

Context of Peer Review

When we describe teaching as serious intellectual work or scholarship, we need to prove that the products of teaching can also be rigorously evaluated for excellence by a community of peers. The challenge is even greater now than a decade ago, because there is a consensus today that to be successful, teaching must produce learning. As in the review of a research or creative project, merely documenting good practice is not enough. Like research or art, teaching is judged in part based on its impact on the intended community.

It will not be easy to meet that challenge, but the current body of work on peer review of teaching suggests that it is certainly possible for us to do so. A wide range of authors has generated both conceptual analyses of the process and practical guides for carrying it out, as well as suggestions for how to use peer feedback to generate improvement in teaching and learning over time. Both faculty members and our students will benefit from using these resources to guide our systems of professional accountability.