

MME Annual Teaching Evaluation Proposal

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1. Introduction

As stated in the Vision of **FIUBeyondPossible2020**, “Higher education is in the midst of a profound transformation. This has opened up unprecedented opportunities for universities to rethink how best to educate the next generation of thought leaders”. Under this innovative foresight, FIU is committed to delivering excellent teaching with three main pillars that focus on **student learning**, using **evidence-based processes** and **culturally responsive teaching**. New forms of education, which have already been implemented by many FIU Faculty in their classrooms, are not being widely adopted and lack a structured measure or documentation.

The purpose of this proposal is to provide guidelines for Faculty to document their innovative practice, receive credit for their labor and encouragement for continued enhancement of their courses and current teaching practices through feedback not only from student perception but also from peers and self-reflection.

These guidelines will serve as a new process providing more information for teaching enhancement as well as annual teaching evaluation for both tenure and non-tenure track promotions.

2. Current Practices

Traditionally, the only data that is collected to measure a specific course and the evaluation of the teaching practices of an Instructor are the student surveys at the end of each semester. Nowadays there are numerous references on teaching research [1] that indicate that “Student ratings are not the only option to provide evidence in the evaluation of teaching. There is a broad range of alternatives to consider beyond student ratings in the delicate decision-making processes to improve teaching and determine the promotion and tenure of faculty”; “student ratings from well-constructed scales are a necessary, but not sufficient, source of evidence to evaluate teaching comprehensively”.

All researchers agree that Student ratings are very valuable and provide relevant information. However, there are limitations to using ONLY student rating for decision making. The main limitations pointed out are [1]:

- Students’ limited qualifications as raters. As informative as student ratings can be, there are numerous behaviors and skills that define teaching that students are not qualified to rate, such as a professor’s knowledge and content expertise, learning outcomes, teaching methods, course design and organization, use of technology, quality of course materials, assessment instruments, and grading practices.
- Technical inadequacy of ratings and bias, which leads to a weak relationship between student ratings and learning.
- Misuse of scales and misinterpretation of ratings. Although guidelines, instructions, and manuals usually accompany student rating scales, they are still administered at many institutions under uncontrolled, unstandardized, and/or inappropriate

conditions which can significantly decrease the response rate and render the answers invalid.

The new tendency in teaching evaluation utilizes a more comprehensive model that includes multiple sources of evidence, having the sources not to be exclusive but complementary. This proposal includes input from **students, peers** and **self as sources**. This list is not meant to be exclusive but could be amended with input from alumni, staff or other sources thereby allowing the faculty the freedom to attach greater weight to individual sources.

3. Proposed Practices

New practices for annual teaching evaluation are proposed in this section to engage faculty in teaching activities aligned with the three main pillars of FIU's vision of excellence in teaching (Appendix A.1), along with evidence collected from the three sources, i.e., student, peer, and self, in complement to each other. Six new practices are proposed by the committee based on a faculty survey (Appendix A.2). The proposed practices are summarized in Table 1 below along with their source of evidence and alignment with FIU's vision of excellence in teaching.

Table 1. Evaluation Activities Aligned with FIU Vision of Excellence

Evaluation Activity	Source of Evidence	Alignment/Sample Ways to Align with FIU Vision of Excellence	Examples of Evidence and/or Records of Activities
Prompting students to evaluate the effectiveness of their own study skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student 	Learner-centered teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Midterm survey for students to evaluate the effectiveness of their own study skills
Facilitate team working.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student 	Learner-centered teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group discussion/problem solving in classroom Group project and presentation
Identify prior knowledge you expect students to have	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer 	Evidence-based teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion with peer/fellow faculty on the subject
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quiz at the beginning of a semester on students' prior knowledge

Adapting materials that has been proven to work to your class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self 	Evidence-based teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture slides/notes • Quizzes, exams and other assignments
Setting rules to work harmonically and ethically	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student 	Culture responsive teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey for students to give feedback or address their concerns. • Open discussion on academic dishonesty and ethics.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion with peer/fellow faculty on the subject • Exchange syllabus with peer/fellow faculty
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicitly specify rules in Syllabus
Encouraging (and, of course, modeling) respectful communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student 	Culture responsive teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage students to ask questions and express themselves both in and out of classroom
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure enough open office hours to accommodate students' questions • Respond to each request from students

All the above proposed activities should be conducted throughout the academic year.

3.1 The three pillars

FIU is committed to enhancing the education of students by engaging faculty to incorporate new and better practices in their classrooms as well as encouraging collaboration among their peers, which would enhance student learning and growth via the following three pillars:

- a. **Learning---centeredness**, a focus on optimizing student learning, growth, and development,
- b. **Evidence---based practice**, instructional practices informed by existing educational research, and/or both quantitative and qualitative evidence collected while teaching, and
- c. **Cultural responsiveness**, teaching that recognizes the Significance and value Of students' cultural identities to their learning and strives for equitable outcomes.

3.2. Sources of evidence

- a. **Students.** The most important source of student reported data for teaching evaluation is FIU SPOTs: Student Perceptions of Teaching surveys.
- b. **Self-reported data.** Researches have different opinions about self-reported evaluation of faculty about their teaching. Some [5] suggest that faculty themselves are the most important assessment source because only they can provide descriptions of their work, their thinking behind it, and their own personal reporting, appraisals, interpretations and goals. Others call attention to research on self-reported data, indicating that it can be associated with some degree of bias.
FIU vision is that self-assessment and reporting presents a significant opportunity for FIU faculty to shed light on their many contributions to student learning and success that often go unnoticed. This data will be accompanied and complemented by student's perception.
- c. **Peers.** Researchers [6] affirm that "peer review brings content-based contextuality to the evaluation of teaching and are especially equipped to provide feedback on course materials and measures of content knowledge such as syllabi and copies of completed student exams or assignments."
Literature suggest [7] that peer might include a departmental colleague, a colleague from another department at the same institution, a good teacher, someone from your local teaching center and/or a teacher from somewhere who shares a pedagogical interest. The peers can play different roles: collaborator, co-learner, student, questioner, critic, advocate and/or confidant

4. Rationale for the Changes

The foundation of best teaching is documented in several research articles [8]. Based on an extensive literature search, the proposal committee conducted a MME faculty survey [Appendix] on their opinions on several teaching practices associated with each of the three main pillars as well as a variety of sources for evaluation data collection including student, peer, and self. The purpose of this survey was to collect faculty's input on the improvement of teaching evaluation. More than 60% of the MME faculty participated in the survey, the results of which were used to solidify the current proposal. The proposal committee met, discussed the survey results, and finalized the proposal as summarized in Table 1 above by using the following two criteria:

- a. Top two practices most selected by MME faculty for each pillar

- b. Must have been selected by at least 50% of the MME faculty who participated in the survey.

The proposal committee is confident that the above proposed new practices for teaching evaluations will be embraced enthusiastically by the MME faculty and become essential in achieving the overall educational goals of the department, the college, and the university.

REFERENCES

- [1] Ronald A. Berk, *Start Spreading the News: Use Multiple Sources of Evidence to Evaluate Teaching*, Vol. 32, No. 1, January 2018 / 73
- [2] Doyle, Terry. *Learner-Centered Teaching: Putting the Research on Learning into Practice*, Stylus Publishing, 2011
- [3] Blumberg, P. *Making evidence-based practice an essential aspect of teaching* (<https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/12186/files/3129908/download?wrap=1>). *Journal of Faculty Development*, 25(3) 27-32, 2011.
- [4] Hammond, Z. Culturally responsive teaching and the brain: Promoting authentic engagement and rigor among linguistically diverse students. *Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin*, 2015.
- [5] Seldin, P. *Changing practices in evaluating teaching: A practical guide to improved faculty performance and promotion/tenure decisions*. Boston, MA: Anker Publishing, 1999.
- [6] Paulsen, M.B. *Evaluating Teaching Performance*. *New Directions for Institutional Research* 114, 5-18, 2002.
- [7] Weimer, M. *Inspired College Teaching: A Career-Long Resource for Professional Growth*. Jossey-Bass, 2010.
- [8] Ambrose S.A, Bridges M. W., DiPietro M, Lovett M.C, Norman M. K., *How Learning Works: 7 Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching*. San-Francisco: John Wiley and Sons, 2010.

Appendix:

A.1 The three pillars

FIU is committed to enhancing the education of students by engaging faculty to incorporate new and better practices in their classrooms as well as encouraging collaboration among their peers, which would enhance student learning and growth via the following three pillars:

a. Learning-centered teaching [2]

There is a great amount of research that demonstrate that learner-centered teaching is more effective than Teacher-centered teaching. Most research are based on the premise that “It is the one who does the work who does the learning”. Learner-centered teaching (LCT) however, is about optimizing the opportunities for students to learn, by engaging them in the process and doing more than listening to a lecture and making them do the work. Doyle [2] also pointed out that Neuroplasticity refers to the ability of the human brain to change by adding new neural connections and to grow new neurons because of one’s experience. Nevertheless, Doyle also confirms that the Lecture has an important place in a learner-centered practice. Students will always need teachers to explain complex and complicated information and to give great examples to help connect new information to students’ backgrounds, but there must be a balance in the help given to the student in solving their problems, because the more help the student receive the less they learn.

One of the most important outcomes required for our students is life-long learning skills. Therefore, it is imperative that students are taught the process by which to learn the content of each course. This is done by incorporating activities that enable the student to realize not only what they are learning but how they are learning. Learner-centered teaching is a balance model where students participate actively in the learning process. Thus, the lecturer must create the appropriate environment that provides the student with the opportunity to use their abilities to create their own experiences to understand concepts.

b. Evidence-based teaching (EBT)

As defined by Blumberg [3], EBT is the use of teaching practices that are based on evidence of their effectiveness in improving the classroom environment and maximizing student learning. The evidence can be external from pedagogical research on higher education and internal evidence based on the faculty's exploration of teaching practices from their own courses.

FIU’s Discipline-Based Education Research (DBER) conducts research on teaching and learning within the academic field and has a group of DBER Faculty engaged in research to “help identify and measure appropriate learning objectives and instructional approaches that advance students toward those objectives” (National Research Council, 2012).

Data on student learning and performance can enable the following:

- Determine which aspects of the teaching practices are most effective

- Identify and improve those aspects that could use refinement
- Explore the impact of new strategies
- Make better decisions about their instructional design and practices.
- Inform continual course enhancement and allow for more targeted refinements.
- Increase faculty confidence and self-efficacy.

To start with evidence-based teaching the following approaches are suggested:

- Reading pedagogical literature in own discipline
- Collecting data about how you are teaching and student feedback, and use this feedback to make adjustment.
- Consulting with teaching and learning experts to use evidence-based teaching and/or to interpret data
- Integrating other practices into your classroom.
- Share with colleagues' best practices

c. Culturally responsive teaching

It has been proven that when the lecturer is aware of the significance and value of students' cultural identities and practices the ability to connect the lived experiences to the student learning, the learning process becomes more effective and the student retain more.

Hammond [4] highlights several core design principles on culturally responsive teaching:

- Minimize social threats and maximize opportunities to connect with others in community, because students need to feel safe and valued in the classroom.
- Positive relationships that students recognize based on their cultural schema.
- Attention drives learning. Students can tune to novelty, relevance, and emotion, but each person interprets these three elements through their particular cultural lens.
- All new information must be coupled with existing funds of knowledge in order to be learned.
- The brain physically grows through challenge and stretch, expanding its ability to do more complex thinking and learning.

A.2 Survey for MME

The Provost's office is undertaking the revamping of the process for annual teaching evaluations across FIU. The focus is on how faculty are currently evaluated for the teaching component, and how to incorporate the many new forms of education FIU Faculty are implementing in the classrooms. Effective teaching can be assessed by the use of multiple sources such as Self, Peer and Students.

The university's core team has been working on this initiative since Spring 2018 and **the vision of teaching excellence is characterized by evidence-based practice, learning-centeredness, and cultural responsiveness.**

A number of different colleges and schools are part of the pilot process, including the College of Engineering and Computing. For our department, our representatives are Drs. Cheng-Xian Lin, Carmen Muller Karger Pereda, Norman Munroe, and Ju Sun, while Dr. Norman Munroe also serves as the Representative of the College.

At this time, the MME representatives are seeking feedback from department faculty on your thoughts regarding the current teaching evaluation process and possible new variables and assessment indicators that we should include. Your voice is critical in this process and so we are asking you to take some time to answer this survey.

Please complete this survey by 11/28/2018 Wednesday.

(This survey contains a total of 15 questions)

Most of the answers will be in the following format:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Answer:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

1. . It is a good idea to review how teaching is evaluated in our department.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Answer:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. SPOTS (Student Perceptions of Teaching Survey) scores adequately assess my teaching skills.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Answer:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. There is significant room for improving the SPOTs questionnaire

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Answer:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. There is significant room for improving the SPOTs process.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Answer:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. There should be other components in addition to SPOTs to assess my teaching skills.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Answer:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. Additional components should include a self-evaluation (where the faculty evaluates him or herself).

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Answer:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. Additional components should include peer feedback.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Answer:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. Confidential peer feedback can help the faculty to become more effective teachers.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Answer:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. Confidential peer feedback can help to share best practices among faculty.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Answer:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. Please indicate the importance of the following characteristics when defining excellence in teaching:

- a. Learning-Centeredness: Focus on optimizing student learning, growth, and development.

	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Somewhat unimportant	Unimportant
Answer:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- b. Evidence Based Practice: Instructional practices informed by existing educational research, and/or both quantitative and qualitative evidence collected while teaching.

	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Somewhat unimportant	Unimportant
Answer:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- c. Cultural Responsiveness: Teaching that recognizes the significance and value of students' cultural identities to their learning and strives for equitable outcomes.

	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Somewhat unimportant	Unimportant
Answer:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. Please indicate how likely you are to attend sessions to develop / improve your teaching skills.

	Very Likely	Likely	Somewhat Likely	Somewhat unlikely	Unlikely
Answer:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. Please mark the source of information that in your opinion should be considered when evaluating faculty teaching performance from the list below. Please select as many as you like.

- ☐ Systematic Student ratings
- ☐ Chair evaluation
- ☐ Dean Evaluation
- ☐ Classroom visits
- ☐ Committee evaluation
- ☐ Course syllabi can exams evaluation
- ☐ Colleagues opinions
- ☐ Scholarly research/publication
- ☐ Alumni opinion
- ☐ Information students opinions
- ☐ Long-term follow-up of students
- ☐ Student exam performance
- ☐ Enrollment in elective courses.
- ☐ Others, list: _____

13. If you are (or have) employed strategies to collect feedback on your teaching in addition to SPOTS, please share this with us below.

☐ yes. ☐

☐ no ☐

☐

If yes, could please list: _____

☐

☐

☐

14. To implement FIU's vision of excellence in teaching with the three identified main pillars in mind, which of the following possible practices that you are willing to incorporate in your teaching? **Please select as many as you like.**

a. For Learning-Centered practices:

- Requiring students to reflect on and annotate their own work
- Prompting students to evaluate the effectiveness of their own study skills
- Giving students opportunities to apply concepts in diverse contexts
- Asking them to generalize to larger principles
- Providing real-time feedback at the group level
- Incorporating directed peer feedback
- Facilitate team working. Two heads think more than one
- Presenting case studies or problems to solve
- Providing feedback to student by lecturing and help student make connection of gained knowledge with new concepts
- Pre-class assignments with open questions that guide students toward new ideas
- Using personal response devices, such as clickers, in class so that students may check their comprehension of one idea before needing it to understand another
- Prompting students to evaluate the effectiveness of their own study skills

b. For Evidence Based practices:

- Identify prior knowledge you expect students to have
- Administer a diagnostic assessment
- Look for patterns of error in student work
- Researching best practices of other instructors
- Adapting material that has been proven to work to your class
- Seeking new methods and ways to deliver material
- Use well designed rubrics

c. For Culture Responsive Teaching:

- Cultivate a productive environment
- To maintain learning attention
- Setting rules to work harmonically and ethically
- Encouraging (and, of course, modeling) respectful communication
- Using multiple and diverse examples
- Use contrasting examples or cases to highlight the organizing features
- Make the connections among concepts explicit (or asking students to identify them)

- Ask students to draw concept maps to reveal their knowledge structures
- Using contrasting examples or cases to highlight the organizing features
- Making the connections among concepts explicit (or asking students to identify them)
- Asking students to draw concept maps to reveal their knowledge structures

15. Finally, again with the three identified main pillars for excellence of teaching in mind, which of the following possible practices in terms of collecting evidence and reporting teaching practices would you agree to? **Please select as many as you like.**

1) Evidence from Students:

- End of term survey for student perception.
- Collecting data about student learning and performance during the term

2) Evidence from peers:

- Course material share
- Syllabus exchange for feedback
- Course coordination
- Departmental exams
- Informal conversation with colleagues
- Collaborative work in designing of assignment sheets or teaching strategies
- CANVAS sharing with colleague for feedback and improvement.

3) Self-reporting and reflection:

- Participating in professional development workshops.
- Participation in Educational Research Conferences
- Presentation of teaching innovation practices at conferences
- Incorporating Technical Innovation in classroom
- Research teaching practice and report incorporation of practices in classroom
- Compare your students' SPOTs results every term to assess whether the strategies you employed are helping to align your students' perceptions of your teaching with your own

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS: If you were given the authority to restructure the manner in which faculty are evaluated on teaching, what would it look like?

Please type here.