

READING THE TEA LEAVES:

**TEACHING AND THE
HIRING PROCESS**

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Why This Is Important

- ▣ Teaching is central to the work we do here
 - Teaching counts for candidate success in T & P
 - Teaching drives retention, and satisfaction, which drives so many other things

- ▣ Doctors bury their mistakes, architects plant shrubbery, but departments live with them!
Every. Single. Day.

This Is Hard to Do....

Research prowess is easier to measure
(count publications, read publications)
than is teaching prowess.

How do we know when we see a good
teacher? Is this apparent in two days?

Common Ways to Assess Teaching Potential

1. Statement of Teaching Philosophy
2. Teaching Demonstration
3. Meeting with Students
4. Pedagogical Colloquia

Statements of Teaching Philosophy

- ▣ Often included in job application
- ▣ Looking for key buzzwords
 - Diversity, inclusiveness
 - Active learning
 - Concern for student wellbeing
- ▣ Conveying enthusiasm for teaching and students

Statements of Teaching Philosophy

- ▣ Might be repetitious, bland
 - To me, they all sound the same
- ▣ Too easy to “borrow” – and too many guides on what to say
- ▣ They are just words, until we see them acted upon

Teaching Demonstrations

- ▣ We can see what they actually look like in the classroom – and perhaps how they interact with our students
- ▣ The rubber meets the road
- ▣ Genuine student information/feedback

Teaching Demonstrations

- ▣ *Might reduce classroom work to a performance*
- ▣ If a real class – takes time from someone's class
- ▣ If not a real class – is it too artificial?
- ▣ Hard to showcase approaches built up over the course of a semester
- ▣ Is there inequity in what candidates teach?

Meetings with Students

- ▣ Opportunity for meaningful feedback from students – could you imagine working with this person?
- ▣ Chance for candidates to get to know your students
- ▣ Candidates seem to actually – gasp! – enjoy this part of the process

Meetings with Students

- ▣ Small groups – may not be a representative mix of students
- ▣ Potential loss of faculty control of the content of the meeting
- ▣ More time in what is an already busy day

Pedagogical Colloquia

Inspired by the work of Lee Shulman

Giving faculty a chance to share with you about their thinking on teaching:

- ▣ How to organize a class – readings, assessments
- ▣ Topics to cover, and omit
- ▣ Ultimate goal for students in the class (backwards design)

Pedagogical Colloquia

- ▣ Artificial – talking about teaching is different than actually teaching
- ▣ Unfamiliar approach – may require more set-up for faculty and for candidate

Bottom Line

There is no perfect way to assess teaching in the hiring process

- ▣ Attempt to align assessment methods with what you want to know
- ▣ Do something – convey the sense that you take teaching seriously

Let's Stay in Touch

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