

Peer reviews of teaching: Are they useful?

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Peer reviews of teachers consist of formal evaluations of faculty members performed by colleagues and peers in their college or university. They are frequently used for promotion, tenure, and salary adjustments. According to existing literature, they may also be used for formative purposes as in the development and improvement of teaching methods, techniques, and styles. Despite the purposes mentioned above, little is known about the authenticity, practicality, and usefulness of peer reviews of university teachers. The purpose of this study was to learn more about methods and uses of information gained from peer reviews of teaching, specifically in Communication Sciences and Disorders programs. Through a national survey, 115 participants from 85 programs returned information. Results showed that peer reviews are being used in many programs with mostly positive results, even though the use, format, and conduct of the reviews vary greatly among programs. The results of peer reviews were meaningful to almost 80% of the respondents, who also included comments and suggestions about the authenticity and helpfulness of reviews conducted by their peers.