The Documentation of Teaching: An Introduction and Guiding Principles

January 2014

Laurens H. Smith Jr, PhD.
Executive Senior Vice Provost
The Story of Your Research

- What is your research about?
- Why do you do that kind of research?
- Is your research making an impact and how do you know what that is?
- Where is the research leading?
- How has your research changed over time?
- What improvements have you made to your research program?
- What are short and long term goals of your research and how will you accomplish those?
THE STORY OF YOUR TEACHING: A “SWITCHEROO”

• What is your TEACHING about?
• Why do you do TEACH the way you do?
• Is your TEACHING making an impact and how do you know what that is?
• Where is the TEACHING leading?
• How has your TEACHING changed over time?
• What improvements have you made to your TEACHING program?
• What are short and long term goals of your TEACHING and how will you accomplish those?
• How does your RESEARCH inform you TEACHING and how does you TEACHING inform your RESEARCH?
THE TEACHING CYCLE

What and How You Teach

Goals

Reflections & Assessment

Creativity and Originality

Innovation

Knowledge

Engagement

Actions & Outcomes

Goals

Reflections & Assessment
TEACHING EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Examples of Role Statement Language

1) We expect you to articulate a philosophy of teaching that communicates your approach to instruction and describes your primary goals as a teacher, advisor, and mentor.

2) We expect positive student evaluations of your classroom performance that demonstrate your ability to create an environment that invites student learning. We also expect to see steady improvement in your student evaluations as you gain experience.

3) We expect systematic and repeated peer evaluations of your classroom performance throughout your probationary period.

4) We expect you to participate in activities intended to improve your skills as an instructor and to demonstrate your continued commitment to high-quality instruction.

5) We expect you to document your engagement with students outside normal classroom instruction. Such engagement may take many different forms such as, involving students in your scholarly activities, supervising independent study, advising student organizations, or consulting with students regarding their evolving careers.

6) We expect you to provide a variety of types and sources of data about your teaching performance (e.g., student outcomes, portfolios of student work, and course projects).
WHY DO YOU TEACH THE WAY YOU DO?

The Teaching Philosophy

A description of your teaching style
  • What is your teaching style, and why?

A description of guiding principles
  • What are they? The basis for the design of your teaching approach
  • What has influenced your choice of teaching approach and perspective?
  • How and why do you assess student learning in the ways that you do?

The reasons and influences for changes to your teaching philosophy
  • What guides your teaching development?
    ✓ Literature/research on teaching/learning
    ✓ Colleagues or mentors

The ways you improve your teaching and the results
  • What do you know about learning? What data do you use to make improvements?
  • How can you provide evidence of the impact of your teaching?

What you know about learning and about your students, their backgrounds and motivations
  • Do you know your students?
  • Do you know what they know and why they are in your class?

Have you documented this?
WHAT DO YOU TEACH?

Document Teaching Activity and Teaching Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course #</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Taught</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BIOL 2000</td>
<td>Human Phys</td>
<td>Soph</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>Face to Face</td>
<td>MWF 900-950</td>
<td>27 times</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Course descriptions
- Class materials such as texts, readings, etc.
- Syllabi with learning outcomes or goals
- Grading plan; examples of quizzes, tests, assignments
- Grading history
- Student mentoring or advisor
TYPES OF TEACHING ASSESSMENT

Formative Teaching Assessment:
- Teaching coach observation
- Self imposed mid-course student surveys and evaluations
- Pre- and post-course assessment of student learning
- Invited class observation/recording and analysis
- Invited reviews of syllabi or teaching approaches by off-campus colleagues

Summative Teaching Assessment:
- IDEA student evaluations
- Teaching peer reviews as required by tenure and promotion guidelines
- Teaching philosophy or statement
Teaching Assessment

Student Course Ratings, Comments, Other Forms of Student Feedback
  • What do you do with student feedback?
  • What changes have you made as a result of student feedback and did they improve your teaching?
  • Have you measured improved student learning?
  • Do you pre-test student knowledge?
  • Do you do mid-term class evaluations?

Peer Reviews
  • Do you do them?
  • Do you know best ways to do peer reviews and apply them?
  • What is your response to peer reviews?

Other
  • Non-institutional Methods
  • Awards

Have you documented this?
Examples of Misconceptions About Student Ratings of Courses

- If an instructor gives easy grades, students give that instructor good evaluations
- Student ratings are a popularity contest
- Large enrollment classes usually get poorer class ratings
- Majors in a course rate it differently than non-majors
- The time of day the course is offered affects student ratings
- Required courses are rated lower than elective courses

Know What You’re Talking About!

What Have You Been Doing Outside the “Classroom”?

Some Examples:

- Read pedagogical literature and apply it
- Obtain funding for pedagogical research
- Voluntarily participate in a colleague’s pedagogical research
- Obtain funding to improve your courses
- Restructure courses based on new approaches to teaching
- Attend teaching and learning workshops at USU and apply or share what you learned
- Attend teaching and learning presentations at professional conferences
What Have You Been Doing Outside the “Classroom”?  
More Examples:

- Participate in, or better yet, lead a department journal club in teaching and learning
- Invite colleagues at USU or elsewhere to review your teaching or course materials
- Experiment with, or develop, innovative new teaching materials or approaches in your field
- Earn awards or honors for your teaching efforts
- Document student success in ways attributable to you
- Serve a leadership role in the department or college in efforts to help colleagues improve their teaching (e.g., be the local resource for best practices in peer teaching review)

Have you documented your engagement?
SHORT AND LONG TERM TEACHING GOALS
FOR TEACHING IMPROVEMENT

What Can You Do Differently and Better?

Are you doing something more than delivering content and grading?

How are you responding to feedback from students and peers in constructive ways?

Are you measuring improvement in your teaching and in student learning?

Are you staying updated on teaching in your field? On new teaching methods or technologies?

Are you trying new approaches, new textbooks or information resources?

What have you done innovatively to improve your teaching?

Have you visited classes of colleagues to observe other teaching styles and approaches?

Have you had colleagues with expertise in teaching visit your classes or review your teaching materials?

Do you actively seek ways to improve your understanding of teaching and learning?

What are those ways and did it make a difference?

Have you documented your efforts to improve teaching?
SUMMARY OF TEACHING DOCUMENTATION

- Responsibilities
- Philosophy or Statement
- Assessment Information
- Evidence of Engagement
- Improvements and Goals
TAKE HOME MESSAGES

• Have a Thriving Teaching Enterprise
• Reflect on Your Teaching Enterprise
  ✓ Are you investing serious effort in teaching?
  ✓ Is it constantly improving?
• Routinely Update and Organize Documentation of Teaching
• Collect Evidence of Teaching Activities
• Consider a Teaching Journal or Log