

Revised—March 2003

Department of Educational Leadership
Miami University

Principles and Criteria for Effective Teaching

We believe that educational leadership programs must model critical, reflective, and collaborative learning. These dimensions of learning are essential because educational leaders are transformative leaders who engage with others in creating a shared vision for building the best schools. As such they must share power with teachers, students, parents, and community for the purpose of building democratic structures and organizations. This involves building cultures in which differences are valued and developing practice on the basis of critical reflection situated in the cultural, political, and moral context of schooling.

Our criteria for effective teaching, approved in 1990, revised in 1994 and in 2003, stem from these principles. Criteria include: 1) strong content knowledge which is current and inclusive of multiple perspectives; 2) instructor acts that reveal clear organization, learning activities relevant to learning goals, sensitivity to human diversity in curriculum and pedagogy, evaluation techniques appropriate to course goals and appropriate office hours; 3) instructor/student interaction characterized by effective communication, a learning environment free of inappropriate actions toward others, implementation of an effective evaluation system of the instructor, approachable demeanor, a learning environment that encourages development of student voice, involvement and promotes their intellectual development; and 4) reflective action by the instructor regarding her/his teaching philosophy, practices, improvements in courses and efforts to improve teaching. [The attached document describes these in detail.] These criteria remain relevant for the department and provide a strong foundation to guide us in continually reflecting on our teaching.

A 32 item student instructional observation form (see attached) is used to seek student observations on the teaching effectiveness criteria they are able to observe. This form is consistently used as a primary form of feedback in EDL classes along with an open-ended form to solicit more detailed comments regarding course readings, examinations, organization, grading procedures, and general areas for improvement. This process results in substantive feedback for improving individual courses as well as identifying trends in pedagogy that are strengths to sustain or areas to improve over time. Many faculty, however, find the narrative feedback more substantive and prefer to find ways to collect more such input. The University requires that faculty conduct evaluations of one course per semester; the Department encourages this as a minimum. (Independent studies and practica are usually excluded from such evaluations.)

Part of our commitment to excellence in instruction involves creating a departmental, divisional, and university culture which values and nurtures reflective teachers. Through formal and informal mechanisms, the department takes care to create

and maintain this culture, though there are areas which may be weak and in need of consideration

Ultimately, the evaluation of teaching effectiveness is a professional judgment rendered by the department or its designee and guided by departmentally approved criteria. The user of these criteria is also reminded of some principles which underlie this document.

1. Elaborations of the criteria are partial, incomplete, and not specifically necessary.
2. Teaching effectiveness encompasses classroom and out-of-classroom teaching.
3. Students can judge behavior and their own reactions, but their judgments must always be put into context which includes course goals, student expectations, and student characteristics, such as student's program.

This document is to be used for purposes of promotion and tenure, annual evaluation, and proposal support for external grants or awards.

Documenting Teaching Effectiveness

The principle of informed choice guides the use of these criteria and procedures. Each faculty member is expected to address the categories and submit data for content, instructor acts, instructor/student interaction and reflective action by the instructor. Within each category, criteria and possible sources of information about these criteria are provided. The faculty member should use his/her professional judgment to determine which criteria and sources to use in providing documentation of teaching effectiveness.

The Department holds some common expectations of all instructors who teach in EDL, including full time faculty, part time faculty, and graduate instructors. Each instructor must provide students with an opportunity to evaluate the class at or near the end of the course, using the quantitative and qualitative evaluation documents created by the Department (see attached). As specified, instructors must not conduct the evaluation, and they may not see the evaluations until *after* their grades have been delivered to the registrar. Full time faculty must reflect on their evaluations in their annual report to the Department Chair.

Formative evaluations (e.g. instructor reflections, instructor portfolios, mentor observations, unofficial student feedback) are designed to provide instructors with feedback to reflect upon their teaching and improve. Such evaluations will not be used for summative purposes, such as promotion or tenure decisions or merit salary increases. Summative evaluations (student qualitative and quantitative evaluations, peer and chair evaluations) document effectiveness in teaching and may be used in instructor assessment for promotion and tenure and merit salary increases.

The faculty member should be guided by the Miami University Policy and Information Manual, section 7.2.A , in the gaining and submitting of appropriate student evaluations of teaching.

I. Content

1. Well versed in subject, including familiarity with current work.
Sources of Information: Syllabus, assignments, exams, research.
2. Acknowledges and incorporates (depending on nature of course) the range of different perspectives that exist in the area.
Sources of Information: Syllabus, assignments, exams, research.

II. Instructor Acts

This set of criteria requires instructor action.

1. Organization.
Clear goals.
Organized syllabus that includes goals, course of action, evaluation system.
Classroom procedures including clear expectations but not reduced to technical directions and an organized plan of activities.
Sources of Information: Syllabus, student quantitative and qualitative evaluations.
2. Plans learning activities appropriate to course goals.
Judicious use of lecture.
Adjusts techniques to help students learn.
Use techniques to encourage student discussion and participation.
Develops plans that will likely promote critical reflection by students.
Use of learning aids (video-computer simulation, etc.)
Appropriate use of case or problem solving methods.
Varies learning activities to accommodate various learning styles.
Creates opportunities for student voices to be expressed (including small group work)
Validates different student voices (encourages the expression of perspective, but not necessarily agreeing).
Promotes collaborative atmosphere to enhance peer support.
Provides opportunities for students to be active learners.
Sources of Information: Syllabus, student quantitative and qualitative evaluations, student examinations and papers, faculty reflection.
3. Shows awareness of and sensitivity to human diversity in curriculum and pedagogy.

Use of gender-balanced language in handouts, lecture, and discussion.
 Creates a non-sexist classroom environment.
 Represents diverse perspectives and authors in texts and classroom topics.
Sources of Information: Instructional materials, projects, student quantitative and qualitative evaluations.

4. Develops student evaluation techniques consistent with course goals and articulates them clearly to students.
 Defines how grades will be calculated.
 Defines what contributes to grade and percentage of each contribution.
 Clear expectations for assignments.
 Reasonable judgment of student performance (based on stated criteria for assignment).
 Implements evaluation system as articulated or convincingly explains rationale for change.
Sources of Information: Syllabus, instructor assessment, student quantitative and qualitative evaluations, student examinations.
5. Office hours and appointment times congruent with teaching load and overall work load.
Sources of Information: Department chair, course syllabus, instructor description.

III. Instructor/Student Interaction

This set of criteria is dependent upon patterns of student-instructor interaction which develop during the course.

1. Communicates effectively.
 Uses language understandable to students or effectively teaches and clarifies language that is complex or new to students.
 Clear presentation of material by using examples and illustrations.
 Is enthusiastic about teaching.
Sources of Information: Student quantitative and qualitative evaluations, peer observations, videotape, chair observation.
2. Develops and maintains a learning environment free of sexism, racism, anti-religious, and other inappropriate actions towards others.
 Discourages student use of sexist, racist, and other such inappropriate language.
 Challenges inappropriate student behavior related to sexism, racism and other such inappropriate behavior.
 Encourages and facilitates discussion of sexist, racist, and other inappropriate incidents and materials relevant to the course.
Sources of Information: Student quantitative and qualitative evaluations, videotape, instructor judgment, chair observation.

3. Implements effective evaluation system of instructor.
Expresses the value of student feedback and how instructor used it to Improve teaching.
Responds openly to informal student feedback.
Provides acceptable mechanisms for formal student feedback.
Sources of Information: Instructor, student quantitative and qualitative evaluations, chair judgment, examinations and assignments.
4. Approachable attitude.
Expresses interest in student learning.
Shows respect for students as learners.
Students feel they aren't unfairly imposing on the instructor's time.
Encouraging students to come to instructor with questions and concerns.
Expressing willingness to help when needed.
Establishes rapport with students, which encourages students to take risks.
Sources of Information: Student quantitative and qualitative evaluations.
5. Creates classroom environment that encourages the development of student voice/involvement in the class.
Creates opportunities for student voices to be expressed.
Incorporates principles of active learning by inviting students to relate their life experiences to the learning process and to apply new understandings from the class into students' life
Sources of Information: Student quantitative and qualitative evaluations, instructor description, video tapes, chair observation.
6. Interaction with students is effective for their intellectual development.
Appropriate balance between challenging students to think for themselves about the material and supporting students in learning how to do so.
Identifies, assesses, and responds effectively to student learning needs.
Sources of Information: Videotape, chair observation, instructor Description, syllabus, peer observation.

IV. Reflective Action by the Instructor

1. Develops and writes a brief but coherent philosophy of teaching that guides teaching practices.
Sources of Information: Instructor portfolios, syllabus
2. Reflects on own teaching practices.
Analyzes and critiques plans and performances.
Conceptualizes revisions and improvements.

Annually reflects on teaching in annual report to the Department Chair
Sources of Information: Instructor portfolios and annual reports

3. Attempts to improve own curriculum and pedagogy by introducing new elements to own courses.
Implements new plans/techniques and evaluates their effectiveness.
Sources of Information: Instructor portfolios.
4. Engages in actions designed to improve teaching.
Takes advantage of opportunities to learn about improving teaching such as lectures, conferences, reading material on college teaching, mentor or peer observations
Processes information to conceptualize application to own teaching.
Sources of Information: Instructor, mentor or peer observations
5. Effectively uses course evaluation procedures.
Follows specified procedures.
Critically analyzes feedback to conceptualize changes and improvements.
Sources of Information: Instructor, chair.

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