

Appraising the Appraisers : Evaluating Modes of Teacher Appraisal

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Appraising the Appraisers:

Evaluating Modes of Teacher Appraisal

Peter Wells

Abstract

Universities and schools use various methods of teacher appraisal, including inspection by external agencies or managers, peer observation, and student evaluation, in order to improve the performance of their faculty. In this article it is suggested that *self* appraisal is more effective than any other method of appraising teachers, and thus improving their performance. The article draws on the writer's experience as a teacher trainer and school inspector in the UK and other countries, and on his recent experience as an Assistant Professor at Kansai Gaidai University. Data from two recent initiatives in teacher appraisal at that university are also studied. The writer concludes by proposing that self appraisal should be the core element of teacher development, supplemented by the judicious use of peer observation and student evaluation.

Keywords: observation, appraisal, evaluation, teacher, development

Introduction

In recent years educational institutions of all types have struggled with the problem of how to improve the performance of their teachers without alienating them by heavy-handed procedures such as external inspection or assessment by results. In this essay I am going to comment on a range of appraisal methods I have experienced personally, and try to compare the advantages and disadvantages of each of them. It is an attempt to contribute to the ongoing debate about teacher appraisal, particularly at my own university, Kansai Gaidai University, where two interesting developments in this area have recently been introduced: an 'Open Classroom' (Peer Observation) initiative, and an attempt to gain feedback from teachers on the already established practice of teacher evaluation by students.

External Inspection

In seeking to improve the overall performance of an educational institution, the first recourse of managers has usually been to have the teachers' lessons inspected by trained inspectors from outside the institution. This method, which I will call External Inspection, dates, in the UK, from the nineteenth century, when it was used to try to improve the performance of government schools. External Inspection is a method still favoured by the state education system in the UK, where the inspectors are recruited, trained, and paid by a government agency. (Private schools have a parallel system using retired teachers and experienced teachers from other schools.) Schools prepare for external inspections in advance by having members of the management team observe lessons to make sure they will be acceptable to the inspectors. Indeed, inspection by managers has become popular in British schools even in the absence of an immediate threat of external inspection, as it is seen, probably mistakenly, as an effective way of improving the efficiency of a school.

Essentially, External Inspection, or management inspection, is an assessment-based mode of teacher development. Lessons observed are graded according to prescribed criteria. The grade, along with some comments, are given to the teacher, and the information is used by the managers of the institution to determine the teacher's future — whether the teacher should be promoted, commended, re-assigned, counselled, retrained, etc. The teacher may well be given a list of 'areas for improvement', and may be required to show progress in these areas over a given period of time. This system is supposedly used by the management of the institution in a positive way to plan individual teachers' careers and development, as well as overall training policy. However, teachers often see it as a threat because they feel, understandably, that their careers could be adversely affected by an unreliable method of assessment. Unfortunately, there are many reasons to doubt the reliability of External Inspection as an assessment tool.

By the very fact of entering a classroom an inspector disturbs the relationship between the teacher and the class. Instead of being a dialogue between the teacher and the students, the lesson becomes, pragmatically speaking, a dialogue between the teacher and the *inspector*, in which the teacher tells the inspector, "This is how I teach my class." It is impossible for an observer not to influence what is observed (unless the teachers were to be secretly observed by CCTV, which most practitioners would regard as being unacceptable, if not illegal). No inspectors will ever see what actually takes place when they are not there!

Teachers under inspection usually suffer to some degree from apprehensiveness or

embarrassment, and are therefore not so relaxed or natural as usual in dealing with their students. The students also feel themselves under scrutiny, and their behaviour is thus also affected. Faced by this intrusion of an external authority figure, they often try to behave exceptionally well during the inspector's visit (partly in order to support their teacher), giving rise to an unnatural silence or exaggerated cooperativeness which is quite amusing to watch. There is no scope, in an inspected lesson, for those inspired digressions that can turn a humdrum lesson into an exciting experience for teacher and students.

Teachers are almost always given notice of inspections, and can therefore prepare for them by devising lessons which show themselves in the best possible light. Sometimes they practise the lesson with the class beforehand. If the inspection is at short notice, they can substitute a 'good' lesson for the one they had intended to teach. However, if the inspection is *not* announced in advance (in order to pre-empt the above), the inspector may chance upon a lesson which is untypical, and does not do justice to the teacher's ability. For example, the teacher may be ill, or less well-prepared than usual. It may be a lesson which does not show the teacher to advantage, for example, silent reading, a test, or a 'catch up' lesson in which the teacher is tidying up a number of loose ends. Thus inspectors rarely gain a true impression of a teacher's 'normal' teaching.

All external inspectors are hampered to some extent by varying kinds of ignorance. Their teaching experience may have been in different types of school. They may have left the classroom behind, and therefore may not be familiar with modern teaching methods. Many of them lack qualifications in teacher-training or teacher-development. No matter how well-informed they are, inspectors characteristically see *only one lesson* from each teacher, and therefore cannot fully understand the context in which that lesson is set: what came before and what will come after. It is true that a team of inspectors may spend a few days in a school, looking at many aspects of its life, but their acquaintance with its culture is bound to be in some degree inadequate, and is sometimes very inadequate. Far too often inspectors' judgements on a school merely reflect the problems or advantages of the locality in which it is situated.

External Inspection claims to be able to deliver a diagnosis of teachers' strengths and weaknesses, which might in theory be used beneficially for their development. In practice, however, inspection too often becomes merely a device for frightening teachers into working harder, or following a particular method or syllabus. Its judgements on teachers' ability are *not* reliable, mainly because, due to their training and experience, inspectors enter the classroom

with a fairly fixed set of ideas about what constitutes good or bad teaching. These criteria are applied mechanically, without regard for the actual situation of the particular teacher under scrutiny. Appraising a teacher is not at all like, for example, rating car engines or measuring the heights of a group of people. It is far more complex—more like describing a parent, spouse, or neighbour. What teachers achieve in their classrooms is determined only partly by their own skills, personalities, efforts or experience. Every lesson is the product of interaction among *all* the participants, and that includes all the students. Granted the teacher is the major player, the students are numerous and their contribution to the atmosphere and success of the lesson is decisive. Most teachers will have had the experience of delivering, or trying to deliver, the same lesson to different classes in the same institution—often in the same week. The two lessons are always different, sometimes subtly different, sometimes dramatically so. The class size, the time of day, the proportion of male or female students, the weather, the presence or absence of a couple of troublesome, or even slightly bored, students—these and many other factors make differences over which the teacher has essentially very little control. For this reason it is a waste of time to try to ‘rate’ teachers, especially on the basis of one or two lessons. As with schools, so with teachers: a rating of a teacher is usually in fact a rating of the environment in which she or he is operating.

The ‘inspection’ model, in which an experienced practitioner observes a lesson and comments on it, is not completely without relevance to teacher development, as we shall see later. It is seen at its best in the work of teacher-trainers with their students, and mentors with probationer-teachers (in their first year or two of teaching). It can re-emerge, in a teacher’s later years, in the form of a friendly colleague taking a look at his or her lessons, in order to suggest improvements. In all these cases the observer has the advantage of close acquaintance with the observee and the situation, and the observations can take place over a long period, in partnership. However, it seems to be the case that, for managers hoping to improve the quality of their teaching faculty in general, External Inspection is not as effective as at first sight it may appear. Even when the inspection is carried out by members of the management team of the institution, rather than an external body, we find that many of the problems associated with external inspections persist. The teachers are still nervous, the students are unsure how to behave, the lesson has been rehearsed for the occasion, and the observers are often out of touch with the day-to-day work of teachers in classrooms. In general, the stress and alienation caused by external or internal inspections outweigh the benefits gained in terms of teacher development.

Peer Observation

Universities are not as fond of the External Inspection, ‘top down’, mode of appraisal as schools (perhaps because lecturers are even more resistant to it than school-teachers are), but they are increasingly interested in finding some means of improving the performance of their teachers.

One of the methods universities have favoured in recent years is Peer Observation. This system, which is often termed ‘Open Door’ or ‘Open Classroom’, dates (in the UK) from the early 1970s. Basically, teachers are instructed or encouraged to visit each other’s classes. Sometimes, as at Kansai Gaidai University, where the system was inaugurated in 2008, a special period is designated for this exercise. At KGU, the observers are asked to write reports on the lessons for the Administration and the observees. Selected reports are then published by the university in the Kansai Gaidai Faculty Development Newsletter (henceforth, ‘Newsletter’).

In the first set of observation reports at Kansai Gaidai University, the observers’ comments were notable for their lack of negative criticism of the observees. In this respect they were the opposite of a typical British school inspection report of the 90s. The tone is almost universally adulatory:

This class is also lively ... the instructor’s consistently gentle kindness ... it was a wonderful way to guide the students ... a very calm and good atmosphere ... the flow of the class was very smooth and interactive ... a satisfied feeling of accomplishment ... a well-organised lesson, in which the students were continually on task ... the class atmosphere was positive; the target language was used effectively ... (Newsletter, October, 2008, pages 4-10)

In only one case was a mildly critical note sounded: “A device to induce students to a more active stance would be desired.” (p 10)

Although these reports are overwhelmingly positive, this does not mean that they are without value. In the first place, it is not surprising that they are favourable. All the teachers at Kansai Gaidai University are experienced and well-qualified, so it is unlikely that any of them would ever teach a ‘bad’ lesson, even when not being observed. What is more, knowing that they were going to be observed, most teachers would no doubt have prepared something special for the observer, perhaps demonstrating some method or technique that they were particularly proud of. Finally, to judge by my own experience, the students probably went out of their way to show how good their teachers were, and worked even harder than they

normally do. So in this respect the reports do not tell us anything more than we already knew—that Kansai Gaidai University is a good, well-equipped university, with enthusiastic, efficient teachers and keen, cooperative students.

But these reports offer more than vacuous plaudits. Many of them draw attention to instances of good practice which could be followed up in various ways. For example,

- Dictation ... is done in an effective manner in this class.
- She ... used a lot of AV materials, such as pictures and video clips available through the Internet ... before they actually read the materials.
- (X) uses a points system to encourage her students to use English when working together.
- This was a ... lesson which focussed on song writing in order to stimulate creative writing. (*loc. cit.*)

On reading these reports, other faculty members might make an appointment to see a lesson taught by a teacher who has been identified as practising an interesting technique or method, or at least talk to that teacher. As we know with our own teaching, well-directed and justified praise is more effective in achieving progress than criticism, no matter how just the criticism may be. Teachers, like students, do not develop positively in an atmosphere of threat and fault-finding, but rather in one of support and encouragement.

The most beneficial aspect of the Open Classroom system, however, does not lie in the reports that are produced. *It lies in the simple fact that teachers visit other teachers' classrooms.* This is an extremely effective method of teacher development, easily outstripping attending workshops or lectures, reading professional journals or textbooks on pedagogy, or even doing degrees in Applied Linguistics. When you see a colleague, whose character you know, teaching a course you have taught, in an institution you know, the differences you observe between their practice and yours are supremely interesting and valuable. It is like a controlled experiment in which there is only one variable: the teacher. Whether you approve or disapprove of the other teacher's different methods and practices, seeing them gives you an unrivalled opportunity for self-examination and personal development. In his manual on Language Pedagogy, H Douglas Brown lists five "realistic goals" for professional development, the third of which is: "Observe *five* other teachers this semester." (Brown, p. 427, my emphasis)

As a method of teacher assessment, Peer Observation suffers from some of the defects of External Inspection. Once again there is an intrusion into the classroom, though the visitor may be perceived by both teacher and students as a 'friend'. As with External Inspection, the observer sees only one lesson. Thus, although the observers are acquainted with the culture of

the institution, it would be unwise to rely on their reports as definitive assessments of the teachers they observe. Also, as we have seen, Peer Observation reports might tend to downplay any misgivings about the observee's methods.

Happily, at Kansai Gaidai University, as in my experience in the UK in the 70s, the aim of Peer Observation is *not* teacher assessment. It is to identify *positive* aspects of the observee's teaching. This was made clear in the first mention of the project in the Newsletter (May, 2008):

In each semester all the classes of Kansai Gaidai are open so that any professor can visit them and discuss *positive* things observed. (my italics)

The purpose of this scheme is further clarified in the instructions to participants (May 23rd, 2008):

The aims of open classes are to *share* teaching methods and classroom skills with observers and to *demonstrate* practical ideas in the classroom setting. (internal memo, unpublished; my italics)

Thus, even in its first cycle, the process produced exactly the sort of positive results that its instigators were seeking. The second cycle was no less profitable, producing interesting comments such as the following:

- Watching this lesson showed me the value of using hyperlinks to bring the living foreign language into the classroom.
- ... both PowerpointTM software and projected imagery via the OHC were used to enhance the learning experience ... (Newsletter, January, 2009, pp 14f.)

Two years prior to the inauguration of this 'Open Classroom' scheme, the Native-English-Speaking teachers at the Hotani Campus of Kansai Gaidai University had set up a similar system for mutual observation, and in the guidelines for this initiative the same basic aim is expounded:

The purpose of this type of observation is to learn how an instructor presents a certain activity or teaches a certain skill. This type of observation is for the professional development of the observer, and *there should be no critiquing of the person or techniques being observed.* (teachers' website, unpublished; my italics)

To summarise, Peer Observation as a tool of assessment is not an improvement on External Observation. The observers may have more understanding of the culture of the institution, but their reports are likely to suppress any doubts the observers may have about the observee's methods, for fear of damaging their colleagues' reputations. They are thus not entirely impartial. However, Peer Observation represents a significant advance over External Inspection in terms of teacher development. It is less intrusive, because the visitor is perceived

as friendly by both the teacher and the students, and it causes less anxiety. It leads to immediate learning on the part of at least one participant (the observer), and can throw up ideas for development and improvement for the wider academic community, if the observer's findings are published. The observers may also make suggestions in private to the observees about ways in which their teaching could possibly be improved. Peer Observation outwardly resembles External Inspection, but the aim and focus are quite different. There is no attempt to rate the observee on any sort of scale, and the focus is primarily on the development of the *observers*, and, through them, the institution as a whole.

Student Evaluation

In addition to Peer Observation many educational institutions, particularly those catering for older teenagers and undergraduates, use Student Evaluation as part of their teacher development strategy. This method has a fairly long history, having been used by the British Council, for example, more than 20 years ago. It is particularly popular with commercial institutions, where the students or their parents pay for their own education. In this method the students, usually towards the end of the course, are asked to fill in a form with multiple-choice questions about the teacher. Sometimes there are also open-ended questions, or an opportunity to make individual comments.

At first sight, students may appear to be a poor choice as assessors of teachers. They are not teachers themselves, and do not have the practitioner's grasp of what the teacher is trying to do in professional terms. Being young, they tend to live in the moment, and think only about how the teacher has behaved that day, or week. They are more likely than professional observers to make biased judgements based on extraneous issues such as the age, sex or race of the teachers, or on what they feel to be their personal relationship with them. They are often asked to complete the evaluation form at the end of a lesson, usually the last lesson of the course, when all they are thinking about is getting out of the classroom. Thus their filling-in of the form can be perfunctory. Many teachers feel their careers are in danger if placed in the hands of such inexperienced and callow observers, especially if no other types of assessment are applied to counterbalance the effects of youthful rashness and immaturity.

However, Student Evaluation need not be any less reliable than External Inspection, and may in fact be more useful and informative. In the first place, Student Evaluation does not suffer from the disruption of the class atmosphere and relationships which External Inspection

or Peer Observation causes. Students experience the lesson in a natural way, as part of the normal student-teacher relationship. Secondly, they see the teacher from the beginning to end of the course, so they do not see only a rehearsed lesson, or any lesson out of context. Their knowledge of the teacher is extensive and penetrating, sometimes uncomfortably so! Finally, they are fully acquainted with the culture of the institution, because they are part of it. They know what they want, and what their friends want, and they know how other teachers behave. Apart from anything else, the students are 'customers', and have a right to be consulted about the education they are receiving.

Generally speaking, students are not, as some teachers might fear, harshly critical or disposed to take 'revenge' on their teachers, at least, not at Kansai Gaidai University. It is true that due to their ignorance of modern educational methods the students might respond negatively to a learning activity which you 'know' from research is 'right'. The fact is, that your 'right' method is not going to work if the students don't like it, so you may as well know how they feel, and act accordingly (either by trying to explain what you are doing, or just dropping it).

On the whole I have seen no evidence that my students, during the evaluation process, have done anything other than tell the truth as they see it, in terms of the questions they are asked. This includes their responses to my own surveys conducted halfway through the course, which I have more control over (See Appendix 3). This does not mean I am completely satisfied with my 'marks', of course. Naturally I would like to score perfect 'A's in every category, and am slightly 'hurt' when I don't. Occasionally there are inexplicable negative judgments, like the student who said that I *always* finished my lessons late when I *never* did! Or another student (not mine) who checked 'No' to the question 'Did the teacher use visual aids?' when in fact the teacher had frequently used music videos in his lessons. But these are actually a tiny minority. (There may be inexplicable *positive* judgements, too, but teachers tend not to be worried by these.) There is nothing wrong with the process that could not be put right by tweaking the system a little - for example by honing the questions, training the students to answer them, and perhaps carrying out the Evaluation at a different time (e.g. the start/middle of a lesson instead of the end, or earlier in the semester).

When the teachers at Kansai Gaidai University were canvassed regarding their feelings about Student Evaluation, a large majority (about 85%) stated that they had utilised the results of their student evaluation for the improvement of their classes. However, among the Foreign Teachers, who were canvassed separately, there was a feeling that there was room for

improvement in the framing of the questions, for example:

- Many teachers requested a comprehensive re-evaluation of some or all of the student evaluation questions ...
- Some teachers suggested that students should be encouraged or even required to write more detailed answers to teachers on such questions as the following: Which class activities did you find useful? Which activities were difficult and why? Which activities did you enjoy? Which activities did you not enjoy? (Newsletter, June, 2008, pp. 3-7)

In the January 2009 edition of the Newsletter it was pointed out that “Many teachers give their own class evaluations ...” and that “The answers to these questions are much more useful than those in the official class evaluations.” (page 11) The questions used in these surveys are simple, and can be tailored to the specific course, unlike those in the official evaluation, which are designed to be applicable to all courses. Examples of questions mentioned are:

- What was useful/not useful for you in this course?
- What did you like/not like? (*loc. cit.*)

Examples of course-specific questions could be: Which games do you enjoy? Do you find the computer-room sessions useful? etc.

Another reason often given for the ineffectiveness of official Student Evaluation programmes is that they are usually administered at the end of the course, which is too late for the teacher to make any changes in the way she or he is teaching that specific course. In many cases the teacher being evaluated is not going to teach that course again, at least not for a considerable period of time. Thus mid-semester evaluations would be more beneficial for both teachers and students. (See Appendix 3 for a typical mid-term survey compiled by the present writer.)

To summarise, Student Evaluation, while not being foolproof, offers a significant advance over External Inspection in terms of reliability, and also avoids the intrusiveness of both that method and Peer Observation. Unlike external inspectors, the observers in this case are intimately acquainted with the culture of their institution, and know what it normally provides. In the words of Penny Ur:

“Students are an excellent source of feedback on your teaching: arguably the best. Their information is based on a whole series of lessons, rather than isolated examples, and they usually have a fairly clear idea of how well they are learning, and why. Moreover, they appreciate being consulted, usually make serious efforts to give helpful feedback; and my experience is that the process tends to enhance rather than damage teacher-student relationships.” (Ur, p 323)

Self Appraisal

There remains a further mode of appraisal which successfully satisfies all the criteria we have suggested as being important in teacher appraisal and development. In this method there is no intrusion into the classroom, yet the observer is a trained professional who is intimately acquainted with the institution in which the teaching is taking place, *because the observer is the teacher*. As such the observer, like the students, has been involved in the course throughout its duration. This method is known as Self Appraisal. As can be seen from Appendix 1, Self Appraisal, unlike the three we have briefly surveyed above, thus satisfies all the criteria we have suggested as being essential for effective appraisal.

Self Appraisal is a process that already takes place in the minds of most teachers. “The first and most important basis for professional progress is simply your own reflection on daily classroom events.” (Ur, p 319). Teachers are, by definition, interested in the process of learning how to do things better, because they spend their lives helping their students to do things better. Overwhelmingly teachers have chosen their careers because they are interested in their subject, in young people, and in the process of education. Many teachers have rejected more lucrative careers in order to pursue this vocation. They want to teach as well as possible, and to improve their skills, because, if they do, their students will get better results, their students will like them and report favourably on them, they will have a good rapport with their managers and their colleagues, and, most importantly, they will feel good about themselves. Most teachers, therefore, spend a good deal of time thinking about how they could teach a particular skill or item better, or how they could overcome perceived shortcomings. What their institution needs to do is to promote and facilitate this process by such means as training manuals and workshops, whether delivered on site or outsourced. Apart from this vital contribution on the part of management, it is dangerous to formalise Self Appraisal further, for example by asking teachers to submit their self appraisal reports to the management. Such an extension of the process would in fact be counter-productive, because the aim of Self Appraisal is not to indentify ‘good’ or ‘bad’ teachers, but to *promote teacher development*.

In fact, there are very few ‘bad’ teachers in reputable educational institutions, such as Japanese universities or British secondary schools. The teachers have already been selected by experienced personnel officers. Their qualifications have been attested, and their references taken up. It can safely be assumed that they are dutifully taking their lessons each working day, doing their best to deliver the courses that have been assigned to them. After all, they are

always under observation, because they work in classrooms full of people! Of course, there is always the remote possibility that a teacher may suffer some sort of breakdown, and start behaving badly in some way, such as failing to attend lessons, or verbally abusing students. There are ‘rotten apples’ in every profession, and teaching is no exception. But such problems are not normally identified by any sort of appraisal process, whether inspector-, peer-, or student-led. They are, rather, the subject of urgent complaints from students or reports from concerned colleagues. To repeat, it is counter-productive to assume that the teachers at a reputable institution are anything but serious, conscientious professionals. To do so is to destroy the atmosphere of trust and respect which is needed for meaningful professional development to take place.

The primary recipients of appraisals of teachers, especially self appraisals, are not the managers, but the individual teachers themselves. The administrative staff may demand to see reports, to make sure that the process is going on, but the people who want to *study* the appraisals are the teachers. That is why we should not fear that teachers might produce false reports about themselves. In writing a report on a colleague’s lesson they may well suppress doubts about a particular method used, in order not to damage that colleague’s credit with the management (they may discuss the issue in private). That is one reason why, as stated above, the ‘Open Classroom’ reports tend to be full of praise rather than criticism. But in reflecting upon one’s own practice there is no room to hide. If the managers require submission of self appraisal reports, individual teachers may suppress some of their more negative conclusions, and they may well be wise to do so. But they cannot ignore the report that goes straight from themselves, *to themselves*. Personally, I find myself a much harsher critic of myself than anyone else has ever been—at least, to my face!

Self Appraisal involves asking oneself a range of questions, which will vary according to one’s subject and level of teaching, but which generally include something like those in Appendix 2. It should not be done merely “in the mind”, or in an *ad hoc* manner, for example while walking back to the office from a class. It requires training, and practice. It benefits greatly from being done regularly, and in writing (e.g. in the form of a journal). (Ur, p. 323) It *must* include recognition of one’s successes and strengths, as well as of one’s failures and weaknesses. It should be an informed, systematic, mature, balanced, lifelong process.

Self Appraisal should be supported by the following professional activities:

- (a) observing other teachers in the same institution (Peer Observation) (to repeat, FIVE times per semester, according to Brown!)

- (b) discussing one's teaching with colleagues
- (c) inviting colleagues to watch a lesson so that they can suggest improvements. This procedure is like Peer Observation, but it has a different focus: this time the *observee* is the one who wants to learn, and the observer takes on the role of a friendly, minimally intrusive, inspector, like a teacher-trainer. "Seeing one's actions through another's eyes is an indispensable tool for classroom research as well as a potentially enlightening experience for both observer and observee." (Brown, p. 431)
- (d) asking students to give feedback, formally or informally (See Appendix 3 for a simple form that can quickly be used for this purpose).
- (e) audio- and video-recording oneself teaching
- (f) attending conferences and workshops; in-service training
- (g) reading educational periodicals and text-books.

Teachers following the above programme will, I believe, maximise their potential for development.

Conclusion

Teachers (like any other human beings) are not discrete objects that can be measured, analysed, and rated like a car, or a camera. They are, rather, part of a web of relationships involving their colleagues, their students, their management, and the wider community. They are the product of their institution, its members, its history, and its social context (as well as their own personal history). The best way for an educational institution to promote academic excellence (and, where relevant, commercial success) is to provide conditions in which teachers, and teacher development, can flourish.

With respect to the appraisal aspect of this relationship, we have seen that the most effective mode of teacher appraisal is Self Appraisal, and that this can beneficially be supplemented by Peer Observation, and by well-conducted Student Evaluation. The External Inspection model has its dangers, but can be re-cycled in the form of friendly visits by a colleague to a teacher who wants advice and/or reassurance.

An educational institution with high aspirations for success should therefore provide encouragement and opportunities for its faculty to carry out good quality Self Appraisal. These will include:

- (a) training teachers in Self Appraisal

- (b) giving adequate time for professional development
- (c) providing adequate resources for professional development
- (d) supporting in-service training
- (e) facilitating Peer Observation
- (f) ensuring that Student Evaluation is fair, focussed and relevant.

With minimal variations depending upon their various roles and natures, educational institutions of all types following this recipe will, in my view, be able to optimise the performance of their teaching faculty.

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Appendix 1: Tabular comparison of four methods of Teacher Appraisal

Criterion ⇒	<i>Class atmosphere and relationships are not disturbed.</i>	<i>Observation takes place over an extended period of time.</i>	<i>Observer understands the context and culture of the institution.</i>	<i>Observer is a trained and experienced professional.</i>
Method ↓				
Self Appraisal	✓	✓	✓	✓
Student Evaluation	✓	✓	✓	
Peer Observation			✓	✓
External Inspection				✓

Appendix 2: Examples of Self Assessment questions

	Area	Example
1	<i>Overview</i>	Do have a vision for this course? Have I communicated that vision to my students?
2	<i>Lesson Planning</i>	Do I plan my lessons adequately in advance? Do I often/sometimes arrive without the necessary equipment/papers, etc.? Do I often take longer/less time to do something than I expected?
3	<i>Classroom Management</i>	Are my students all on task for 100% of the time? If not, why not? Are the desks and other furniture and equipment always in the right place for my purposes? If not, why not?
4	<i>Technology and Resources</i>	Do I make the best use of the resources my institution has? Do I need an upgrade on some new technology?
5	<i>Voice and Mannerisms</i>	Is my voice pleasant and audible? Do I have any irritating mannerisms? Why don't I record/video myself teaching more often?
6	<i>Personal Relationships</i>	Do I dislike certain students, or types of student? If so, why? Do my students find me friendly and approachable? Do I understand my students problems and needs?
7	<i>Assessment</i>	Do I promptly correct written assignments clearly and helpfully? Do my students understand my Grading Criteria? Do I give students a clear indication of their ability and potential? Do I use praise effectively to reinforce good behaviour?
8	<i>Professional Development</i>	Do I keep abreast of developments in my subject? Do I take every opportunity to observe other teachers?
9	<i>Professional Relationships</i>	Do I respect my colleagues and share my experiences with them in an appropriate way? Do I try to understand my managers and cooperate with their aims?
10	<i>Personal Encouragement</i>	What are my strengths? What went really well last week/month? Why did it go well?

Appendix 3: Sample Feedback Form used mid-semester at Kansai Gaidai University
by the present writer

FEEDBACK FORM FOR ENGLISH TEACHERS

Please help your teacher by filling in this simple form. You do not have to put your name on it.

1)

	Yes! Yes!	Yes	?	No	No! No!
I can understand my teacher					
The teacher is helpful					
The textbook is interesting					
I enjoy the lessons					

2)

	Too difficult	OK	Too easy
The lessons are			
The book is			
The homeworks are			
The tests are			

3) What should the teacher do to make the lessons better?

.....

4) What should the teacher NOT do?

.....

Thank you for filling in this form!

Appendix 4: Parental Monitoring

While this article was in preparation, there was some discussion among faculty, following some media publicity, about the idea of 'Parental Monitoring' (students' parents sitting in on classes). A full discussion of this issue is beyond the scope of this article, but if we check this mode of appraisal against our original chart (below), its disadvantages become immediately obvious. Parental Monitoring may be deemed necessary for political, commercial, or social reasons, but it is unlikely to contribute anything to teacher development.

Criterion ⇒	<i>Class atmosphere and relationships are not disturbed.</i>	<i>Observation takes place over an extended period of time.</i>	<i>Observer understands the context and culture of the institution.</i>	<i>Observer is a trained and experienced professional.</i>
Method ↓				
Self Appraisal	✓	✓	✓	✓
Student Evaluation	✓	✓	✓	✗
Peer Observation	✗	✗	✓	✓
External Inspection	✗	✗	✗	✓
Parental Monitoring	✗	✗	✗	✗

(Peter Wells 国際言語学部講師)