

**Beyond SIRS:
Other Ways to Evaluate Effective Teaching**

1) Expanded / Improved SIRS

- A SIRS form with less reliance on the bubble-sheet, and more emphasis on short written responses. Better questions = more useful and reliable feedback.

- **Advantages:**

- Easily administered at the end of the semester.
- Comparatively easy to evaluate.
- Doesn't involve a major departure from the current system.

- **Disadvantages:**

- Fraught with many of the perceived difficulties of the current SIRS system.

2) Classroom Visits

- Annual / Semi-annual classroom visits by other faculty members designed to monitor classroom teaching.

- **Advantages:**

- Provides a professional (non-student) perspective on a faculty member's classroom methods.
- Provides an exposure to other perspectives on teaching for both faculty members.

- **Disadvantages:**

- Time consuming: may be seen as yet another burden on faculty.
- May be seen as invasive.
- Subject to cronyism / departmental politics.
- Limited in scope: evaluates only one day's classroom activities, and ignores the fact that much teaching occurs *outside* the classroom.

3) Teaching Portfolios

- A "paper trail" of a faculty member's teaching effectiveness which could be annually reviewed. Might include items such as syllabi, problem sets, assignments, self evaluations, student comments / letters, and other evidence of innovative and effective teaching.

- **Advantages:**

- Perhaps the most detailed and all-inclusive method of evaluating teaching.
- The process of putting together a teaching portfolio can be, in itself, a step towards more effective teaching.

- **Disadvantages:**

- Can be time consuming and difficult to evaluate.
- Subjective, and thus apt to focus on strengths rather than weaknesses.
- Concerns over whether a polished teaching portfolio = great teaching.

4) Other Methods?

- Annual self evaluation by faculty
- "Exit Evaluations" by graduating seniors
- ?