

Topic stream: B. Good practice

Submission type: Presentation

Submission title:

From Peer Observation to Peer Support for Teaching: A collegial underpinning to professional development.

Abstract:

Peer observation, review and support for teaching practices are amongst the most simple yet powerful ways in which teachers can enhance and reflect on their own practice. However, many staff members may feel reluctant to engage with peer observation exercises if they are participating as a response to institutional policies, completing a 'tick-box' exercise, or are being judged as part of an audit or quality performance review. Gosling and O'Connor (2009) would term this an 'evaluative' approach to peer review. They argue that a 'collaborative' model is a more helpful and supportive approach to peer review exercises. This presentation explores this model, termed Peer-Supported Review, in more detail. A collaborative, peer-supported review approach values professional autonomy, control of the topic being reviewed, and, crucially, it moves away from relying on observation as the only method of review. The traditional focus on the observation of the teacher delivering a lecture or a seminar no longer reflects the varied teaching methods of HE. Many modules are now being delivered online, in small workshops, in laboratories or out at field sites, and many teaching activities are conducted by staff other than lecturers. A peer-supported approach is much more inclusive about who can participate, what is actually being reviewed, and through what review method. Drawing on findings from consultations with current staff members, this presentation will consider why this approach is suited to the values of ENU. In response to these staff views and the current research, members of DLTE and other colleagues have developed an online Peer Support for Teaching tool, using Moodle. The second half of this presentation will showcase this tool, with the opportunity to ask questions about its application to staff's everyday teaching and professional development.