



## PEER EVALUATION EXERCISE AT EMILIO AGUINALDO COLLEGE, CAVITE, PHILIPPINES - TOWARDS PERSONAL IMPROVEMENT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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### Abstract:

One of the teaching evaluation processes at EAC-Cavite is the peer evaluation exercise. In order to improve the quality of teaching and learning, teachers are encouraged to conduct classroom peer observation as a component of the faculty evaluation. The major purpose of this study was to assess and analyze the importance of Peer Evaluation as part of personal improvement and professional development of teachers at EAC-Cavite. Using the qualitative method of research and documentary analysis, this study sought to explore the importance of peer evaluation exercise to improve the teaching and learning process, to critically analyze the participants' teaching practice, and to gain new insights in their own area of expertise from the teacher's performance in the classroom observation as part of professional growth. The researchers discovered some of the best practices of teaching through feedback and it highlights its implications in the TL process. The researchers conclude that peer evaluation is effective and should continuously be implemented in all schools at EAC-Cavite. Finally, the result will be the basis of the administration to enhance and support the teachers' professional development.

**Keywords:** teaching evaluation, peer observation, peer evaluation, personal improvement

### 1. Introduction

One of the teaching evaluation processes at EAC-Cavite is the peer evaluation exercise. Admittedly, learning and teaching in higher education has become more critical for a variety of reasons. Teachers at EAC-Cavite are challenged to improve their professional practices. One way to elaborate these issues is to conduct a peer evaluation and

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afterwards, talk about it! In the context of peer classroom observation in teaching, the best practices of faculty members can be discussed and elaborated during the post conference and feedback. The Human Resource in EAC-Cavite facilitates this peer evaluation exercise in various schools. The major purpose of this study was to assess and analyze the importance of Peer Evaluation as part of personal improvement and professional development of teachers. Argued strongly in this paper are the best practices of teaching that will enhance the learning of our students and professional development of teachers. Specifically, this study was focused on the (1) importance of peer evaluation exercise to improve the teaching and learning process; (2) critically analyze participants' teaching practice; and (3) to gain new insights in the teachers' own area of expertise based on the classroom observation. Although peer evaluation was not positively welcome in the past, the HRD pushed through with its pilot implementation and this was carefully managed by the administration. The results become the basis of the administration to enhance and support the professional development program of the EAC-Cavite. According to Beerens and Santoyo (2000), there are three major reasons behind the completion of a teacher evaluation and these are to: (a) improve teachers' effectiveness; (b) encourage their professional growth and; (c) redevelop or eliminate weaker educators.

## **2. Literature Review**

Selective literature review was focused on the aspects of teacher evaluation and peer evaluation for personal improvement and professional development.

### **2.1 Teacher Evaluation vs Teaching Performance**

Peer evaluation serves many purposes in the process of evaluating faculty, courses, or entire program. In fact, many scholars have stressed out the significance of teacher evaluation as a significant way to determine the teacher's performance and improve the quality of teaching (Wang and Ling, 2012). They believe that this issue is one of the most critical and hot issues in the field of education, thus, their study focused on the number of constructive suggestions by reviewing the teacher evaluation of rewards and punishments. Their findings include a variety of methods that can be applicable for teaching evaluation such as, teacher's self-assessment, evaluation of teachers' files, parent evaluation, teaching evaluation, classroom observation and interview, informal observations, peer review, peer assessment, capacity test, indirect measurement and many others. On the other hand, Singgih (2003) argued that the use of portfolio evaluation for language teachers' performance is to raise the awareness of becoming reflective teachers to develop independence, self-directed learner teaches, and to achieve the best performance for their teaching effectiveness. In Singgih's (2003) study, he utilized the teacher self-evaluation model to improve the teaching performance of language teachers. This reflection might be useful to develop the power of critique. Wallace as cited by Singgih (2003) emphasizes that it is important to have an alternative

reflective model for teachers just like the teacher diary. Wallace as cited by Singgih (2003) emphasizes the significance of teacher-trainee's diaries which were used as a source of information to polish, improve and enrich their own perception of teaching. This insight also points out Halbach's (1999) opinion as regards teacher-trainee's diaries. Wang and Ling (2002) deal with the general issue on the teacher evaluation which may coincide with this study while Singgih (2003) may be helpful in examining the methods to be used in evaluating teachers' performance, and this has a parallelism on Halbach's diaries used to evaluate the teacher's performance. According to Shortland (2004) as cited by Donnelly (2007), reports that peer observation is significant to new teachers and established teaching staff, thus improving faculty approaches to teaching. Daniel Bernstein, Jessica Johnson, and Karen Smith (2000), found that peer evaluation has positive impacts on faculty's attitude and approaches towards teaching. Whatever they call it, peer evaluation exercise is a useful tool in teacher evaluation while it could also harness skills to improve the teaching performance. Furthermore, it gives emphasis on its importance and benefits in fostering teaching excellence, creating collegial communities of scholar teachers and transparent cultures of professional development and personal improvement.

## **2.2 Peer Evaluation for Professional Development**

Peer evaluation is an essential facet of teaching evaluation, both for professional development and personal improvement. The people that form and complete the core component of the educational institution have the power to assess and evaluate their colleagues' pedagogy of teaching and provide feedback necessary for the betterment of their teaching. Falchicov and Goldfinch (2000) as cited by Sahin (2008) describe peer evaluation as an evaluation method that evaluates each other according to criteria. In his context, he considered peer evaluation as an alternative evaluation method that includes learning and evaluation. This may attract attention in higher education because it constitutes a parallelism with improvements such as cooperative learning. However, this kind of peer evaluation is on the perspective of students when evaluating their work together with their peers. In this way, students do evaluate the quality of studies of their classmates and then provide feedback to each other (Van Den Berg, Admiral, and Pilot, 2006 as cited by Sahin, 2008). Moreover, peer evaluation can offer faculty critical perspective to inform efforts to ameliorate teaching based on the assessment and observation. Finally, if it is done properly, this can lead to numerous of advantages.

In Farrell's study (2017), he investigated the perception of teachers about peer evaluation to improve their teaching practice, and he found out that teachers agree in the integration of peer evaluation which may increase in the amount of time spent sharing instructional strategies among others. His findings reveal that "*potential benefits such as increased sharing of best practices of instructional strategies, more timely and relevant feedback, and reduced feelings of isolation could potentially occur because of conducting peer evaluation.*" (Farrel, 2017:2). Another related study examines teacher's perception of peer

evaluation as an enhancement for quality teaching, quality enhancement, and professional development, this study concludes that peer evaluation is highly relevant and effective as perceived by the respondents (Abdel Rahman, Abdalla Salih, 2013). Therefore, it is a necessary process in today's teaching practices and as such it should be promoted among teachers. Furthermore, an alternative assessment method was utilized by Freeman (1995) as a learning activity in addition to assess learning performance.

While Holroyd (2000) points out that lecturers and students have some doubts about the validity of level of evaluation made by students, at the same knowledge level, and about each other. In this study, peer evaluation was found to be significant in the teaching and learning process as part of professional development rather than as an additional task or activity of a teacher. Similar investigation was made such as Farrell (2017) about peer evaluation that will improve the teacher's teaching practice. There are times that seminars and workshops can no longer be done by different schools due to lack of time, but when there is a scheduled peer evaluation for all teachers, and then they are obliged to fulfill this task. After all, teachers who have the same course to teach may learn from each other and could eventually share their teaching practices for professional improvement.

Ultimately, peer evaluation aims to provide the faculty with feedback, support and assistance from their colleagues, for they will be given the chance to see teaching from the students' approach and viewpoint (K.N. Volchenkova, 2016). According to Wilkins and Shin (2011), peer feedback promotes professional development, allows for increased teacher collaboration, and provides faculty with alternative means of self-assessing their teaching skills. It is therefore significant that participants who give feedback should receive training to provide specific and constructive feedback highlighting the important insights on the significance of peer evaluation enhancing quality teaching and professional growth (Abdel Rahman, Abdalla Salih, 2013). By this reason, there is a strong possibility to improve faculty joy in teaching by improving the relations among faculty and students, and among faculty themselves. Based on Wilkin and Shin's study, they also associated the term peer evaluation as peer review, peer coaching, peer feedback, and peer observation. Whatever the description is, peer evaluation and other related terms investigate same elements of teaching improvement and professional development.

### **2.3 Summary of Literature Review**

Whether teacher evaluation or peer evaluation is used, criteria should always be present. These should be clearly stated and explained before conducting peer evaluation exercises. In this way, teachers may not be dissatisfied with the results of evaluation since they have prior knowledge in the conduct of the peer evaluation and how this can be evaluated at the end of the term. As Singgih's (2003) result of his study: (a) there are some models used to monitor teacher's performance in the classroom that could improve their own teaching performance for their professional development; (b) The instrument used were self-evaluation checklist, student feedback checklist, the pre-

observer feedback checklist, and the teacher reflection and the diary; (c) The teacher self-evaluation models as authentic portfolio are beneficial for the teachers to control their own teaching; (d) The models show the teachers' efforts, progress, and achievements as well as the teachers' holistic teaching performance; and the teacher self-evaluation models as authentic portfolio are beneficial for the school principals or heads to know what the teachers have accomplished. The research made by Singgih (2003) inspired the researchers to conduct this study, and they firmly believe that peer evaluation is beneficial in the light of professional development. Peer evaluation enables the institution to establish teaching standards for instruction which are a fundamental key element of an aligned evaluation and professional development style.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

This research was a qualitative research design using documentary analysis. The purpose of this qualitative research was to find out the importance of peer evaluation exercise to improve the teaching and learning process, to critically analyze the participants' teaching practice, and to gain new insights in their own area of expertise from the teacher's performance in the classroom observation as part of professional growth.

#### **3.2 Research Participants**

The Conduct of Peer Evaluation Participants were 14 schools that participated in the conduct of peer evaluation in EAC-Cavite. The participants are all faculty members from 14 schools. There were 185 teachers who participated in peer evaluation out of 244 members of the faculty.

#### **3.3 Procedures of the Study**

The HRD made the proposal to conduct the Peer Evaluation to all schools. The school's dean will disseminate the information to all faculty members to conduct the evaluation and explain how this should be conducted in the classroom. Those teachers with similar major for example, the same English majors will be observing each other. After the observation, post conference will follow to bring out insights and observations for personal improvement and professional development.

### **4. Discussion of Results**

#### **4.1. Peer Evaluation in EAC-Cavite**

This study provides some evidence that most teachers welcome the peer evaluation exercise as gleaned on the table. Out of 244 faculty members, there are 184 who participated in the actual conduct of peer evaluation. This is tantamount to 75.82% of the academic community. This resulted to sharing of various teaching strategies,

methods, and techniques that might be useful in other courses. In this view, teacher evaluation using peer evaluation exercise is conducted every semester or twice a year. Among the 14 schools, the following is the summary of participating schools:

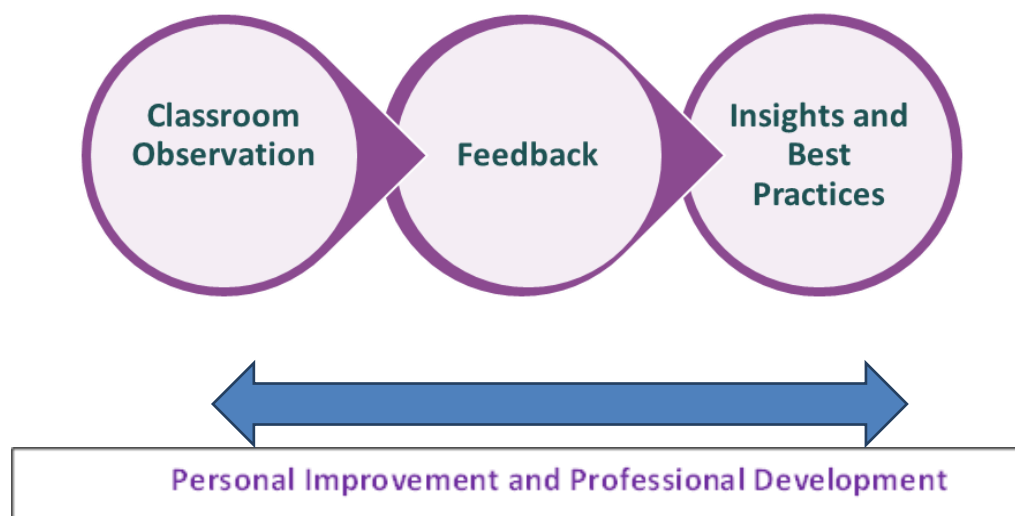
**Table 1:** No. of Faculty members participated in Peer Evaluation

School	No. of Faculty Members Participated in peer Evaluation	Total no. of Faculty Members per School
SAS	30	37
SOC	8	8
SBA	26	26
SOL	0	6
SDM	4	18
SOE	10	17
STH	4	9
SMT	7	7
SMW	4	6
SON	4	6
SPT	4	6
SRT	2	4
SET	7	14
SHS	75	80
<b>Total</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>244</b>

At all times, support from different aspects is discovered:

- Willingness by the teacher participants to explore the possibilities of learning new ideas and best practices;
- Willingness to try and apply new ideas learned in his/her own field of specialization;
- Enthusiasm to work with peers and learn from each other;
- Development of trust and confidence to share insights that will encourage both parties to reflect in terms of teaching strategies and approaches;
- Openness to accept feedback whether positive or negative for personal improvement; and
- A chance to meet face-to-face and to discuss modifications or changes if necessary.

The peer observation is divided into three (3) parts: Classroom observation, Feedback system, and gaining insights and best practices as shown in the diagram below.



**Figure 1:** Mack and Chua's Peer Evaluation Exercise Model (2019)

In EAC-Cavite, teachers are advised to conduct the peer evaluation in the classroom in the same area of specialization. The school deans, in consultation with the faculty members, agree among themselves who will be visiting and observing classes. Observing and being observed can be a powerful learning instrument for teachers. It helps teachers to learn from each other to advance and explore a more reflective approach to their teaching and to realize development goals. Then, teachers will evaluate their fellow teachers using the evaluation form provided by the HRD. This process is done once a semester or towards the end of the semester. Students are aware of this process. Teachers keep on reminding their own students that observers will come to their classes in order to observe the class, the teacher's professional skills, and most especially the students' way of learning how to learn, their motivation, listening skills, and understanding. Fortunately, students really do participate during classroom observations.

A post-evaluation of peers followed by observation is done by both parties. They will sign the form that contains the comment of the observer. The teacher being observed listens to the teacher evaluator. The evaluation form contains of: (1) Content and Teaching-Learning Plan (2) Pedagogy and Instructional Tools (3) Class Discipline and Activity Management (4) Teacher-Student Interaction. The instrument was easy to understand and to follow.

Moreover, this peer evaluation exercise promotes sharing of best practices of ideas, instructional designs, methods, and strategies of teaching. The time allotted for a seminar or workshop can be alleviated through this exercise. Personal meeting with the colleague and face-to-face communication, increase the leadership skills and motivation to improve interpersonal relations among each other. Ellermeyer (1992:164) affirms that *"teachers view colleagues as a more helpful source of feedback."* Prior to the implementation of Peer Evaluation Exercise, teachers at EAC-Cavite were given a chance to meet with

their Heads and Deans to discuss some issues or concerns about teaching. However, providing them with a more detailed evaluation and social interaction with their peers allow them to learn various teaching strategies and methodologies that will be effective and appropriate in teaching a course. By incorporating this exercise, teachers could receive quarterly feedback not only from their peers but also from the Deans and the management. This exercise serves as an avenue through which teachers can self-evaluate their strong or weak points for purposes of professional growth and development. If all evaluations were conducted by the HRD, now the teachers become concerned about their peers by setting an appointment to conduct the peer evaluation exercise. Because both parties knew that the purpose is for improvement and professional development, they cooperate and collaborate with each other to perform their tasks. Thus, student progress is fast, instructional materials, strategies, and methodologies are improved.

Peer evaluation form is composed of four (4) categories such as pedagogical approaches, interaction, content, and classroom management. Apart from this, there are four (4) qualitative questions that will supplement the quantitative parts. Such questions allow the observer to write the positive and commendable points about the teacher being observed, the improvements in teaching, and an opinion whether the teacher needs to be recommended or not for the next batches of students. Based on the stages of peer evaluation exercise, the observer and the teacher try to reflect on their own insights on this level. UNSW [2019] believes that students learn best when they are actively engaged and given an appropriate level of challenge, and students are expected to take responsibility for their own learning and they work collaboratively with their peers. Reflective teaching strategies can be used in class who wish to enhance and develop their teaching skills. This kind of self-awareness is a powerful comrade for a teacher, especially when so much of what and how they teach can change in the moment. During the stage of feedback system, each of the participants is free to discuss an observation or reactions regarding his/her teaching or other aspects that will improve the participant. This needs mutual respect, understanding, and openness with each other. Based on Figure 1, the three major activities resulted to self-improvement and professional development.

#### **4.2 Personal Improvement and Professional Development**

Teachers expressed a developing sense of confidence in their teaching approach. They develop their sense of belongingness. Hendry and Oliver (2012) affirm that peer observation of teaching is viewed as a supportive and developmental process to improve the quality teaching in universities. Feedback is one of the most important keys in teaching. Peer evaluation of teaching in higher education institution involves academic colleagues giving and receiving feedback on their teaching practices and its effectiveness in promoting student learning on the light of knowledge and insights of university faculty. With the presence of feedback, a teacher can explore all the possibilities to improve his/herself. Bennet and Barp (2008), Byrne, Brown and Challen



(2010) believe that the target of classroom observation by peer should be the new teachers. Although peer observation is common in academic institutions, there are still issues to be considered in the peer evaluation exercise.

### **4.3 Data Privacy**

Some teachers do not want to divulge their teaching strategies and methodologies in teaching with other people. Therefore, an observer should ask personally whether the person would like to share his/her ideas for professional development. Data privacy is significant in this country. There may be sensitive issues that do not need to be written down or documented. Both parties should be aware of Data Privacy Law in the Philippines.

### **4.4 Observer's Role**

There are times that students do not want other people to see them in the class. Therefore, the faculty member should make sure that this should be explained to his/her students prior to conducting the peer observation exercise.

### **4.5 Other Factors**

Inasmuch as the observer would like to complete the evaluation exercise, this impedes the development:

- The focus of the observation is on the teacher, not on the learning process, improvement in strategies of teaching, and best practices;
- Some best practices may not be considered as such due to individual differences of students and teachers alike;
- In student-led instructions, it may be inappropriate for the observers to stand and look at students works;
- Time management cannot be established due to long motivational strategy sessions at the beginning.

For improvement purposes, there is a need to create specific procedures for Peer Evaluation Exercises. The procedure should include the roles of the facilitator being observed, observer, and students. Comments should be discussed only in a separate venue. This should not be discussed inside the classroom while students are still in the room. The purpose of the post-conference between the observer and facilitator should be to share insights for personal improvement but not to weaken the motivational spirit of the facilitator being observed. A well-aligned peer evaluation exercise will form the core component for a professional growth plan; give consistency to coaching and monitoring; provide diagnostic approach to understanding inadequate student learning growth; offer a set of criteria and standards to help the faculty and other identity areas in which teachers are successful and areas for improvement (Goe, et.al. 2012). According to their study, they illustrate how teaching standards are used in an evaluation system focusing on teacher and student success. In application of standards, some of the applications are deemed applicable in EAC-Cavite:

- Teachers should focus on the standards so that they are aware of what is expected of them.
- Teachers should know the standards as basis for their licensure and evaluation.
- There should be measures to the specific standards on which they are designed to collect information.
- The evidence collected should reflect teacher performance on a specific standard.
- Teachers should be aware of their strengths and weaknesses in order to focus on addressing them after a thorough discussion of the evidence with the evaluators.
- Teachers' progress is linked towards student progress.
- All the standards should be identified as areas for improvement.

#### 4.6 Enabling Change!

In the peer evaluation post-conference, there is a need to complete a form for documentation purposes and areas for improvement which can also be the basis of the administration to enhance and support the teacher's professional development. Such form sample is written below:

**Form No. 1: Post Conference Peer Evaluation Sample Form**

<b>Post-Conference Peer Evaluation Sample Form</b>				
Name of Faculty: _____				Area
of Specialization: _____				
Class _____			Observed:	
_____				Date: _____
_____				
Area	Observer's Comment	Recommendation	Agree/Disagree	
			YES	NO
1. Preliminaries	The class started on time. Prayer and recitation of the mission and vision was done. Motivational strategy was highly engaging. There was no recall.	<b>Always integrate review of the past lesson and relate this to your present topic.</b>	√	
2. Presentation of the Lesson/Discussion	You presented the lesson well. However, it could have been better if you used a song as a springboard to your lesson.	<b>A song is a useful approach to present the lesson. After that, you can elicit grammar lesson based on the song. The vocabulary should be used in a sentence.</b>	√	
3. Evaluation	The quiz was constructively aligned with your objective and teaching and learning activities. The rubrics was explained before they started the group activity.	N/A	√	
4. Lesson Closure	Reflection was missing in this lesson.	<b>Try to teach your students to become reflective. Ask them a short reflection about the</b>	√	

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		song. You can also ask one or two students to sing the song for the class, and then they can provide their reflections after that.		
5. Teaching Strategies Used	Role Playing/Drama/Pantomime	The role play was indeed natural. Well-done! Allow the students to bring out more their talent by singing the song again. Let them feel the meaning of the song “Father and Son.”	√	
6. Instructional Design Model Used/Method	Engaged-Study-Activate	N/A		
7. Student Interaction	Student-Teacher-Student Student-Student Group-Group of Students	The interaction was excellent. However, give more focus on the student-student interaction.		√
8. Student Discipline and Respect towards the Teacher	The students were well-behaved, and they showed respect to their teacher and visitors during class.	N/A	√	
9. Classroom Climate	There was a friendly and natural climate in the classroom. The students were comfortable to learn. In addition, the classroom has a conducive learning environment.	N/A	√	
10. Cooperation/ Participation of Students	There were students who did not participate in the group activities.	Encourage those students who do not participate. Learn how to give intrinsic or extrinsic motivation.	√	
<b>Signed:</b> _____ <b>Conforme:</b> _____ Signature Above Printed Name Signature Above Printed Name				

This form can be useful both for the teacher participant and the peer evaluator. Once the form is established, this will be registered to the Planning and Quality Management. The form will be used officially to record the ten areas of concerns as mentioned above. As shown, although there are 10 stages or aspects to be discussed by the evaluator and the teacher participant, these can be summarized below:

- Lesson Starter/ springboard
- Introduction of the New Lesson
- Lesson Closure
- Teaching Requirements (Includes the strategies, methods, techniques)
- Student Requirements (Classroom Discipline, Classroom Environment)

## 5. Conclusion

The study provides some evidence that teachers are enthused to join and learn in the peer evaluation exercises. This activity promotes professional development and self-improvement because of sharing the best practices of instructional strategies and methodologies in teaching. Participants also indicate that there are various best practices to be emulated from the facilitators which will serve as their model and reflections to improve their strategies and to come up with a relevant and timely feedback. There is a need to implement and apply it in the institution since it is more adaptable to modern developments and the assessments of quality teaching and learning outcomes. Since peer evaluation encourages faculty to critically reflect their own teaching style, encourages them to be more responsible for their own professional development and personal improvement, and helps them to be more aware of their weakness and strength. It is a vital contributor to the ongoing evaluation and enhancement of learning and teaching. Peer evaluation is therefore a valuable way of providing more frequent and relevant formative feedback that faculty can act upon. Peer evaluation highlights the evaluation process necessary for establishing high-teaching standards and shall be the basis for the administration to provide the necessary professional development of teachers at EAC-Cavite.

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