Chapter 9
Asynchronous Electronic Feedback for Faculty Peer Review: Formative Feedback That Makes a Difference

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ABSTRACT
This case study at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University – Daytona Beach (ERAU-DB) describes the process of facilitating a faculty peer observation model that uses asynchronous electronic feedback through the Teaching Partners program offered by the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence (CTLE). This practical, hybrid model of peer observation builds on practices found in current models and uses digital recording and web-based software to encourage faculty feedback that will positively impact their pedagogical practice. The results of this study suggest to truly cultivate a dialogue between faculty and/or education developer in the process, the goals should be clearly stated, the reflection should be clearly defined using the current research when possible, and the process should be modeled in practice. This comparative analysis also suggests that the hybrid model of evaluation, coupled with the implementation of video asynchronous electronic commenting system, resulted in increased faculty reflection that impacted classroom instruction.

INTRODUCTION
This chapter is written for faculty developers and administrators interested in creating and facilitating a faculty peer observation model that uses asynchronous electronic feedback. This practical, hybrid model of peer observation builds on practices found in current models—such as micro-teaching, faculty peer observation for evaluation, and external faculty review for pedagogical development—to create a

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formative developmental model. It uses digital recording and web-based software to encourage faculty feedback that will positively impact their pedagogical practice.

This chapter outlines a case study at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University - Daytona Beach campus (ERAU-DB) and describes the process of instituting technology through the “Teaching Partners Program” offered by the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence (CTLE). While ERAU-DB departments already have a formal process for faculty to complete evaluations, these reviews are typically designed to evaluate performance for the purposes of tenure and promotion. With this limitation in mind, CTLE developed and facilitated the Teaching Partners Program to encourage faculty self-reflection and pedagogical development. This program implemented a “true hybrid” model of evaluation (Yiend, Weller, and Kinchen, 2014) that included peer faculty members and a faculty developer. Unlike traditional, department-guided observations, the Teaching Partners Program is not included as part of the faculty member’s promotion and tenure materials. Using web-based software as a method for providing feedback provided an opportunity for faculty developers to asynchronously observe courses on a larger scale and provide directed pedagogical feedback in new ways to produce formative rather than summative feedback.

Chism (2007, p. 5) distinguishes “formative evaluations”, where teachers are provided with “information that they can use to improve their teaching”, which may be offered confidentially and can be “informal, ongoing, and wide-ranging” from “summative evaluations,” which are used to make personnel decisions, such as hiring, promotion, tenure, and merit pay. Instructors often find a formative process more useful than a performative evaluation (Cross, 1986). Keig and Wagoner (1995) added that the collaborative peer review was a process by which faculty learn how to teach more effectively, to practice new pedagogy, and to receive feedback and coaching. Therefore, when developing this Teaching Partners Program, the process and types of evaluations were significant considerations.

BACKGROUND

The focus on peer observation in the Teaching Partners Program at ERAU-DB campus is not new to American universities. Peer observation of teaching has become increasingly commonplace in the university setting as institutions carefully examine the effectiveness of their educational systems (Bryne, Brown, & Challen, 2010). Peer observation offers many benefits, including developing pedagogical knowledge and understanding, enhancing specific skills, and developing confidence in teaching (Bell, 2005). Smith (2014) notes that when peer review is done well; it is “a critically reflective, complex, and multifaceted, collaborative, and developmental approach to improving instructional excellence” (p. 94).

While Blackmore (2005) broadly identifies peer review as a method for assessing performances to help faculty peers improve so that good practice can be identified and shared, Peel’s (2005) review of the literature on peer observation of teaching suggested that it is used for two main purposes: development or performance management. More concretely, Gosling (2002) (see Table 1) identified three distinct models of peer review (1) Evaluation model (or management model) – involving senior staff observing; (2) Developmental model – involving educational developers, expert teachers, or learning and teaching practitioners in the observation process; (3) Peer review model – where teachers observe teachers. The model’s described above have distinct purposes, processes, and modes of feedback. The evaluative model is more summative in nature, the peer review more formative, and the developmental model includes outside experts or observers and may include both aspects of summative and formative feedback. Since Gosling’s delineation, other researchers have described more detailed hybrid models (described later),