Tutorial observation literature survey

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revised 21/3/17

Notes:

Added publications on observations (not peer).

Two additional summaries at the end:

- Tutorial observation (not peer observation)
- What should ALs get out of observation of tutorials?

Annotated bibliography included below. I have included a star (⭐) next to the most useful papers.

I have also summarised as I went along (see end of document).

I have tried to concentrate on practicalities in implementing peer observation.

I have also tried to identify themes likely to come up in peer observation which may help with interpretation (coding) of qualitative results at a later date).

Any notes in green are things I thought useful for evaluating OULA, so not relevant to your project!

Papers not yet located are marked △

Annotated bibliography

Baeten and Simons (2014) Marlies Baeten, Mathea Simons (2014) Student teachers' team teaching: Models, effects, and conditions for implementation Teaching and Teacher Education 41 (2014) 92e110

Bell (2001) △Bell, M. (2001) Supported reflective practice: a programme of peer observation and feedback for academic teaching development. *International Journal for Academic Development*, *6*(1), 29-39.Perceptions of participants - anxiety

Bell and Cooper (2011) Maureen Bell & Paul Cooper (2011) Peer observation of teaching in university departments: a framework for implementation http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1360144X.2011.633753

Bell and Mladenovic (2008) △ Bell, A., & Mladenovic, R. (2008) The benefits of peer observation of teaching for tutor development. *Higher Education*, *55*(6), 735-752.

Bell and Thomson (2016) ⭐Bell, A. and Thomson, K. Supporting peer observation of teaching: collegiality, conversations and autonomy, Innovations in Education and Teaching http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14703297.2016.1212725 Successful peer-observation requires: conversations, and linking formal professional development with informal conversations.

Bennett and Barp (2008) Shirley Bennett & Donatella Barp (2008) Peer observation – a case for doing it online, Teaching in Higher Education, 13:5, 559-570, DOI: 10.1080/13562510802334871 Peer observation in asynchronous online teaching. Partly relevant since new technology requires pedagogic change, but not necessarily helpful in designing a peer observation scheme. See also Swinglehurst et al (2007)

Blackmore (2005) Jacqueline A. Blackmore (2005), A critical evaluation of peer review via teaching observation within higher education, International Journal of Educational Management, Vol. 19 Iss 3 pp. 218 - 232, http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/09513540510591002

Brown et al (1993) Brown, S., Jones, G. and Rawnsley, S. (1993) Observing teaching, SEDA Paper 79, Staff and Educational Development Association, Birmingham. Describes a range of approaches to observing teaching, also includes proforma.

Byrne et al (2010) Byrne, J., Brown, H., & Challen, D. (2010). Peer development as an alternative to peer observation: a tool to enhance professional development. *International Journal for Academic Development*, *15*(3), 215–228. Used focused conversations to foster development and encourage sharing of experience. Developed community of practice. Approach used by Harper and Nicolson (2013).

Carroll and O'Loughlin (2014) Conor Carroll & Deirdre O'Loughlin (2014) Peer observation of teaching: enhancing academic engagement for new participants, Innovations in Education and Teaching International, 51:4, 446-456, DOI: 10.1080/14703297.2013.778067

Chamberlain et al (2011) John Martyn Chamberlain, Meriel D'Artrey, Deborah-Anne Rowe (2011) Peer observation of teaching: A decoupled process, Active Learning in Higher Education, Vol 12, Issue 3, pp. 189 - 201 DOI: 10.1177/1469787411415083

Cooper (2015) Cooper D. G. (2015). The Lesson Observation On-line (Evidence Portfolio) Platform. Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 40(1). http://dx.doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2015v40n1.5

Cosh 1998 ⭐ Jill Cosh (1998) Peer Observation in Higher Education -- A Reflective Approach, Innovations in Education & Training International, 35:2, 171-176, DOI:10.1080/1355800980350211 Looks at the participants' perceptions of peer observation. Training needed in observation skills and giving feedback.

Cove and Lisewski (2001) △Cove, G. and Lisewski, B. (2001) *Peer observation for teaching: code of conduct in peer observation of teaching: taking it beyond surveillance,* University of Salford. Code of conduct for tutorial observation

Courneya et al (2008) ⭐ Carol-Ann Courneya, Daniel D. Pratt, John Collins (2008) Through what perspective do we judge the teaching of peers? Teaching and Teacher Education 24 (2008) 69–79 Observers often have preconceived ideas about what constitutes 'excellent' teaching; also the tendency to 'look for themselves' in others teaching.

Darling-Hammond (2013) Darling-Hammond, L. (2013). *Getting teacher evaluation right: What really matters for effectiveness and improvement*. New York: Teachers College Press. Available from

https://books.google.co.uk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=fj8SBQAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&ots=5o0 mcKycK9&sig=_yI2y98rugNM0hjsMYozZhVrZUw&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false

Donnelly (2007) ⭐ Donnelly, Roisin (2007) Perceived Impact of Peer Observation of Teaching in Higher Education International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, 2007, Vol.19(2), p.117-129. Used a dialogue model.

Dray (1997) Susan M Dray (1997) Structured observation: practical methods for understanding users and their work context, Proceeding CHI EA '97 CHI '97 Extended Abstracts on Human Factors in Computing Systems Pages 182-183, doi>10.1145/1120212.1120333 Different context - this is about observation of users to aid in development of systems. However, it does look at structured observation using 4 techniques including naturalistic observation, referencing the Sage publications (in folder).

Gosling (2001) Gosling, D. (2001) *Guidelines for peer observation of learning and teaching, Advantages and principles of peer observation*

Gosling (2002) ⭐ Gosling, D. (2002) Models of Peer Observation of Teaching. Learning and Teaching Support Network, Generic Centre. Categorises peer observation: 'an evaluative model with a focus on quality assurance, a developmental model used in initial training, and a collaborative model which aims to improve teaching through reflection, dialogue and innovation.' (quote from Jones and Gallen, 2015).

Gosling (2009) ⭐ A new approach to peer review of teaching. *SEDA paper 124*, Chapter 1.

Fullerton (2003) Observation of Teaching, in Handbook for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, ed. Heather Fry, Steve Ketteridge, Stephanie Marshall, Psychology Press https://books.google.co.uk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=-909T4JBBiEC&oi=fnd&pg=PA226&dq=teaching+observation&ots=CZp2tZkfI9&sig=aPWDApy 6ai3MDRUFBKshE0yNf_M#v=onepage&q=teaching%20observation&f=false includes example proforma for observation. Good review of practice of tutorial observation at that time.

Hammersley-Fletcher and Orsmond (2004) △ Hammersley-Fletcher, L., & Orsmond, P. (2004) Evaluating our peers: is peer observation a meaningful process? *Studies in Higher*

Education, *29*(4), 489-503. Wider context - how the ethos of the institution//department influences use of peer observation (review).

Harford and MacRuairc (2008) Judith Harford, Gerry MacRuairc (2008) Engaging student teachers in meaningful reflective practice, Teaching and Teacher Education 24 (2008) 1884–1892

Harper and Nicolson (2013) ⭐Harper, Felicity and Nicolson, Margaret (2013). Online peer observation: its value in teacher professional development, support and well-being. International Journal for Academic Development, 18(3) pp.264–275. Peer observation in languages in the OU. Overall, the experience was positive with participants feeling more confident and more willing to experiment. Mentions professional friendships and 'flexible communities of practice'. Results may be subject specific and it's not known whether this could be extended to different subjects or across disciplines.. Report anecdotal evidence of a more authoritarian approach in online rooms than in face-to-face. The medium encourages this.

Hatzipanagos and Lygo-Baker (2006a) Stylianos Hatzipanagos and Simon Lygo-Baker (2006) Teaching observations: promoting development through critical reflection Journal of Further and Higher Education Vol. 30 , Iss. 4, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03098770600965425

Hatzipanagos and Lygo-Baker (2006b) Stylianos Hatzipanagos and Simon Lygo-Baker (2006) Teaching Observations: A Meeting of Minds? International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, Volume 17, Number 2, 97-105 Nice summary of observation models.

Hendry et al (2013) Graham D. Hendry, Amani Bell & Kate Thomson (2013) Learning by observing a peer's teaching situation http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1360144X.2013.848806

Holliday (2012) Holliday, T (2012) Evaluating the Effectiveness of Tutoring: An easier Way

Hubball and Clarke (2011) Hubball, H. and Clarke, A. (2011) Scholarly approaches to peer-review of teaching: emergent frameworks and outcomes in a research-intensive university, *Transformative Dialogues: Teaching and Learning Journal*, 4. Available from: https://www2.viu.ca/integratedplanning/documents/TD437_HubbalClarke_Peer_Review.pdf 10 year study, looking at peer review as a way of gathering evidence for tenure, promotion etc. So very much evaluation and a very 'academic' approach. Extensive review of the

literature pre-2011, particularly that relevant to research universities. Context is broad: institutional level and includes analytics and broader assessment of teaching. Probably worth a second look.

Iqbal (2013) △ Isabeau Iqbal (2013) Academics' resistance to summative peer review of teaching: questionable rewards and the importance of student evaluations, *Teaching in higher* Education, 18, 5 http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2013.764863. Notes that observees don't take much notice of peer review unless it is clearly linked to promotion. This is in a research-intensive University and so may not be relevant to the OU where emphasis is more on teaching.

Jarzabkowski and Bone (2006) △ Jarzabkowski, P., & Bone, Z.(1998) A 'how-to'guide and checklist for peer appraisal of teaching. *Innovations in Education and Training International*, *35*(2), 177-182. Looks at how peer observation is implemented

Jones and Gallen (2015) ⭐ Jones, Mark H. and Gallen, Anne-Marie (2015). Peer observation, feedback and reflection for development of practice in synchronous online teaching. Innovations in Education and Teaching International (Early view). Open Research Online - a research publication from The Open University Distinguish between technical competence and practices to develop effective learning. Note that in OULA we have consciously aimed to develop good pedagogic practice as much as developing participants' technical competence. Paper explores peer observation as a tool to share good practice, based on collaborative model (Gosling, 2002). Based on observation of TG tutorial in physical science.

Knight et al (2007) Knight, P., Tait J., & Yorke, M. (2007) The professional learning of teachers in higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*, *31*(3), 319-339 Considers informal learning as staff development. Notes that ALs surveyed in 2004 valued conversations in social learning.

Kuit et al (2001) Kuit, J.A., Reay, G. and Freeman, R. (2001) Experiences of reflective teaching *active* learning in higher education Vol 2(2): 128–142

Lomas and Kinchin (2006) △ Lomas L., & Kinchin, I. (2006) Developing a Peer Observation Program with University Teachers. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, *18*(3), 204-214. Example of peer review as a means of developing staff.

Luo 2011 Luo, Heng. (2011) Qualitative research on educational technology: philosophies, methods and challenges. International Journal of Education 3.2 (2011). Global Reference on the Environment, Energy, and Natural Resources.

Martin and Double (1998) ⭐ Graham A Martin & Jeremy M Double (1998) Developing Higher Education Teaching Skills Through Peer Observation and Collaborative Reflection, Innovations in Education & Training International, 35:2, 161-170, DOI:10.1080/1355800980350210 Based on peer observation in face-to-face sessions at Bradford. Looks at practicalities of using peer observation. Includes details of how to do the observation, what to record etc. They note that the presence of the observer changes the dynamic of the session (face-to-face)

McMahon et al (2007) ⭐ Tim McMahon , Terry Barrett & Geraldine O'Neill (2007) Using observation of teaching to improve quality: finding your way through the muddle of competing conceptions, confusion of practice and mutually exclusive intentions, Teaching in Higher Education, 12:4, 499-511, DOI: 10.1080/13562510701415607 Models of implementing peer observation.

Nicolson and Harper (2014) ⭐ Nicolson, Margaret and Harper, Felicity (2014). Online Peer Observation: An Exploration of a Cross-Discipline Observation Project. International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, 26(2) pp. 251–259. Extends earlier work by Harper and Nicholson (2013) beyond languages to MCT. Contrasts experience of language tutors and MCT tutors (see Table 1). Gives a nice summary of previous research and the wider context of social learning.

O'Leary (2013) O'Leary, M (2013) Developing a national framework, Project report for UCU Report on survey of UCU members, so summarises the experience of 'being observed' well.

Quinlan (2002) △ Quinlan, K. M. (2002). Inside the peer review process: How academics review a colleague's teaching portfolio. Teaching and Teacher Education, 18, 1035–1049.

Robinson (2008) Stephanie Robinson (2008) Using a strategy of 'structured conversation' to enhance the quality of tutorial time, Journal of Further and Higher Education, 32:1, 59-69, DOI: 10.1080/03098770701781457 May have some information about how to observe

tutorials. Note, though that this is more concerned with observing the students than the tutor.

Robinson (2010) Robinson, S. (2010) Peer observation of teaching: Barriers to successful implementation 2010 Occasional Papers on Learning and Teaching at UniSA – Paper 11 http://w3.unisa.edu.au/academicdevelopment/what/documents/2010/Robinson.pdf

Sandt (2012) Fred-Ole Sandt (2012) Peer Observation Action Research Project, School Leadership & Management, 32:4, 355-373, DOI: 10.1080/13632434.2012.712511

Schmidt (2001) Hans Schmidt (2011) Communication Patterns that Define the Role of the University-Level Tutor, Journal of College Reading and Learning, 42:1, 45-60, DOI: 10.1080/10790195.2011.10850347

Schuck et al (2008) Schuck, S., Aubusson, P. and Buchanan, J. (2008) Enhancing teacher education practice through professional learning conversations. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 31, 215–227.

Shortland (2004) Shortland, S. (2004) Peer observation: a tool for staff development or compliance? *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, *28*(2), 219-228.

Shui-fong (2001) Shui-fong Lam (2001) Educators' opinions on classroom observation as a practice of staff development and appraisal, Teaching and Teacher Education 17 (2001) 161}173

Smith et al (2014) Smith, MK ; Vinson, EL ; Smith, JA ; Lewin, JD ; Stetzer, MR (2014) A Campus-Wide Study of STEM Courses: New Perspectives on Teaching Practices and Perceptions, Cbe-Life Sciences Education, 2014 Dec 1, Vol.13(4), pp.624-635

Sullivan et al (2012) Sullivan, Peter B ; Buckle, Alexandra ; Nicky, Gregg ; Atkinson, Sarah H (2012) Peer observation of teaching as a faculty development tool, BMC medical education, 04 May 2012, Vol.12, pp.26

Swinglehurst et al. (2007) △ Swinglehurst, D., Russell, J., Greenhalgh, T. (2008) Peer observation of teaching in the online environment: an action research approach. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, *24*(5), 383-393. Peer observation in asynchronous online

learning. See also Bennett and Barp (2008). They note that before 2001, peer observation was a tool in quality assurance rather than staff development.

Tenenberg (2016) Josh Tenenberg (2016) Learning through observing peers in practice, Studies in Higher Education, 41:4, 756-773, DOI: 10.1080/03075079.2014.950954

Trujillo et al (2008) Jennifer M. Trujillo, Margarita V. DiVall, Judith Barr, Michael Gonyeau, Jenny A. Van Amburgh, S. James Matthews, and Donna Qualters (2008). Development of a Peer Teaching-Assessment Program and a Peer Observation and Evaluation Tool. American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education: Volume 72, Issue 6, Article 147. doi: 10.5688/aj7206147

Truuvert (2014) Toomas Truuvert (2014) Enhancing tutorial learning experiences: a programme to develop sessional-tutor teaching skills by raising awareness about learning, Studies in Higher Education, 39:1, 20-33, DOI:10.1080/03075079.2012.690731

Washer (2006) Peter Washer, (2006) "Designing a system for observation of teaching", Quality Assurance in Education, Vol. 14 Iss: 3, pp.243 - 250

Weller (2009) Weller, S. (2009) What Does "Peer" Mean in Teaching Observation for the Professional Development of Higher Education Lecturers? International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, Volume 21, Number 1, 25-35 Identifies problems in 'peer' observation, including perception of what a 'peer' is. Weller argues that there are benefits in the differences between observer and observee.

Wu and Looi (2012) Wu, Longkai ; Looi, Chee - Kit (2012) Agent prompts: scaffolding for productive reflection in an intelligent learning environment.(Report) Educational Technology & Society, Jan, 2012, Vol.15(1), p.339(15)

Yiend et al (2012) △ Jenny Yield, Saranne Weller and Ian Kinchin (2012) Peer observatio of teaching: the interaction between peer review and developmental models of practice. *Journal of Further and Higher Education, 38* http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2012.726967. Description of one lecturer's experience in a teaching observation cycle (observation and being observed). Noted a change in this lecturer's awareness and ability to evaluate colleagues' teaching.

Peer Observation

There are various models of peer observation, including models for evaluation and quality assessment and collaborative models (Jones and Gallen, 2015; Gosling, 2002). For peer observation to 'work' as a means of effective staff develop, developing and sharing good practice, the peer relationship is important and must be genuine, creating a collaborative and supportive atmosphere (Jones and Gallen, 2015; Harper and Nicolson, 2013). Harper and Nicolson (2013) following Byrne et al (2010) and Donnelly (2007) seem to have achieved a supportive environment (community of practice) which allowed ALs to develop. Need to work out how they managed this!

Peer observers need guidance/training in skills in both observation and giving feedback (Cosh, 1998).

Examples of how to set up peer observation

Jones and Gallen (2015) organised pairings so that no person observed the same person who observed them. Some observations were made on different modules. Harper and Nicolson (2013) used a similar fluid model.

Martin and Double (1998) also describe how to organise observations.

Design of peer observation scheme

Clarification of peer relationship (Harper and Nicolson, 2013). For example, Type-A model (McMahon et al, 2007), tutor being observed has control over the process: arranging the session etc. Jones and Gallen (2005) described collaborative nature in online briefing (but this didn't seem to work).

Aims and details of the observations needs to be communicated clearly (Jones and Gallen; 2015).

Some guidance in observing (Cosh, 1998). See also Martin and Double (1998).

Some guidance required in giving feedback (Cosh, 1998). Receiving feedback as participants can feel anxious about being judged (Cosh, 1998; Bell 2011). However, for the process to be useful feedback must not be superficial (Gosling 2009). Jones and Gallen (2015) note that participants were not well briefed on this and some still viewed the process as evaluation.

Consider how the observer will be introduced to students (Jones and Gallen, 2015).

Time for organisation and record-keeping. Martin and Double (1998) advise recording actions and events during the tutorial. This could be achieved in online rooms by saving whiteboards. Jones and Gallen (2015) using a handwritten time line.

Jones and Gallen (2015) used three stages following Martin and Double (1998): pre-observation meeting, observations, feedback meeting.

Evaluation of observations. Jones and Gallen (2015) used structured phone conversations with open-ended questions. Participants were asked to reflect on their reflective notes beforehand (not all participants had kept notes!). Conversations were recorded and transcribed. Harper and Nicolson (2013) also used stages of observation and feedback.

Knight et al (2007) note that the most effective staff development for ALs is 'intentional non-formal professional learning', relevant to OULA. Jones and Gallen (2015) therefore recommend an informal process of peer observation.

Issues

Observation process

Anxiety associated with both observing and being observed (Cosh, 1998; Bell, 2001; Courneya et al, 2008; Hammersley-Fletcher and Orsmond, 2004; Jones and Gallen, 2015). Jones and Gallen attributed this in part to lack of cues in Elluminate. Harper and Nicolson (2013) also report initial anxiety.

Can be difficult to arrange because of availability (Harper and Nicolson, 2013).

Possible effect of knowing/not knowing the peer. Jones and Gallen (2015) found this could work both ways, citing issues with respect, shared values, anonymity. Harper and Nicolson (2013) succeeded in creating a community (Wenger, 2000). An approach based on dialogue, collaboration, sharing seems to better foster a community of practice. Examples of this approach include Harper and Nicolson (2013). Byrne et al (2010), Donnelly (2007).

It's difficult to get away from the perception of being judged. The collaborative nature needs to be emphasised early (Jones and Gallen, 2015) and the peer relationship explained (Harper and Nicolson, 2013; McMahon et al, 2007). Swinglehurst et al (2008) observed that peer observation becomes judgmental when it involves specific evaluation.

How objective is the observer? Preconceived ideas about what is good teaching and tendency to rate practices close to own highly (Courneya et al, 2008; Quinlan, 2002)

Observees were not particularly inclined to take notice of feedback (Jones and Gallen, 2015). However, Harper and Nicolson (2013) seemed to achieve a more supportive atmosphere. Iqbal (2013) also comments on lack of engagement with peer-review process, but context (research-intensive university) is not necessarily relevant to OU)..

Observees didn't feel able to innovate, even though this was mentioned in the initial briefing (Jones and Gallen, 2015). In contrast, Harper and Nicolson (2013) report that participants were more willing to experiment as a result of peer observation (and increase in confidence). Climate should encourage risk-taking (Donnelly, 2007).

Peer observation works very well in the final activity in OULA. This is possibly because the participants have worked together for a couple of weeks in OU Live and in forums, creating a community of practice. Also, the ethos of the module encourages innovation so participants take the opportunity to try something new. OULA has been quite successful in creating a safe space for innovation and observation.

Observers are more likely to reflect on their own practice (Cosh, 1998; Hammersley-Fletcher and Orsmond, 2004; Jones and Gallen, 2015).

Observers are likely to evaluate practices which are close to their own practice positively. Things outside what the observer would normally do are reviewed less favourably (Courneya et al, 2008; Quinlan, 2002). Problems in methodology make outcomes less useful, more anecdotal (Hammersley-Fletcher and Orsmond, 2004).

Reflections on peer observation in practice

Observations changes the group dynamic, including how the tutor is perceived by the students (Martin and Double, 1998; Jones and Gallen, 2015). Could be avoided by using tutorials of online session (Jones and Gallen, 2015) but there are possibly ethical issues because students will not be aware that they are being observed.

Observation resulting in change in practice. Jones and Gallen (2015) identified changes around making more use of the features of Elluminate to make sessions more interactive. It seems that observation seeds ideas and gives participants confidence to try things. It helps to see activities in action. Jones and Gallen (2015) note that this is a superficial result, focusing on the technical competence as much as pedagogic. Overall, Jones and Gallen (2015) felt that participants were not likely to innovate.

Harper and Nicholson (2013) also distinguished between gaining confidence in the technology and gaining confidence in the pedagogic use of the technology.

Observation resulting in reflection on practice. Jones and Gallen (2015) note that participants were new to the technology and so has a 'provisional approach' to their practice. Their immediate concern was to develop confidence and affirm practice. Harper and Nicolson (2013) also note that participants in their study have reverted to 'novice level'.

Both Jones and Gallen (2015) and Harper and Nicolson (2013) suggest that the success of their respective projects could have been because there was an immediate need for feedback, reflection, ideas etc. This is because the technology was new (novice users etc) and there was a lack of pedagogically oriented training opportunities.

Jones and Gallen (2015) anticipate that this aspect of self-refection will become less important as practice becomes established. This is possibly borne out by Nicolson and Harper (2014) who suggest that in the later phase involving MCT tutors, there was more confidence in the technology.

Harper and Nicolson (2013) report several anecdotal examples of shifts in perspective of the teachers.

Harper and Nicholson (2013) report gains in self-confidence, in belonging, in reflection and widening perspectives and in aspirations.

Observations as evaluation

Hubball and Clarke (2011) advocate evaluation over peer-review and argue that the approach should be rigorous.

Tutorial observation (not peer observation)
added March 2017

I went back to look at teaching observation as evaluation, quality monitoring etc, rather than as peer support.

If the observer is not a true 'peer', there may be benefits from a different perspective (Weller, 2009). Peer observation can include bias, with convergence to a norm (Nicholls, 2001 cited in Hatzipanagos and Lygo-Baker, 2006b).

As in peer observation, the observee should have control of the process and be able to choose the observer (e.g. Shortland, 2004 and references therein).

Much of the literature advocates a four-stage process (e.g. Shortland, 2004):

- initial discussion
- observation
- discussion meeting
- written record

Before the initial discussion. Fullerton (2003) suggests that the observee should provide the observer with some context for the session e.g. objectives, how it fits in with the programme of study, any handouts. My comment: but this could also be seen as checking up on the planning of the session

Purpose of the observation must be clear to both parties (Harper and Nicolson, 2013).

For the observation itself, Fullerton (2003) recommends a proforma and includes links to other examples (e.g. Brown et al. 1993).

There is the opportunity for bias in observations. There is a tendency for observers to 'look for themselves' in the teaching of others and they may have preconceived ideas about what is 'excellent' teaching (Courneya et al 2008). This could be an unconscious bias.

There should also be a discussion after the session (Fullerton, 2003). Fullerton (2003) considers the follow-up discussion to be the most important aspect (sharing approaches, values, experiences etc). However, it must be approached sensitively (as discussed under peer-observation above). Written feedback with no discussion should be avoided (Bell and Thomson, 2016).

The views of observees are summarised well in the report by O'Leary (2013). Observation as assessment of teaching is not popular, however more people see it useful in developing teaching skills. Peer observation is considered most beneficial, when focused on professional learning and development. It's a snapshot of someone's teaching, not the whole story.

As concluded for peer observation, the observation needs to be carefully set up to reassure the observee that the observation is to help their development and not for assessment.

In summary, for observation to be useful to those observed:

- it should be 'sold' as part of development rather than assessment.
- Even though the observer is a line manager, it really should sit within 'peer review', but see Weller (2009) for a discussion of what a 'peer' is.

- It must be remembered that it's a snapshot of the observee's teaching.
- it needs to be set in context: the observer should know more about the purpose of the sessions observed and its place in the programme of study.
- There must be some discussion afterwards, an exchange of views.

Observees should also observe (Bell and Thomson, 2016).

Tutorial observation should only be part of any overall assessment. Any assessment of teaching should include other aspects of the observee's role, e.g. students' views, self-reflection, in addition to tutorial observation. In the OU, this should include feedback on assignments, written feedback in emails, forum support etc.

Similarly, observation shouldn't be in isolation, but as a package of support, discussion and community of practice (Bell and Thomson, 2016).

What should ALs get out of observation of tutorials?
added March 2017

Advantages

1. Pedagogical

- Gain an awareness of pedagogy (Truuvert, 2014).
- This could extend to learning more about online pedagogy.
- Shift in perspective (Truuvert, 2014; Harper and Nicolson, 2013).
- Ultimately, improving teaching (Bell and Thomson, 2016).

This requires a dialogue with the observer (Harper and Nicolson, 2013; Fullerton, 2003; Byrne et al 2010; McMahon et al, 2007).

2. Meeting a need

- Professional development will be especially effective if and when there is a pressing need. The main examples are:
    - New technology. For example, Jones and Gallen (2015) and Harper and Nicolson (2013) attribute the success of their peer review schemes to meeting a need for support in using new technology (OU Live) and using it effectively.
    - New role. Observation may be particularly useful for new staff.
- Needs are likely to change during a career.

3. Personal development

- Validation (Weller, 2004)
- Gain in self-confidence (Harper and Nicolson, 2013)
- Sense of belonging (Harper and Nicolson, 2013)
- Aspirations and motivation (Harper and Nicolson, 2013)

4. Evaluation

- Driven by management (Shortland, 2004)
- Possibility of bias in observation should be explored (Courneya et al, 2008)

Disadvantages

- Anxiety; feeelings of being judged
- Increased workload (Shortland, 2004)
- Availability issues (Harper and Nicolson, 2013)
- Participants may not engage with the process (Jones and Gallen, 2015; Iqbal, 2013)

- Participants may simply look for a verdict on their teaching (Hatzipanagos and Lygo-Baker, 2006b)