Advanced Strategies for Peer Feedback

1. **Expectations**—Ensure that feedback on teaching is expected and that the purpose (helping the resident to improve as a teacher) is clear.
   - Best if you are invited or at least the observation is agreed to.

2. **Be on the same page**—Discuss the peer observation template before providing feedback. Consider providing a copy before the teaching takes place.

3. **Elicit areas for focus**—Ask your peer for 2 or 3 specific areas that he wants you to focus on. All of us are limited in how much feedback we can take in so it is best if we emphasize high impact areas.

4. **Take notes**—During the observation make mental or written notes relating to areas of focus and the behaviors detailed on the peer observation form.
   - Many experts find written notes to be invaluable.
   - Record specific observations and how these impacted the learners and the teaching encounter.
   - Providing specific examples will enhance your credibility and emphasizes that effective teaching comes from utilizing effective behaviors.
   - Consider letting your colleague know in advance that you will be taking notes.

5. **Self-Assessment**—Ask your colleague to self assess after the teaching encounter and prior to providing your observations. You can ask generally, “How did you think your teaching went?” or more specifically, “What went well for you?” or “What could have gone better?”
   - This can provide you with areas of focus.
   - Self-assessment can tell you how much insight the teacher has about her effectiveness.
   - This can set the stage for breadth and depth of the feedback and also guide any recommendations that are discussed for improvement.

6. **Convey observations**—Provide observations related to your colleague’s areas of concentration as well as relevant behaviors in the peer observation form.
• Keep the language descriptive and non-judgmental. “I noticed most of your interactions were with the intern.” Not “You seemed much more interested in the intern than the students.”
• Be specific, drawing from your written or mental notes. Focus on behaviors and not the person. “Your varying your voice helped to keep the environment stimulating.” Rather than “Your voice is really good.”
• Feedback should be given as soon as possible after the observation.
• Be sure to keep the focus on what the individual did well.
  • You don’t have to report all of your observations.
  • Best if your colleague can identify areas that need work. You can help frame these as opportunities for future growth.

7. **Emotions**-Attend to the emotional state of your colleague. He may be frustrated or unhappy with the teaching encounter. Receiving feedback can be challenging as well. Consider checking in “What was that situation like for you?”

8. **Action Plan**-Providing information back is not enough. What will the teaching resident do differently or try out next time?
  • Promoting the self-efficacy and problem solving of your colleague is key here. Your role might best be as facilitator rather than advisor. Let her propose some ideas.
    • Sometimes this means utilizing a new approach.
    • Often teachers need help putting into action a cognitive model that he or she knows though has uncertainty about implementing.
  • Reinforce/praise effective teaching strategies.
  • Consider asking your colleague to name 2 or 3 areas that he or she will work on or do differently. Check back with your colleague at a later date (use your electronic calendar to remind yourself!).