**Peer Review of Teaching—List of Possible Teaching Practices**

**(Excerpted from Vanderbilt University center for Teaching\*)**

**How to assess teaching practices?** In many institutions, inventories of teaching practices are combined with assumptions about what is conducive to student learning. It is important for the peer reviewers and the administrators who guide them to be conscious of what they regard as effective teaching and the appropriate evidence for it before committing to an observation process, lest the peer review gather invalid or unreliable data, and lest the process invite peer biases and unexamined pedagogy into the evaluation. A reasonably representative list of teaching practices, along with more or less explicit value for learning, would include the following:

**Content knowledge**

– Selection of class content worth knowing and appropriate to the course  
– Provided appropriate context and background  
– Mastery of class content  
– Citation of relevant scholarship  
– Presented divergent viewpoints

**Clear and effective class organization**

– Clear statement of learning goals  
– Relationship of lesson to course goals, and past and future lessons  
– Logical sequence  
– Appropriate pace for student understanding  
– Summary

**Varied methods for engagement, which may include…**

– In-class writing  
– Analysis of quotes, video, artifacts  
– Group discussions  
– Student-led discussions  
– Debates  
– Case studies  
– Concept maps  
– Book clubs  
– Role plays  
– Poster sessions  
– Think aloud problem solving  
– Jigsaws  
– Field trips  
– Learning logs, journals  
– Critical incident questionnaire (see [Brookfield’s discussion](http://www.stephenbrookfield.com/Dr._Stephen_D._Brookfield/Critical_Incident_Questionnaire.html))

**Presentation**

– Project voice  
– Varied intonation  
– Clarity of explanation  
– Eye contact  
– Listened effectively  
– Defined difficult terms, concepts, principles  
– Use of examples  
– Varied explanations for difficult material  
– Used humor appropriately

**Teacher-Student Interactions**

– Effective questioning  
– Warm and welcoming rapport  
– Use of student names  
– Encouraging of questions  
– Encouraging of discussion  
– Engaged student attention  
– Answered students effectively  
– Responsive to student communications  
– Pacing appropriate for student level, activity  
– Restating questions, comments  
– Suggestion of further questions, resources  
– Concern for individual student needs  
– Emotional awareness of student interests, needs

**Appropriateness of instructional materials**

– Content that matches course goals  
– Content that is rigorous, challenging  
– Content that is appropriate to student experience, knowledge  
– Adequate preparation required  
– Handouts and other materials are thorough and facilitated learning  
– Audio/visual materials effective  
– Written assignments

**Student engagement**

– Student interest  
– Enthusiasm  
– Participation  
– Student-to-student interaction

**Support of departmental/program/school instructional efforts**

– Appropriate content  
– Appropriate pedagogy  
– Appropriate practice

**In-class, formative assessment practices**

– Background knowledge probes, muddiest point exercises, defining features matrix and other “classroom assessment techniques” described in greater detail [here](http://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/cats/)  
– Ungraded in-class writing exercises, such as minute papers  
– Discussions  
– Questioning

**Out-of-class, summative assessment practices**

– Class participation  
– In-class writing exercises, graded  
– Presentations  
– Examinations  
– Projects

**Use of observation forms.** To make the process more transparent, reliable, and valid, many departments and programs use observation forms, constructed from items like those listed above, to help peer evaluators track and evaluate teaching and learning practices. These may include nothing more than checklists of activities; they may provide rating scales (e.g., Likert scales) to assist the evaluation; they may have open-ended prompts that provide space for general commentary and analysis; or, they may involve some combination of all three. The most thorough forms guide the observer in what exactly they should observe, and prompt them to provide some synthesis and evaluation of their observations.

\*https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/peer-review-of-teaching/