standards that are likely to vary widely across the University.

Colorado State University should help faculty find the information pertinent to teaching in their disciplines. TILT should make a rich variety of the following resources easily available at a central repository on its website. CSU faculty with knowledge and expertise in the disciplines should assist by providing materials for the TILT website.

7. DEPARTMENTAL EVALUATION PROCESSES SHOULD REWARD FACULTY MEMBERS FOR ENGAGING IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES RELATED TO TEACHING AND LEARNING.

Instructors improve most when they take advantage of resources that support improvement in teaching performance. Resources range from informal conversations with colleagues to structured professional development opportunities. Departments are encouraged to provide access to mentoring and encourage participation in mentoring programs and to encourage participation in professional development programs offered by TILT, CSU Online, and the Provost’s Office. Departments are also encouraged to identify potential professional development opportunities offered through professional organizations and at conferences.
8. **CSU SHOULD PROMOTE THE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES AND SCHOLARLY INITIATIVES RELATED TO UNDERSTANDING AND ENHANCING LEARNING AND TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS ACROSS THE INSTITUTION.**

A wide range of resources currently exist on websites sponsored by departments, the Office of the Vice President for Research, TILT, and CSU Online, among others. We encourage the university to make additional investments in professional development resources and scholarly initiatives related to teaching effectiveness. These might include:

- Expanding the PDI and TILT Summer Conference to include greater attention to the scholarship of teaching and learning, learning science, and disciplinary based educational research
- Tools that support peer review of teaching, such as observation forms and report templates
- Tools that prompt faculty reflection on teaching effectiveness
- Models of best practices for classroom instruction
- Models of best practices for online instruction
- Examples of teaching portfolios
- Examples of department processes for assessing teaching effectiveness

At the department level, we recommend that departments support and recognize scholarly work related to teaching effectiveness. Departments should include discipline-based research on teaching and learning in its evaluations of faculty and support such work within and across disciplines.

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**Report Submitted:** TBD
Appendix: Reviews of Literature and Recommendations Based on Practice

Discussions, bibliographies, and overviews are provided on the following topics:

- Course evaluation
- Teaching excellence
- Student course surveys
- Course development and instructional innovation
- Peer review of teaching
- Mid-semester and/or periodic semester reviews
- Teaching portfolios
- Professional development plans
- Lesson study
- Statements of teaching philosophy
Bibliography: Research on Course Evaluation:


Bibliography: Research on Teaching Excellence


Rice, R.E. (2002). Beyond Scholarship Reconsidered: Toward an enlarged vision of the scholarly work of faculty members. New Directions for Teaching and Learning, 90, 7-17.


Review: Research on Student Course Surveys

Student course surveys are commonly used, at CSU and nationally, to assess teaching effectiveness. Here and elsewhere, some departments employ course surveys as the primary, or exclusive, means of conducting such assessment. Some departments use only a few questions, such as how students rank what they learned in a course and how they rank an instructor’s overall effectiveness. Departments need assessments for high-stakes purposes, such as tenure and promotion decisions, contract renewal decisions for contingent faculty, and salary reviews. Given the importance of such decisions to both the institution and instructors, the attractions of this approach include a seemingly objective quantitative measure, the ready availability of data, and ease of score comparisons.

However, the research literature on course surveys has raised serious questions about whether they are valid measures of teaching effectiveness. Two salient points emerge from this research. First, a number of studies have questioned the validity of using course surveys for this purpose (Beleche, Farris, & Marks, 2012; Braga, Paccagnella, & Pellizzari, 2014; Carrell & West, 2010; Langbein, 2008; Stark & Freishtat, 2014; Weinberg, Hashimoto, & Fleisher, 2009). These studies showed that positive course survey responses correlate positively with students’ expected grades in the course but inversely with learning, which was typically measured through students’ grades in subsequent courses that depend upon the learning gained in the initial course. For example, Carrell and West, who examined course surveys from 10,534 students at the U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA), based their study design on USAFA’s random assignment of students across sections and its standardized core curriculum, which uses shared syllabi, examinations, and cumulative courses required of all students. They found that students in introductory courses who rated professors more positively received higher grades in those courses but lower grades in subsequent courses. Further, less experienced instructors’ students consistently received higher grades in introductory courses and lower grades in subsequent courses, while more experienced instructors’ students consistently received lower grades in introductory courses and higher grades in subsequent courses. “Students appear to reward higher grades in the introductory courses but punish professors who increase deep learning [as demonstrated by higher grades in subsequent courses],” the authors indicated, concluding that this fact “draws into question the value and accuracy of this practice [of using course surveys to measure teaching effectiveness]” (p. 412). Similarly, Braga, Paccagnella, & Pellizzari, who found similar patterns in course survey responses, concluded, “good teachers are those who require their students to exert effort; students dislike it, especially the least able ones, and their evaluations reflect the utility [or desired ease] they enjoyed from the course” (p. 85).

Second, some studies demonstrated consistent patterns of bias in course survey responses, patterns that negatively impact instructors of color and female instructors (MacNeil, Driscoll, & Hunt, 2014; Weinberg, Hashimoto, & Fleisher, 2009). For instance, MacNeil, Driscoll, & Hunt used the absence of in-person interaction between instructor and students in online courses to test whether course survey responses differed based on instructors’ perceived gender identities. To do so, they assigned two online assistant instructors, one male and one female, two different gender identities, but equivalent qualifications, in their instructor biographies for a course. Thus each instructor taught half of his or her students identified as a male and half identified as a female, with no other differences in teaching
Thus using course surveys as a primary measure of teaching effectiveness poses three problems. First, much research suggests that such use is not valid. Second, course surveys produce systematically biased response patterns that negatively impact instructors of color and female instructors. Third, emphasizing course surveys in assessing teaching effectiveness undermines a crucial means of improving this effectiveness, namely fostering ongoing reflection on teaching. Such reflection is a crucial component of teaching development and should be supported by the use of various data types, consistent engagement with peers in discussion of teaching, and other forms of instructor professional development (e.g., workshops, seminars, short courses, and conferences).

However, there are potentially valid uses of course surveys that can contribute importantly to assessing teaching effectiveness and supporting teachers’ development. Reid (2011) argued that course surveys should be more focused on curricular goals. In addition to supporting curricular improvement, course surveys can provide information instructors can use to improve instructional approaches. When course survey responses offer information on issues students can evaluate, such as clarity of presentation, pacing and accessibility of assignments, and perceived relevance of course texts, they often provide instructors with information that can be used to improve curriculum design or instructional delivery. For departments needing to replace the direct use of course surveys with a more valid – but still manageable – measure of teaching effectiveness, this feature of course surveys makes them a potentially valuable tool, when used to prompt instructor reflection and revision of course design or instructional delivery.

Instructors can be asked to summarize their course survey responses, briefly explain changes they’ve made to address issues needing improvement, and summarize any relevant responses from subsequent surveys. This material can be provided in one page per academic year. By asking instructors to produce such surveys each year, departments can track progress (or lack thereof) in instructors’ course survey responses and in their efforts to improve teaching effectiveness. Further, use of this approach will promote sustained, cumulative reflection on teaching. It may scaffold instructors’ and departments’ work toward more robust forms of reflection on teaching, such as teaching portfolios. It is likely to be most effective when supported by professional development endeavors such as teaching effectiveness consultations, workshops, seminars, conferences, and the like.

REFERENCES


Overview: Course Development and Instructional Innovation

Objective: Improve teaching effectiveness through course development and instructional innovation

COURSE DEVELOPMENT

- Initial development; then cyclical, dynamic, on-going process of continuous improvement
- Connected to previous and subsequent courses taught in program/major
- Support student learning; engagement and interaction
- Appropriately challenging; discipline specific; invite deep, meaningful learning
- Desired learning and performance outcomes are identified, measured, met;
  - Process: define outcome, identify approaches to measure outcomes, set acceptable standard of expected outcome (e.g. benchmark), determine assessment
  - Suggested best practices: course mapping; link core curricular competencies with subsequent course objectives, learning strategies, and final endpoint. Backwards design. Cluster of courses re-designed.
- Core curricular competencies identified
- Assess student baseline characteristics


See TILT website: http://teaching.colostate.edu/tips/index.cfm?category=9&subcategory=0 or http://teaching.colostate.edu/guides/bestpractices/ for additional tips and articles.

INSTRUCTIONAL INNOVATION

- Definition: Creativity is subjective, making it difficult to measure. Innovation is completely measurable.
- Can be innovative use of existing or new pedagogy/andragogy, product, etc.
- Adds to body of knowledge
- Assessment of innovation important
- Research indicates that innovative teaching performance has four competencies (learning competency, educational competency, social competency and technological competency).
  - Findings indicate that teachers' educational competency, social competency and technological competency were positively related to their innovative teaching performance.
- Supportive relationship with colleagues is important for teachers' innovative teaching performance


Overview: Peer Review of Teaching

Objectives: Improve teaching effectiveness and provide evidence of teaching effectiveness for evaluation processes.

PROCESS FOR SELECTION OF PEER EVALUATORS

(1) Instructor option; (2) Administrator option; (3) Combination of (1) and (2). In most disciplines for which the evaluation is being conducted, the evaluator has expertise in the subject although this requirement may not be consistently required. A few units utilize a specifically designated trained reviewer across all units.

EVALUATION PROCESS DETAILS

a. Observation of Classroom Teaching: Perceived appropriateness of materials and methods; depth of material covered; correlation of topics with course syllabus and learning outcomes for course; currency of the material presented. Interaction with instructor by reviewing syllabus and course goals prior to evaluation enhances experience.

b. Evaluation of course materials: Review of materials used in the class can provide a more in-depth assessment of the course and therefore more useful feedback to the instructor.

c. Peer reviewers should work one-on-one with instructor in contrast to “committee of peers.” Results should be shared only with instructor. Report by peer reviewer should outline suggestions for improving teaching effectiveness.

d. Training of reviewers and use of a standardize assessment template (many available) will improve quality and consistency of information collected.

FACTORS TO CONSIDER IN IMPLEMENTING PEER REVIEW

a. Time allotted to peer evaluations can be extensive and therefore could be burdensome to reviewers
b. Reviewers’ efforts must be seriously recognized
c. Process has to be non-judgmental
d. Feedback to Department chairs/deans should not reflect nature of review—merely that exercise was completed.

e. Instructor resistance to peer evaluations exists for various reasons (Berk, 2005)
f. Peer evaluations should be regular—a one-time classroom review may be insufficient
g. Departments/Colleges should consider development of processes/policies for peer evaluation
h. Literature generally discourages use of student evaluations as part of peer evaluations
i. “The evidence for peer’s effectiveness in broadened evaluative roles is scant and inconsistent. – article calls for caution regarding roles that peers should assume in evaluating teaching. – questioned whether it is the “right thing to do.” (Burns, 1998)

j. Creation of peer teaching discussion groups usually viewed as positive aspect of process

RESOURCES REQUIRED

a. Training of reviewers by TILT as to what should be focus of assessment
b. Standardized templates recommended by TILT tailored when appropriate to units
Overview: Mid-Semester and/or Periodic Semester Reviews

Objective: Improve teaching effectiveness with the use of feedback during the semester

In order to determine whether students are learning throughout a semester, it is important to utilize various types of assessments. Formative assessments used throughout the semester are common measurements to help increase learning in undergraduate students (Feden, 2012). Assessments range from traditional multiple-choice tests to group work projects to less traditional assessments of essays, poems, etc.

The key to formative assessments is the act of “providing helpful information as “learning occurs” (McMillan & Hearn, 2008, p.42). Mid-semester reviews or periodic semester reviews allow the instructor to receive feedback and take action while the learning is happening to ensure student learning outcomes have a better chance of being achieved. Boyer (1990) understood effective teachers are constantly requesting feedback and by receiving feedback, they were learning along with the students, and thus more effective teachers. An effective teacher’s intrinsic desire to learn makes them more effective to teach students (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1998; Czikszentmihalyi, 1982).

Factors to consider when utilizing mid-semester or periodic semester reviews:

• Small chunks of time can be utilized to gain valuable feedback
• A small number of pointed questions can deliver significant feedback to direct the rest of the semester activities
• Providing comments and corrective actions for the feedback received is a critical step
• Not all feedback will require or even allow a significant change to the syllabi or remaining course

Factors causing resistance for teachers to ask for feedback:

• The feedback loop may imply more work for the faculty member
• Feedback requires faculty to consider their goals and expectations when receiving feedback from students, which can be uncomfortable (Grassian, 2013)
• Feedback not acted on requires an explanation for the remaining activities and pedagogical activities

REFERENCES


Overview: Teaching Portfolios

WHAT IS A TEACHING PORTFOLIO?

A teaching portfolio is a set of elective documents that support claims that an instructor makes about his/her teaching effectiveness. The supporting documents may include:

- Narrative statements of teaching goals and philosophies
- Curricular revisions
- Lessons and Assessments
- Student work samples
- Supervisor or peer evaluation notes/observations
- Excerpts from students
- Communications with others in the institution who are not directly in the classroom
- Photographs
- Video files
- Action Research Projects

PURPOSE

- Opportunities for teachers to be reflective
- Starting point for supervisors and teachers to discuss effective teaching
- More authentic assessment of teaching
- May be used to determine tenure/promotion/recognition for teaching award/etc.

ISSUES/CONCERNS

- Quality of documentation
- Commitment to updating portfolio
- Models for reflection/ quality of teacher reflection

REFERENCES


Overview: Professional Development Plans

WHAT IS FACULTY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN?

Faculty members proposed goals, proposed plan on meeting goals, intended outcomes, resources needed to meet goals, alignment of goals with university mission, and success in meeting goals so far or in the past.

PURPOSE

• Instructor must think and articulate his/her goals for teaching
• New faculty members/instructors can pilot new ideas with their supervisors
• Fosters communication amongst faculty about teaching and approaches
  o Opportunities to clarify expectations
  o Resources can be negotiated so instructors can meet goals
• Written documentation of plan for future reference (including short and long-term goals)

BENEFITS

• Raises awareness amongst colleagues
• Fosters communication amongst colleagues about best practices
• May initiate reform efforts
• Continuous documentation of programs

REFERENCE

BYU Faculty Development Center, http://facultycenter.byu.edu/faculty-development-plan-guidelines

Overview: Lesson Study

WHAT IS LESSON STUDY?

Group of instructors observe instructional strategies as a team in order to collect data; the data are shared during a post-instruction colloquium with the intention of making evidence-based decisions on how to improve instruction

1. Study curriculum and formulate goals
2. Plan (include goals, anticipated student thinking, data collection plan, rationale for instructional plan and model of learning trajectory)
3. Collect data (one person teaches, others collect data)
4. Reflect (Discuss data and original learning plans, consider next steps)
5. Repeat

PURPOSE

Educators to work collaboratively, learn from one another, collect data as a team (increase reliability of their interpretations of the data collected) to improve learning outcomes of students.

ISSUES/CONCERNS

- Is it scientific?
- Lack of clear causal warrants (perhaps instructional practices are restricted locally)

REFERENCE

Overview: Statements of Teaching Philosophy

Statements of Teaching Philosophy are generally one- to two-page documents that are required as part of job applications for academic positions and are used in dossiers for promotion and tenure. The statements generally articulate teaching approaches, methods, and expertise in ways that convey teaching values, beliefs, and goals. Teaching Philosophy statements address the following questions (Teaching Center – WUSL):

• **Why do you teach?** : Teaching values, beliefs, and goals.
• **What do you teach?** : Content areas of expertise.
• **How do you teach?** : Modes (lecture, active learning, On-line, Self-directed learning, Experiential learning), Discourse style, and Activities.
• **How do you measure your effectiveness?** : Criteria and/or standards to judge the quality of your teaching, evidence of your teaching effectiveness (e.g., student mastery in content, critical thinking, problem solving, and collaborative teamwork skills).

**ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION**

• Course Syllabus (assignments, format, content, expectations, texts, assignments, grading and assessment).
• In-classroom environment (diversity of methods, level of interaction, quality of feedback, intercultural sensitivity)
• Assessment of student learning
• Connection to institutional mission and disciplinary trends

**METHODS AND CRITERIA USED TO PROVIDE EVIDENCE OF TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS**

• Peer review
• Students comments
• Ratings
• Portfolio
• Syllabi
• Teaching activities

**REFERENCES**


Montell, Gabriela (2003). How to Write a Statement of Teaching Philosophy, from the Chronicle Manage Your Career section of the *Chronicle of Higher Education*.


Writing a teaching philosophy statement. Washington University in St. Louis [http://teachingcenter.wustl.edu/About/ProgramsforGraduateStudentsandPostdocs/resources/Pages/Writing-a-Teaching-Philosophy-Statement.aspx](http://teachingcenter.wustl.edu/About/ProgramsforGraduateStudentsandPostdocs/resources/Pages/Writing-a-Teaching-Philosophy-Statement.aspx)