UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

Peer Observation of Teaching

Directed observation option 2

What to do/look for when observing a peer's teaching or reflecting on your own teaching

One way of carrying out peer observation is to adopt a directed approach. This is good for those with less experience of observing teaching, and may take various forms, including:

- A checklist of pre-determined questions or global categories, for example see: ESCalate (http://www.escalate.ac.uk/resources/peerobservation/04.html) and The University of Nottingham (http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/sedu/peerobs/checklist.php)
- A form with a tick list of criteria and/or open categories, such as the form provided here (which is designed with lectures and seminars in mind)
- Focus on a particular issue, for example use of visual aids, question techniques, pace and timing, interaction patterns with / between students.

You do not have to use the form given here if you prefer to use a different one, or if you have agreed to focus on a specific area. However, you should agree on your approach **in advance** of the observation session, and if necessary, source or prepare your own checklist or observation categories.

If this approach to peer observation is new to you, or you want to know more, go to http://www.prodait.org/approaches/index.php

See also Directed Observation options 1, 3, 4 and 5.

Note: The current (June 2005**) University Guidelines on Peer Observation of Teaching** state that '**All forms of teaching activity** should be subject to observation' (section 3), so you can interpret 'teaching' in its broadest sense, to include not only lectures and classroom teaching, but seminars, research and professional supervision, online tutoring, lab supervision …

The University Guidelines (section 2) also state:

'Enhancement of an individual's teaching performance is always the primary purpose of peer observation of teaching'

- The process should be such that the observer has an opportunity to identify good practice from the observee, and that particularly good practice can be disseminated in the Department/School or beyond.
- Self-evaluation and formative feedback are normally confidential to the observer and observee.
- Observation should primarily consider the delivery of teaching, rather than the content.

You can view the Guidelines in full at: http://www.ppd.bham.ac.uk/policy/cop/peerguide.htm

You will also need a copy of the peer observation report form, available from http://www.ppd.bham.ac.uk/policy/cop/peer.htm

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL
This part to be completed by the observer before / during / after the observation session

School of _____

Peer Observation of Teaching

Observer record of a Teaching Session

Name of lecturer / tutor	Name of observer
Module Title:	Degree programme / year of study:
Topic/Title of session and type of activity:	Date:
Number of Students present:	Level/Year of Study:

Comment / take reminder notes on the following aspects of the session:
Preparation and Planning These comments might be made by inference from how the session went, and/ or preferably as a consequence of the pre-session meeting
Start of the session
Explanation of the topic/session material

© Staff Development Unit, University of Birmingham
(Adapted from HEFCE Assessors Form, updated October 2005)

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL
This part to be completed by the observer before / during / after the observation session

Presentation of the session
Student participation
Finishing the session

Queries discussion points and comments to be raised during the debriefing / follow-up session

This part to be completed jointly by both participants, after the session and post-observation discussion have taken place (although section A may be completed beforehand).

School of _____

Peer Observation of Teaching

Lecturer / tutor record of an observed teaching session

Name:	Name of observer
Module Title:	Degree programme / year of study:
Topic/Title of session and type of activity:	Date:
Number of Students present:	Level/Year of Study:

A. BEFORE THE SESSION

What are the aims of the session? What do I intend to do and how does it relate to the rest of the course/module?
What are the learning objectives for this session? What do I want the students to achieve? By the end of the session, the students should have learnt/know/be able to do the following.

This part to be completed jointly by both participants, after the session and post-observation discussion have taken place (although section A may be completed beforehand).

Rationale Why I am doing it this way. How the student group/background/experience has impacted my choices. On which educational theory/ideas from the programme, advice from colleagues, feedback from students, feedback from previous observations, I am basing my practice.

B. AFTER THE OBSERVATION SESSION: REFLECTION

What do I feel went well? Why did it go well? How could I extend this element of my teaching to other sessions / courses / interactions with students?
On reflection, what do I feel could have gone better? Why do I think it did not go as well as hoped / expected? Is there anything I try doing to help this type of event go better in future?
If there are some elements apparently outside my control, who might be able to influence these, and how?
Any other comments?