



## **Unpacking Proposal Reviews Worksheet**

### **Instructions**

The following redacted proposals and reviewer feedback in this worksheet are intended for educational training purposes only. This worksheet serves as an opportunity for reviewers to practice providing constructive feedback, grounded in the review criteria and The POD Network values. Please read the sample proposals below and follow the prompts in the gray text boxes to complete this worksheet. It may be helpful to print this PDF.

## **PROPOSAL A**

### **Title**

Action Research: How is Teaching Effectiveness Assessed in Tenure-Track Hiring?

### **Abstract**

This session reports on a CTL action research study that examined how academic hiring committees consider a candidate's teaching effectiveness for tenure-track, assistant professor positions. We report on a nationwide survey of 168 hiring committee chairs from 10 different disciplines, and use this data to provide recommendations for preparing teaching philosophy statements and diversity and inclusion statements. Implications of this work are relevant for anyone entering the academic job market as well as for CTL's providing consultations to individuals on the job market or delivering programs to prepare future faculty.

### **Proposal**

Determining the teaching effectiveness of a tenure-track applicant is challenging for many reasons. For example, graduate students may have limited teaching opportunities and hiring committee members have different conceptions of "effective" teaching. Despite these challenges, most hiring committees want information on an applicant's teaching effectiveness.

Limited empirical research exists on the evaluation of teaching effectiveness in tenure-track hiring. Existing work, though informative, is dated (Bruff, 2007; Meizlish & Kaplan, 2008), based on anecdotal evidence (e.g., Lang, 2010), or focused on preparing specific teaching documents (e.g., teaching philosophy statements). Our study builds on previous work (Bruff, 2007; Meizlish & Kaplan, 2008) by providing updated information on the academic job market, considering additional "evidence" of teaching effectiveness, and increasing the range of academic disciplines included.

Our session aims to provide participants with data to address the following questions: 1) What relevant information do committees request to assess teaching effectiveness and how do they evaluate such information? and 2) How can CTLs best help job applicants prepare teaching materials?

## Session Activities

(5 mins) Fact or Fiction? To surface misperceptions, participants will respond to true/false questions about evaluating teaching in the hiring process. We'll provide the "correct" answers to these questions throughout the presentation using data from our study.

(5 mins) Study Design. We conducted a nationwide survey of hiring chairs from 10 disciplines advertising tenure-track positions for Assistant Professors in Fall 2018. Survey respondents were identified using online job advertisements posted during a 4-week period. Questions examined the importance of teaching in academic hiring decisions as well as what documents are used to evaluate teaching and how they are evaluated.

(10 mins) Results and Recommendations. Study results indicate that teaching statements are still a metric for assessing teaching effectiveness and they are more frequently requested now than in 2008. Respondents provided recommendations for writing a competitive teaching statement (e.g., include examples of specific teaching methods and reflections on teaching experiences). Additionally, 37% of hiring committees used diversity and inclusion statements to evaluate teaching effectiveness, though why they were requested and how they were evaluated during the hiring process varied across institutions. In addition to sharing data about these specific documents, we'll also share the overall study results and discuss variations by discipline and institution type (e.g., research, teaching, etc.).

(15 mins) Moderated Q&A/Discussion. What are the implications of this study for CTL work, in general, and specifically with respect to Diversity and Inclusion Statements? Additional questions (collected through a Google Form) will follow.

As a cross-institutional research team, this work supports The POD Network's values of collaboration and evidence. We hope the results of this study will increase equity by bolstering CTL's efforts to make the academic hiring process more transparent to future job applicants.

### Reviewer 1 (Comments to Proposal Authors)

The results of this study will be of great interest to all graduate students and postdocs on the job market! I look forward to attending this session. You may want to incorporate how this will benefit a diverse group of applicants.

### Reviewer 2 (Comments to Proposal Authors)

Timely and important topic - sounds like a great session!

### Reviewer 3 (Comments to Proposal Authors)

This sounds awesome. I'm super excited to hear about this project and the results. I love the idea of using research talking to hiring committees to better inform how we advise folks to write their teaching statements. This makes so much sense to me. I think the plan to have the POD participants talk about the results and implications is just what should be done at this conference.

### Prompts for Your Consideration

1. What's missing from these reviewer comments, if anything?
2. How might you reframe these reviewer comments to explicitly reflect The POD Network's values of equity, collaboration, and evidence?
3. What other comments do you believe would help the authors push their work forward? Is there anything in the reviewer feedback that does *not* help the authors improve their proposed session?

### Notes

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# PROPOSAL B

## Title

Advocating for Equity and Inclusivity in the Remote Teaching Shift

## Abstract

The coronavirus pandemic exacerbated already existing inequalities all over the world, including in higher education. In the rapid shift to remote instruction, how did you support faculty to attend to issues of equity and diversity? What challenges were revealed? What practices were effective? Did you navigate tensions between equity and inclusion priorities and finance-related administrative pressures? What did you learn from the shift to remote instruction that will assist you in prioritizing equity and inclusivity at your institution moving forward?

## Proposal

Building inclusive classrooms, decolonizing the curriculum, and diversifying the student body, faculty, and staff are high priorities for many institutions. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated already existing inequalities everywhere, including in academia. In a recent Chronicle of Higher Education Forum "Fixing Higher Ed's Inequities in a Time of Crisis," Anthony Abraham Jack (*The Privileged Poor*, 2019) noted that the clearing out of campuses was both "an eviction notice and a pink slip" for many students. Although teaching and learning changed for everyone, some students also lost access to stable housing, food, and income when their colleges closed. A quiet place to study, reliable computers, a predictable schedule, and stable internet access disappeared. Already-high anxiety levels rose, as did family responsibilities. Disability accommodation plans needed adjusting and support networks dispersed.

Educational developers helped lead their institutions towards more equitable and inclusive practices during this time. Because we often "lead from the middle," we have had to guide faculty development while also maintaining our institutions' focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion -- goals sometimes complicated by financial pressures and concerns that we should replicate face-to-face teaching as closely as possible. As a result, we have adopted a variety of direct and indirect strategies to advocate for the primacy of questions of access, equity, and inclusion.

In this session, we invite participants to share experiences of supporting equitable and inclusive teaching during the shift to remote teaching. How did you support faculty to attend to issues of equity and inclusivity? What challenges were revealed?

We also want to leverage this moment in order to make a lasting impact on equity and inclusion priorities at our institutions. What did you learn that will assist you moving forward? What opportunities for institutional transformation lie ahead, and what do you need to do this work?

Outcomes: Participants will:

- Reflect on and learn from the equity and inclusivity challenges of this year;
- Generate ideas for prioritizing equity and inclusivity moving forward;
- Gain a network of colleagues engaged in similar efforts.

## Session Activities

Exercise: Participants identify their own experiences with supporting equity and inclusion during the rapid shift to remote teaching.

## Discussion Topics

Online & Hybrid teaching: What are key priorities when emphasizing equity and inclusion in courses designed for temporary remote learning?

Organizational development: How do we "lead from the middle" on equity and inclusion during pandemic conditions? What can we take from this experience to help lead our institutions going forward?

Integrative discussion: We will capture discussion highlights and remaining questions in a shared document;

Exercise: Participants identify next steps for when they return to their home campuses;

## Resources

Facilitators will provide a shared folder with readings, resources, and workshop models.

This proposal furthers POD Network's mission of supporting inclusive teaching and facilitating communities of practice among educational developers. By connecting emerging equity and inclusion challenges to our work as both educational and organizational developers, it speaks to both intentional connections and building community; and inclusion and accessibility.

### Reviewer 1 (Comments to Proposal Authors)

I love this proposal. It is organized and clearly explicates what the outcomes are and why they are important. Connecting emerging equity and inclusion challenges to our work is vitally important and I think your looking back/looking forward approach will not only be useful but motivating.

### Reviewer 2 (Comments to Proposal Authors)

This is a timely discussion due to the inequities that have been highlighted and acutely exposed during the shift to remote instruction. This session offers a roundtable discussion that provides the opportunity for rich dialog. The shared documents reinforce continued collaboration following the session.

### Reviewer 3 (Comments to Proposal Authors)

This is an interesting and important topic. It is one that all educational developers should engage in. I would like to see a bit more of it tied to the scholarly literature about equity and inclusion, as well as teaching in online/hybrid models. Given the format, find a creative way to get participants talking and sharing ideas at the beginning.

### Prompts for Your Consideration

1. What's missing from these reviewer comments, if anything?
2. How might you reframe these reviewer comments to explicitly reflect The POD Network's values of equity, collaboration, and evidence?
3. What other comments do you believe would help the authors push their work forward? Is there anything in the reviewer feedback that does *not* help the authors improve their proposed session?

### Notes

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## Turning Ineffective & Negative Reviews into Constructive Feedback

The following reviews are composites of past reviewer feedback. Please read the sentences below and then, rewrite the sentence in a way that is constructive.

1. The topic is important but I wonder how original and innovative the approach is. The structure of the session is detailed but seems very standard. I am unsure whether the proposal would add to existing literature and procedures, as other proposals I have read bring more new perspectives.

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2. I struggle with this proposal. While it could be an interesting one to attend, I see a major issue with it - the time posts add up to 30 minutes, but you are requesting a 60-minute session. It's hard for me to assess the value of the session or the activities with that unresolved issue.

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3. My one caveat is to be careful when talking about learning styles. While people surely have learning preferences, the concept of learning styles is not well supported by empirical evidence, so be careful to not lose your audience on that point.

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4. Your citations are old, and includes so much unnecessary background information. The proposal has limited scholarly reference that supports or analyzes your approach, nor contextualizes the issues addressed by the workshop. These are significant weaknesses. In the section "inclusive strategies" I expect to read about resources that will enable POD members to participate equitably, irrespective of their internet connection, hearing, etc. Your response in this section makes me think that you have not thought enough about this aspect.

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5. I think this is very helpful to learn about the barriers and resistance they faced in their particular context, but it is only one case at a specific type of institution so I worry about how they could advise those at different institutions when there are so many other variables at play.

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## Reviewer Training Quiz

1. The POD Network's values are (select one answer):
  - a. Equity, Evidence & Sustainability
  - b. Access, Inclusion, & Collaboration
  - c. Collaboration, Equity, and Evidence
  
2. Answer True or False to the following statement: Each category in the rubric has received a rating of three; the reviewer's overall recommendation for the proposal should be "accept with reservations".
  
3. The intention of a constructive review is to (select the most accurate answer):
  - a. Strengthen and improve the work of the author
  - b. Be clear and insightful
  - c. Build a stronger POD community for everyone to flourish
  - d. Help the field of educational development move forward
  - e. All of the above
  
4. Answer True or False to the following statement: Most people have good intentions and do not want to cause harm when providing feedback.
  
5. Answer True or False to the following statement: People may develop biases for or against an individual, a group, or a belief.
  
6. What are the three types of microaggressions (select one answer):
  - a. Microinsults, microassaults, and microinvalidations
  - b. Microassaults, microfinances, and microputdowns
  - c. Microminimizations, microassaults, and microabuses
  
7. The most common rater errors are (select the correct answer):
  - a. First Impression Error & Similar-to-Me-Effect Error
  - b. Leniency Error & Halo Effect Error
  - c. Central Tendency & Leniency Error
  - d. Strictness Error & First Impression Error
  
8. The reviewers who are most helpful to authors (select the most accurate answer):
  - a. Focus on the most important, substantive issues in their feedback
  - b. Balance critique with positive comments
  - c. Become passionate about the topic and share their enthusiasm
  - d. Vary their ratings to help session coordinators make more informed decisions
  - e. A and B only
  - f. All of the above

# Unpacking Proposals - Sample Responses

Disclaimer: These sample responses provide a lens for discussing the characteristics of possible comments on proposals. They are NOT intended to be templates, models, or even suggestions of how a review should be written.

## PROPOSAL A

1. Remember that you will not be there to explain your comments to readers, so clarity and directness are important. Make sure you communicate everything you want to say concretely and avoid using language that could make the reader think that there were things “left unsaid.”
  - Reviewer 1’s comment is generally well framed and balances positive comments with critique. The feedback is likely to be more helpful to the authors if the reviewer were to clarify what they meant by “diverse” group of applicants”. It is presently unclear what the authors should incorporate (i.e., how their work applies to job applicants from diverse institutional types, historically marginalized applicants, non-White applicants, etc.).
  - Reviewer 2’s comment lacks substantive feedback. The phrase “sounds like a great session” might be perceived as though the reviewer is unsure of whether the session will be great or *IS* great.
  - Reviewer 3’s comments are overly personal and casual (i.e., “sounds awesome”, “super excited”, “makes so much sense to me”, and “folks”). The feedback should be stripped of these personal qualifiers and reframed more succinctly. One such way of doing so is: This session is evidence-based and engaging. The study’s results and implications are highly transferable to all CTLs and educational developers. I’m particularly motivated to learn how the study’s findings will inform our hiring committee practices on how we should better advise applicants on preparing teaching philosophy statements and diversity and inclusion statements.
2. Proposals should reflect The POD Network’s values of equity, collaboration, and evidence. Think about how reviewer comments can reflect these values explicitly while maintaining focus on the merits of the proposal.
  - Two major strengths of Proposal A are that it uses research-based evidence and is highly collaborative. Reviewers may also want to make a more direct connection to the POD Network’s value for equity and inclusion: The proposal uses evidence-based work to inform how CTLs can support faculty at different points in their careers, from the job market through mid-career, and from senior status to leadership positions. The cross-institutional membership of the research team and the session activities the author’s have proposed are strong examples of collaboration. The format of the session, with participants discussing the results and implications of what is being presented upholds the POD Network’s commitment to promoting equity and collaboration.

3. What other comments do you believe would help the authors push their work forward? Is there anything in the reviewer feedback that does *not* help the authors improve their proposed session?
  - Reviewers could suggest that it may be interesting to discuss how the study's results and implications inform our thinking on how to better support job applicants newer to educational development and those whose voices are typically underrepresented in educational development.

## PROPOSAL B

1. Remember that you will not be there to explain your comments to readers, so clarity and directness are important. Make sure you communicate everything you want to say concretely avoid using language that could make the reader think that there were things "left unsaid."
  - Reviewer 1 seems clearly passionate about the session as conveyed in the language they used in their feedback i.e., "love" and "motivating". The use of extra verbs in the reviewer comments are distracting and may convolute the intention of the feedback (i.e., "explicates", "important" x 2, and "vitality"). Overall, the feedback could be more direct and succinct while also expressing the reviewer's enthusiasm for the session.
  - Reviewer 2s feedback is clear and carefully constructed. It focuses on the substantive issues in the proposal, addresses session methodology and format, and connects to the POD Network's values of equity and collaboration well.
  - Reviewer 3s feedback is concise and relatively well crafted. The positive comments could be better balanced with the critique. It is generally not useful to receive feedback that a proposal is interesting and important without qualifiers.
2. Proposals should reflect The POD Network's values of equity, collaboration, and evidence. Think about how reviewer comments can reflect these values explicitly while maintaining focus on the merits of the proposal.
  - Reviewer 1's feedback could be more direct and demonstrate a more specific connection to the POD Network's values. Here is one example: This proposal is well organized and clearly articulates how the authors will leverage the roundtable format to better understand how emerging equity and inclusion challenges have informed and continues to inform the work of CTLs and educational developers. The looking back/looking forward approach is likely to engage and motivate attendees well. This session furthers the POD Network's values of collaboration by striving to build intentional networks and communities of practice around topics of inclusion and accessibility.
  - Reviewer 3s feedback can be slightly amended to illustrate a more direct connection to the POD Network's value for evidence and collaboration: This proposal is an important topic for all educational developers. Scholarly literature about equity and inclusion, as well as teaching in online/hybrid models would further strengthen the proposal. The authors may want to brainstorm creative ways to engage participants in sharing their ideas at the beginning of the roundtable session.



## **Negative Reviews Into Constructive Feedback**

1. Problematic Review: The topic is important but I wonder how original and innovative the approach is. The structure of the session is detailed but seems very standard. I am unsure whether the proposal would add to existing literature and procedures, as other proposals I have read bring more new perspectives.

*Suggested Reframe: The session activities are detailed and exhibit a wide range of possibilities for engaging participants (cite examples). Scholarly literature in the areas of x, y, z would strengthen the proposal. The approach (state specific approach) seems appropriate, adding content on x would better illustrate how the approach is innovative in the field of educational development and a fresh perspective for the POD community.*

2. Problematic Review: I struggle with this proposal. While it could be an interesting one to attend, I see a major issue with it - the time posts add up to 30 minutes, but you are requesting a 60-minute session. It's hard for me to assess the value of the session or the activities with that unresolved issue.

*Suggested Reframe: There is a lack of information in the proposal about x, y, z. The session outlines 30-minutes of content; it would be helpful to understand what other activities or discussion questions will be presented in the 60-minutes so as to paint a fuller picture of the session's content.*

3. Problematic Review: My one caveat is to be careful when talking about learning styles. While people surely have learning preferences, the concept of learning styles is not well supported by empirical evidence, so be careful to not lose your audience on that point.

*Suggested Reframe: The inclusion of scholarly evidence around learning styles would strengthen the proposal.*

4. Problematic Review: Your citations are old, and includes so much unnecessary background information. The proposal has limited scholarly reference that supports or analyzes your approach, nor contextualizes the issues addressed by the workshop. These are significant weaknesses. In the section "inclusive strategies" I expect to read about resources that will enable POD members to participate equitably, irrespective of their internet connection, hearing, etc. Your response in this section makes me think that you have not thought enough about this aspect.

*Suggested Reframe: What is the current scholarship to support your approach and to contextualize the issues of x and y in the workshop? You might consider the work of (input suggestions). Beyond the principles of Universal Design, what approaches and strategies will you incorporate to enhance participant inclusion and session accessibility?*

5. Problematic Review: I think this is very helpful to learn about the barriers and resistance they faced in their particular context, but it is only one case at a specific type of institution so I worry about how they could advise those at different institutions when there are so many other variables at play.

*Suggested Reframe: The barriers you have described and the examples of your institution's resiliency amidst these barriers is particularly powerful and inspiring. Strengthening the implications section of the proposal, i.e., how the lessons learned can be applied to different institutional contexts or professional contexts, such as for Center Directors, would increase the applicability and transferability of this work.*

## Quiz Answers

1. The POD Network's values are (select one answer):
  - a. Equity, Evidence & Sustainability
  - b. Access, Inclusion, & Collaboration
  - c. Collaboration, Equity, and Evidence

**Answer: C. The POD Network's values of collaboration, equity and evidence can be accessed [here](#).**

2. Answer True or False to the following statement: Each category in the rubric has received a rating of three; the reviewer's overall recommendation for the proposal should be "accept with reservations".

**Answer: False. An average score of 3 should be considered an accepted proposal. Accept with reservations must have a rating of 2 in one of the rubric themes. A proposal with multiple 2s and/or a 1 should be designated as reject.**

3. The intention of a constructive review is to (select the most accurate answer):
  - a. Strengthen and improve the work of the author
  - b. Be clear and insightful
  - c. Build a stronger POD community for everyone to flourish
  - d. Help the field of educational development move forward
  - e. All of the above

**Answer: All of the above**

4. Answer True or False to the following statement: Most people have good intentions and do not want to cause harm when providing feedback.

**Answer: True. Members of the POD community typically want to uplift the field of educational and organizational development by providing helpful and constructive feedback to their peers.**

5. Answer True or False to the following statement: People may develop biases for or against an individual, a group, or a belief.

**Answer: True. Biases are a disproportionate weight in favor of or against an idea, or thing; they can be innate or learned.**

6. What are the three types of microaggressions (select one answer):
  - a. Microinsults, microassaults, and microinvalidations
  - b. Microassaults, microfinances, and microputdowns
  - c. Mincrominimizations, microassaults, and microabuses

**Answer: A. The three types of microaggressions are microinsults, microsassaults, and microinvalidations. See Sue, D.W., & Spanierman, L. (2020). *Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.**

7. The most common rater errors are (select the correct answer):
- First Impression Error & Similar-to-Me-Effect Error
  - Leniency Error & Halo Effect Error
  - Central Tendency & Leniency Error
  - Strictness Error & First Impression Error

**Answer: A. The two most common rater errors are First Impression and Similar-to-Me-Effect. The first is the tendency to make an initial favorable or unfavorable judgment about the proposal and then ignore subsequent information that does not support this impression. The Similar-to-Me Effect is the tendency to more favorably judge proposals perceived as similar to yourself and/or your scholarly work.**

8. The reviewers who are most helpful to authors (select the most accurate answer):
- Focus on the most important, substantive issues in their feedback
  - Balance critique with positive comments
  - Become passionate about the topic and share their enthusiasm
  - Vary their ratings to help session coordinators make more informed decisions
  - A and B only
  - All of the above

**Answer: E. Proposal reviewers who focus on the most important and substantive issues when writing comments, and do so with positive and balanced perspectives are most helpful to the author. Reviewers who become passionate about the proposal run the risk of bias because they may let their own research agenda and interest dominate their lens, inhibiting their ability to provide constructive feedback. Reviewers should strive to vary their ratings both within and across proposals to indicate where a proposal is strongest and what aspects could be improved; reviews are not driven with the intention to help session coordinators with their decision making.**