School of Education and Lifelong Learning

Reflective Peer Observation Handbook
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Reflective Peer Observation

Reflective Peer Observation in the UWA School of Education and Lifelong Learning is designed as an opportunity for continuing professional development related to teaching, learning and assessment.

It is not designed to evaluate academic staff or pass judgement on their teaching. It is independent of any process related to appraisal or performance.

The aim of Reflective Peer Observation is to benefit:

- **the person observed** - through developing reflective practice. If staff choose, they may also use participation in the scheme as evidence of their own professional development for training courses, professional bodies, etc.

- **the observer** - through reflection on the session observed and its relation to their own practice.

- **the students** - through the continuous improvement of teaching and learning at UWA.

The member of staff being observed is in control of the process, including

- deciding what aspects of their teaching they would like feedback on
- what session the observer will visit
- the record made of the reflective discussion after the observation
- whether the record is kept
- whether the results of the process should be shared with anyone (eg to disseminate good practice)

The aim of the discussion after the observation is to promote reflective practice. For this reason, the person observed makes their own notes of any outcomes, learning points, action points etc. The observer makes notes of their own learning from the process. Any record made of the discussion is not passed to anyone else, but remains with the members of staff concerned.

Confidentiality and Code of Practice

1. Reflective Peer Observation is intended to serve the professional development of the one observed.
2. All staff involved (both as observer and observed) should be enabled to learn and develop from the process.
3. The one observed will retain control over the way outcomes of the process are reported, including whether aspects can be disseminated for the benefit of colleagues.
4. Both parties will respect the confidentiality of all information gathered during the process.
The Reflective Peer Observation process

The programme Director for your area will allocate pairs, or ask staff to form pairs of your choice.

Contact your observation partner to discuss the focus of the observation and make arrangements.

Carry out the observation at an agreed time.

Meet to reflect on the observation.

Inform your programme director by e-mail that you have met and carried out an observation.

Complete the anonymous feedback form.

See page 5
Checklist for Organising the Observation

See page 6
Guidelines for Observations and Feedback

See page 7
Reflecting on the Observation

See page 8
Evaluation of the Reflective Peer Observation process
Checklist for Organising an Observation

1. What does the person observed want to gain from the process?

   How does the person observed hope to use feedback from the observation?
   
   e.g. for general professional development
   
   to tackle a particular issue
   
   to trial a new approach
   
   to evidence professional development

   What aspects of teaching and learning would the person observed like feedback on?
   
   a particular teaching method or approach?
   
   lecturing or presentation style?
   
   interaction with students?
   
   the approach to a particular subject area?
   
   how resources are used in their teaching?

   any other aspect of teaching or learning?

   You might consider using a proforma for teaching observations which is already in use in your programme area, if the person being observed finds this useful.

2. What is the context of the observation?

   Are any of the teaching methods / course content new to the person being observed?

   Are there any particular issues / difficulties relating to this course or group of students?

   What documentation would be useful for the observer before the visit to the session?
   
   e.g. Course outline
   
   Course aims
   
   Session plan
   
   Student handbook
   
   Student information on assignments and coursework
   
   Course handouts

3. How will the observation session be organised?

   Which session would it be most helpful for the observer to visit?

   How will the students be informed of the nature of the observation?

   Where will the observer sit and will they take notes?

4. Are there any health and safety issues the observer should be aware of?
Guidelines for Observations and Feedback

The observer is not required to complete a written report or proforma of the observation, unless the person observed requests this.

The focus of the feedback session is discussion and reflection on the issues identified. The person observed might choose to make a record of the discussion for their own use.

During the observation the observer should

- Arrive before the beginning of the session
- Be discreet and not draw attention to her/himself during the session
- Respect the confidentiality of both students and the tutor observed
- Take a professional approach to the observation, noting positive aspects of teaching and learning as well as suggestions for improvement

After the observation the observer should

- Reflect carefully on the session observed before giving feedback to the one observed
- Consider the aims which were discussed before the observation and ensure that the tutor observed receives feedback focused on these aims
- Use questions and the sharing of experience in the feedback session to help the tutor observed to reflect on their own development
- Give ideas and suggestions sensitively and constructively
Reflecting on the Observation

The observer is not required to complete a written report or proforma of the observation, unless the person observed requests this. The focus of the feedback session is discussion and reflection on the issues identified. The person observed might choose to make a record of the discussion for their own use.

The role of the observer is to help the person observed to reflect critically on the issues identified before the observation. The observer should also take time in the session to reflect on anything they have gained from the process, such as ideas for their own practice.

The following questions are a framework for guiding the reflection:

How did the person observed feel the session went in relation to the agreed areas for observation?

Using the areas for reflection below, are there particular aspects of the session on which the person observed would like feedback?

Are there any other comments, ideas or suggestions which the observer would like to give?

In the light of this discussion, are there any changes which the person observed would like to make?

Does the person observed want to take further action such as identifying new resources; sharing their ideas, etc?

What has the observer learned from the process?

Areas for reflection

1. **Teaching Characteristics:** Preparation, selection of aim/objectives, statement of aim and learning outcomes. Selection and organisation of content. Planning. Choice of teaching/learning methods

2. **Presentation:** Beginning class, introduction, continuity with other sessions, students’ prior knowledge. Clarity of presentation. Pace. Attitude to subject matter. Use of appropriate reinforcement. Ending the session - summary, future work etc.

3. **Technique and Aids:** General apparatus - board. OHP, use of handouts. Question and answer technique. Other evaluation procedures, class management, instructions to students.

4. **Student Responses:** General class atmosphere, level of participation, attention and interest. Student attitude and ability to carry out classwork. Were learning problems identified and overcome? Awareness of individual needs. Attitude to students.

5. **General:** Was effective communication achieved? Was there good student - teacher rapport? Were the objectives achieved? Appropriateness of teaching/learning methods.

Please e-mail your Programme Director to confirm that an observation has taken place.
Evaluation of the Reflective Peer Observation Process

Please complete this form after you have both been observed and acted as an observer. Please send it via internal mail to the Staff Development Coordinators.

The aim of gathering this feedback is to ensure that peer observation is meeting the needs of staff, and to identify any improvements which can be made to the process.

The evaluation form is anonymous. Please tick the relevant statements, and feel free to give more detailed information if you wish.

A. As the person observed

Did the observation lead to any of the following:

- Confirmation of the effectiveness of your teaching practice
- Help in identifying improvements to your teaching practice
- The development of innovations in teaching and learning
- Help in tackling particular issues or difficulties
- A useful exchange of views with the colleague observing you
- Identification of further training or development
- Identification of further resources to improve teaching and learning

Other:

Please add any other information as required by attaching it to this document.

Did you feel satisfied with the way the observer carried out the observation and gave feedback?

- Yes
- Some reservations
- No, there were some aspects which were not satisfactory
B. As the observer
Did you gain any of the following while acting as an observer:

Ideas for improvements to your own teaching practice:

    Please specify:

A useful exchange of views with the colleague you observed

    Other:

C. Joint comments (observed and observer)

Are there examples of good practice in the teaching session?

Please specify if possible.

Is the observed teacher willing to disseminate the good practice to the rest of the School?

If the observed agrees with the dissemination of this good practice, a signature will be needed.

If the observed doesn’t agree with disseminating this good practice, the Reflective Peer Observation remains anonymous.

Signature …………………………………………………………………

Name: …………………………………………………………………