

Making the most of Peer Review of Teaching



Start small

Concentrate on one small area of your teaching or subject delivery that you feel could be improved or is providing challenges for you. Beginning small allows you and your peer to develop a good partnership (Shortland, 2010) where both are comfortable with each other and enables you to achieve an outcome alongside your other responsibilities.

Decide what aspect(s) of your practice you'd like to work on

Face-to-face teaching such as lectures, tutorials, and/or workshops can be reinvigorated along with the online aspects such as LearnJCU site structure, videoconference sessions, discussion forums, and learning resources (written, audio, video) and activities.

Plan well

Take the time to reflect on your teaching and to think about what you would like to achieve, and to identify some of the barriers which might affect your practice. Set some goals and take the time to discuss this with your peer, so that you have a shared understanding.

Look outside your discipline for a peer

If possible partner with someone outside your discipline, This can help to put and keep the focus on you and your goals not the discipline content.

Value diversity

Being individuals we bring different values and experiences to our interactions. This diversity can be a valuable resource that can help us understand the diversity of our student cohort, their experiences and expectations.

Establish your 'ground rules'

Ensure that you and your peer understand the details of the observation, including what, how, when, criteria and expectations, so that you can operate effectively as a partnership to support each other.

Keep the relationship personal and the feedback positive

Make meetings visual (face-to-face over coffee or video conference). This will help to develop the relationship and enable a more positive environment for discussing the feedback and opportunities for improvement.

Be open, supportive and collegial

Peer observation works best when the feedback is honest and transparent and both partners feel free to acknowledge their feelings, while being open to the message through a shared discussion of experiences and solutions enabling forward movement (Shortland, 2010).

Reflect on learning and plan for improvement

At the end of the process reflect on what you have learned and the strategies you have discussed with your peer. From this, develop an implementation plan which should also include any professional development activities you might need to undertake to achieve your goals.

Do it regularly

The benefits of peer observation are not restricted to a single instance, in this ever-changing world, learning is a life long journey in which much can be learned and applied. Your best approach is to make peer-to-peer support a regular tactic in your professional development toolkit.

Shortland, S. (2010) Feedback within peer observation: continuing professional development and unexpected consequences, *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 47(3), 295-304. doi: 10.1080/14703297.2010.498181.