HMS Academy Peer Observation Interest Group Meeting Minutes

March 6, 2015


- Welcomed 2 new members, Nora and Valeria. Relayed history of developing the Case-based Collaborative Learning (CBCL) Peer Observation Worksheet and use of Delphi Method.

- Group is at final proofing phase of the CBCL worksheet. We began pilot testing the worksheet by having the group members use the form to observe Dr. Richard Schwartzstein’s Gas Exchange flipped-classroom session for the IHP Course 2015. Instructions were to see if the worksheet captured the various types of CBCL methods demonstrated during the class.

- Most updated form (attached) was distributed; gas exchange video was uploaded and cued at the point where Rich is sitting with a student as they “partner” in working through the answer to a question. Group noted how effective this technique was.

- Group reviewed the worksheet. Discussion points:
  - The worksheet might be used for teaching beyond CBCL, for example at the clerkship and residency levels. Question raised as whether we should change title to allow for broader use. Please email Lori (lnewman@bidmc.harvard.edu) your thoughts about this proposal. Suggested titles were Peer Observation Worksheet of Collaborative Learning or Peer Observation Worksheet of Active Learning. Open to other suggestions. We are asking you this to see if you are actually reading the minutes. It’s our readiness test.
    - The group agreed to the suggestion to add “Why does this matter?” to Item 3. Members felt this type of question promotes application of knowledge.
    - For Item #5, suggested changing last bullet to “Collaborative learning exercises that encourage higher-order thinking and practice of applying knowledge.”
    - Members agreed to change the word “Balance” (Item #8) to “Incorporates.”
  - Lori relayed her experiences attending a webinar led by Professor Robert Talbert (mathematics professor from Michigan) and later speaking with him directly about flipped classroom techniques he has used effectively. These include how he has addressed common problems such as student push-back and unprepared students; how he explains the flipped classroom to the students (i.e., asking students to come prepared and ready to work on the most difficult problem or concept in class while they have access to the faculty’s expertise).
    - Professor Talbert reviewed the CBCL worksheet and suggested adding the new item 6 (Conducts frequent, real-time assessment of students’ understanding to provide immediate feedback and inform instruction. Examples include audience
response, polls, group quizzes, and “assessment while walking around.”) Group agreed this was important to include.

- Question was raised as to whether Professor Talbert might come to HMS and help lead a faculty development session and/or a question-answer forum about flipped classroom teaching.

- Additional edits and comments:
  - There was a question as to whether Rich explicitly connected prior learning and pre-class assignments to in-class activities. However, it was noted that he did reference the pre-class, online discussion, the Forum:
    
    “I want to thank everyone who has been trying to help answer each other’s questions on the Forum. I think this new format we are using is working well. The questions are appropriate, and effort is being made to try to answer each other’s questions. You will notice that I sometimes will answer a question with another question to re-direct your thinking. The goal is if you can come to the answer on your own, you are more likely to remember it than if I give you the answer.” (preparatory work-session connection and priming for CBCL teaching)

- This led to the question as to whether the worksheet adequately captures Rich’s explanation to the students about using the flipped classroom approach:

  “This is a flipped classroom so we start out with the premise that you looked at the notes and you thought about the questions and now I am going to give you some vignettes, and we will try to apply that information.”

Group concluded that Item B from the Elements of Effective Instruction is worded appropriately and no further items are needed: “Clearly states learning objectives and plan for in-class time; makes organization of session transparent to students.”

- Discussion continued about the need to be transparent and teach all students about flipped classroom or collaborative learning. Question was raised as to what point the new students would learn about these techniques (possibly, at second look and orientation).

- Suggestion was raised to include an item about whether the amount of preparatory work assigned was appropriate for the session (e.g. too much, adequate, too little). Lori mentioned the Professor Talbert’s “prep work time = class work time” rule of thumb.

- It was suggested to add “warm call” to Item #5. This led to a discussion about the wording of several of the items. For example, would most faculty know
what “near-peer teaching” or “Think-Pair-Share” were? Does this type of language verge on “edu-speak,” which often alienates faculty? Should things be re-written so they are more generic? e.g. “Think through the problem, find a partner and discuss, share with the larger group.”

- There was further discussion about revising the form so that it was broader and less specific vs. including detailed criteria and examples of behavior. Decision was to keep form as is to provide a standard frame-of-reference when observing a faculty member, but to add an “Other” item to allow for additional observations not included on the form.

- Susan then led a discussion about next steps for the group and offered various options for moving forward with our CBCL peer observation work vs. thinking about new interest group opportunities (e.g. devising best ways to provide feedback to a peer, peer observation of foundational program teaching in clinical settings). Group consensus was that our CBCL work would not feel complete unless we developed a faculty compendium or manual for the worksheet so that it can become a stand-alone faculty resource (one that we might consider publishing on the AAMC’s MedEdPORTAL). Moreover, the compendium might serve as a faculty self-assessment instrument when peer observation is not an option.

- Bobby encouraged the group to take the time now to also create a parallel students’ manual. This manual would teach students what is expected from them in a flipped classroom as well as how they can assess their own knowledge and readiness for a CBCL session.

- Next steps:
  - Group members will select worksheet categories that interest them. Then, either alone or in pairs, members will write an in-depth description for the category, including additional observable behaviors, defining key terms, and providing further examples or suggestions. In parallel, members should also consider the student’s expectations or optimal preparation for the selected category.
  - Later in April, Lori and Susan will send out an example of for the group to consider along with a sign up sheet.

Next meeting is Thursday May 14, 3:30-5:00PM