Peering out to peer in: Implementing a pilot peer observation program at The College

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WSU Learning Showcase, 4 December 2018
Presentation Outline

Context

Process overview

Challenges and solutions

Reflection
Organisational Structure

The College

Academic Pathways Program
- Bankstown
- Kingswood
- Nirimba

English Language
- Sydney Olympic Park
- Offshore

RTO
- Nirimba
Academic Pathways Program

- Teaching-focused institution
- Diverse student cohort
- Transition pedagogy focus
Process Overview

- Inquiry
- Consultation
- Development
- Dissemination
- Evaluation
- Implementation
Inquiry

• 2018 Staff Learning and Teaching Day
• Theme: “Making the First Year Student Experience a Success”
• Workshop under ‘reflective practice’ stream

Peer observation  Reflective practice  Enhanced teaching practice  Improved student experience

(Krause, 2013; McAlpine & Harris, 2002)
Staff Workshop

• “Peer observation: Background, benefits, barriers and brainstorming”

• Staff surveyed to determine:
  • Perceived benefits, barriers and suggestions for overcoming challenges
  • Preferred model and overall interest in participating
Summary of Results

‘Top 3’ Perceived Benefits of Peer Observation

- Exposure to different methods: 16 responses
- Supports reflective practice: 12 responses
- Improved teaching quality: 8 responses

\[ n = 29 \]
Summary of Results

‘Top 3’ Perceived Barriers to Peer Observation

Perceived Barrier

- Observer-related issues
- Teacher-related issues
- Logistical issues

No. of Responses

$n = 29$
Summary of Results

Top 5

Suggested strategies for overcoming barriers:

1. Ensure clear purpose, guidelines and expectations
2. Give ‘control’ to observed teacher
3. Provide adequate observer training
4. Implement confidentiality agreements
5. Establish collegial relationship prior to observation
Summary of Results

Preferred Peer Observation Model

- Evaluation model: 46%
- Development model: 13%
- Peer review model: 36%
- Would not want to participate: 5%

*Multi-response item; 39 responses
Process Overview

Inquiry
Consultation
Development

Baseline data
Evaluation
Implementation

Dissemination
Consultation

• Senior leadership team
• Wider College community
• Stakeholder identification
• Literature review
• Draft proposal
Process Overview

Inquiry
Baseline data

Consultation
Institutional support

Development

Dissemination

Evaluation

Implementation
Development

• Resources
  • Program guidelines
  • Confidentiality and consent form
  • Online application survey
  • vUWS site
Development

- Program templates
  - Pre-observation lesson plan
  - Observation session
  - Post-observation guided discussion
  - Self-reflection form
Development

- Training workshop
- Program structure and proposed timeline
- Giving and receiving constructive feedback
- Opportunity for participants to develop rapport
Development

- Support arrangements
  - Administrative
  - Program structure and content
  - Partner-related concerns or program outcomes
- Decision to start with a pilot program
Process Overview

Inquiry
Baseline data

Consultation
Institutional support

Development
Resources, structure

Dissemination

Evaluation

Implementation
Implementation

• Pilot program promotion
• Participant expression of interest invitation
• Training webinar
• Participant matching by senior leadership
• Logistics and staff preferences
## Pilot Program Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Characteristic</th>
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<th>(Total n=8)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Curriculum Area</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic English</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
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<td>Biological Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical Science</td>
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<td><strong>Years of Teaching Experience</strong></td>
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<td>3-5</td>
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<td>6-10</td>
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<td>11-15</td>
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<td>16-20</td>
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<tr>
<td>More than 20</td>
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<td><strong>Previous Participation in a Peer Observation Program</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>‘Top 4’ Areas of Teaching Practice for Feedback</strong></td>
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<td>(multiple-response item)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student engagement</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving students feedback</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher talk time</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Student-centred activities</td>
<td>3</td>
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Core Program Stages

Pre-observation meeting

Discuss intentions and expectations

The observation

Record observations

Post-observation meeting

Discuss outcomes; provide feedback

Adapted from McGrath & Monsen (2015)
Process Overview

- Inquiry: Baseline data
- Consultation: Institutional support
- Development: Resources, structure
- Dissemination
- Evaluation
- Implementation: Feasibility
Evaluation

• Ongoing discussion board
• Formal evaluation survey
• Focus group
Process Overview

Inquiry
- Baseline data

Consultation
- Institutional support

Development
- Resources, structure

Implementation
- Feasibility

Evaluation
- Value, impact

Dissemination
-
Challenges and Solutions

Challenge:

Multiple Campuses

Solutions:

Conduct training via webinar
Aim to match participants within same campus
Challenges and Solutions

Challenge: Matching Participants

Solutions:
- Introduce participants in webinar to establish rapport
- Allow nomination of preferred partner
- Allow nomination of preferred discipline area
- Trio option if odd number of participants
Challenges and Solutions

Challenge:

Sustainability

Solutions:

- vUWS repository of resources
- Distributed leadership:
  - Webinar recorded
  - Pilot participants as leaders for future iterations
  - Support from professional staff for administrative components
Reflection on Early Benefits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Element</th>
<th>Perceived Benefit</th>
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<tr>
<td>Semi-structured approach</td>
<td>Balance between structure and flexibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>Developmental purpose and voluntary participation</td>
<td>Supports intrinsic motivation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Autonomy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cross-discipline partnerships</td>
<td>Exposure to different teaching approaches</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Larger pool of participants</td>
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<td>Fosters collegiality</td>
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<td>Exposure to broader institution curriculum</td>
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Supporting Engagement

Teacher-led

Community of practice
Relatedness
Competence
Skill development

Self-Determination Theory

Adapted from Ryan & Deci (2000)
Peering Out to Peer in
References


Questions?