



Instructor Evaluations: Benefits for All

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Learning Objective: The student will be able to recognize the value of scheduled instructor evaluations as they relate to curriculum delivery and/or development.

The word “evaluation” often has a negative connotation, and it invokes relative emotional responses, such as nervousness, fear and anxiety. However, when approached carefully and in a considerate, respectful fashion, formal instructor evaluations can be beneficial for the instructor, the material, the students and the organization. Scheduled formal and informal evaluations will also serve the purpose of establishing a precedent and routine so that visits are neither unexpected nor looked at with trepidation.



The best instructors continually reflect and hone their delivery skills, but it is easy to become complacent as an instructor and teach on “autopilot,” especially for those who are extremely knowledgeable or considered experts in their fields. Likewise, course materials that may have been current and on target at the time of development may now need a revision, but this will sometimes be overlooked in the shadow of a heavily experienced teacher who delivers material outside the established text, not realizing that the text may no longer be current. During a formal evaluation, a variety of classroom, instructor and course material elements can be observed, including student interest and participation, time management, teaching and classroom management strategies, routines, course objectives, and the effectiveness of classroom lessons and projects.

A formal evaluation provides an opportunity for the observer to share a dialogue with the instructor that encourages an examination of the materials, goals and strategies employed by the instructor in order to provide the best environment for the students to explore and fulfill the learning objectives of the course. During this dialogue, it is imperative that the observer provide anecdotal feedback of what worked well and what might need improvement. A balanced approach will create a positive, healthy atmosphere, which is much more conducive to all-around improvement. Part 2 of this Coffee Break Training will list some appropriate examples of feedback.

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