

Notes from Peter Seldin and Associates' Changing Practices in Evaluating Teaching,
A Practical Guide to Improved Faculty Performance and Promotion/Tenure Decisions (1999, Anker)

A survey by Seldin (1999, p 6) indicates that 40.3% of colleges and universities now use peer classroom observation for summative evaluation, up from only 5% 25 years ago.

1. Institutional culture, disciplinary paradigms, departmental policies, and available resources.
2. Faculty can assess a) goals, content, and organization of course design, b) the methods and materials used in delivery, and c) evaluation of student work, the instructor's grading practices, and the instructor's adherence to ethical standards.
3. The ten criteria of Cohen and McKeachie are a) mastery of course content, b) selection of course content, c) course organization, d) appropriateness of course objectives, e) (instructional materials), f) evaluative devices, g) (methods used to teach specific content areas), h) (commitment to teaching and concern for student learning), i) student achievement, and j) support of departmental instructional efforts.
4. Train for what criteria to use, how to apply criteria, observational skills, record-keeping, and how to provide constructive criticism.
5. Procedure has to be better than one observation by one observer
6. Based on consensus about what constitutes good teaching in discipline with a focus on shared criteria for teaching effectiveness including elements colleagues can best judge.
7. Process should be consistent for all observers and observers
8. Rules of the game should be known to all
9. Instructor should have input into the process at several stages such as selection of observers, selection of class, interpretation of classroom experience after observation, and input into the written report.
10. A validated observation instrument should be used (model departments)
11. The purpose of the observation is critical to know-summative or formative?
12. [Have the pool include members of the TPS committee.]
13. Students can be peer observers [maybe graduate students.]
14. See page 77 (bottom) for how to select the observers.
15. Have two observers.
16. Each observer observes at least twice. [1-7 weeks, and 8-14 weeks, at least two weeks apart]
17. Level of decision as to which courses get observed is important [pay some attention to this]
18. Observer training is essential and has to be required for at least one of the observers.
19. Time required is
 - a. 4 hours of training plus
 - b. Pre-observational meeting of .75 hour
 - c. Review of materials of .75 hour
 - d. Observations of 1.25 hours
 - e. Preparation of report of 1 hour
 - f. Post observation meeting of .75 hours (4.5 hour subtotal for one course)
21. Give a list of what is to happen at pre-observation meeting
22. Give a list of what is to happen at post-observation meeting
23. Give a list of items on how to handle the final written report.