Professional Learning and Development in Schools and Higher Education 9

Judyth Sachs
Mitch Parsell *Editors*

Peer Review of Learning and Teaching in Higher Education

International Perspectives

Springer

Peer Review of Learning and Teaching in Higher Education

Professional Learning and Development in Schools and Higher Education

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Editors

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Preface

The project and this volume have benefitted from the incredible leadership of Professor Judyth Sachs, Deputy Vice Chancellor and Provost at Macquarie University. Professor Sachs is a champion of learning and teaching, collegial development and the scholarship of teaching. These three themes come together in this volume. Through luck and persistence the volume has managed to attract contributions for some of the thought leaders in these areas, including David Gosling and Mick Healey for Europe; Amy Goodburn and William Buskist from North America; Wendy Kilfoil from South Africa; and, Maureen Bell and David Spencer from Australia.

Each contributor brings a unique set of skills and vastly different perspectives to the volume. But all agree that collegial review could be a powerful force for improving teaching and thereby student learning. Yet for many lecturers the thought of having another person review their teaching is confronting. Clearly it is not review *per se* that is the problem. The academy is built on peer review. We submit journal articles in the full knowledge that someone is going to read them and decide whether they are worth publishing or not. We routinely ask for colleagues to comment on draft papers in the hope of making them better, of improving their quality. But review of teaching is another matter. There are a number of reasons for this. A commonly cited reason is anonymity. Peer review of research is anonymous; peer review of teaching is not. But notice this only applies to the blind review used by journals. It would be pretty atypical to have anonymous developmental review in research. That form of review is between colleagues. A second obvious difference is between what is being reviewed. Review of research is a review of a product; review of teaching is a review of performance. Performance is much closer to the person. Review of the product does not involve people *looking at you*. This distance between you and both the reviewer and the focus of review makes it feel less threatening; makes the reviewed feel less vulnerable. But this only applies if teaching performance is being reviewed. Review of teaching artefacts (assessment tasks, unit outline, online learning activities) is the review of products. A third difference is how confident we are in each domain. Most active researchers would consider themselves reasonably expert within their research field. This is not necessarily the case when it comes to teaching. So you recognise yourself as an expert in research, but you may not feel an expert in teaching. But you should want to become an expert in teaching or at the very least be committed to improving your teaching. The models of peer review presented in this volume are aimed at allowing you to do just that: improve your teaching. The volume is focused on *improving* the quality of teaching. It is not centrally concerned with the *assurance* of the quality of teaching.

Linking peer review too closely to quality assurance can lead to negative perception about peer review. It may lead to the perception that peer review is about surveillance, an attempt by management to control and monitor staff. Combating this perception is important if you want broad uptake of peer review Broad uptake from educators demands a model of peer review based on the development of staff, not the monitoring of staff by management. It requires that peer review is placed in a culture of mutual respect, not a culture of managerial control. The culture needs to be an open one in which we're prepared to talk about our teaching, in which we are proud to share our teaching highs but equally unafraid to share our teaching lows in the hope of making us all better teachers.

The point is to make peer review about achievement through unity. It's about all coming together in an attempt to make us all better teachers because we care about our students and we care about our their learning outcomes.

Ultimately we want this volume to improve student-learning outcomes. We want it to make us better teachers; better institutional leaders; better developers of our peers so that all of our students have a better learning experience and learn more effectively.

St Lucia
June 2013

Mitch Parsell

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Thank you to our contributors who have worked both enthusiastically and tirelessly. Their contributions are testament to the variety of ways one can successfully and sustainably support the development of ourselves as educators.

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Chapter 1
Introduction: The Place of Peer Review in Learning and Teaching

Judyth Sachs and Mitch Parsell

Introduction

At a time where accountability and transparency are dominant rallying calls from governments and students alike to improve the quality of teaching in universities globally, the language and processes of quality assurance, audit and quality enhancement are now a central element of the lexicon of both university managers and teachers. The common aspiration is to improve the quality of student learning outcomes through a systematic approach of data collection, analysis and decision-making. The challenge for universities is how to do this. This volume presents one approach that is gaining acceptance across the world, namely peer review of teaching. This monograph draws on contemporary theory and practice to provide guidance for the development and implementation of peer review of teaching. However, before proceeding, it will be useful to get a sense of where the idea for the project came from and how this monograph has taken shape.

The project about peer review in learning and teaching happened by chance. One of the authors (Sachs) was visiting the University of Hong Kong to be on a panel to allocate teaching excellence awards. During this visit Sachs gave a presentation to members of academic staff on recognising and rewarding teaching. As a result of a number of conversations the germ of an idea for a comparative international project examining peer review of teaching emerged. Upon returning to Macquarie Sachs invited a small group of interested practitioners to discuss the idea and where funds to support it might be obtained. A proposal to the then Australian Learning and Teaching Council was assembled and submitted, and funding was obtained. We had money, and now we needed to confirm that we would have two international partners. Sachs had a strong relationship with colleagues at Lund University in Sweden and

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they agreed to participate in the project. The University of Hong Kong, at the time of the visit expressed interest to collaborate. However, at that time the University of Hong Kong was undergoing a major restructure of its undergraduate curriculum and had to withdraw from the project. Not to be beaten, we contacted colleagues at the University of Pretoria in South Africa and they agreed to be the third partner. Beyond the project we have added contributors from North America and Europe.

Despite differences in detail all contributors share an underlying philosophical agreement that peer review should to be a collegial endeavour: a dialogue between partners (peers) rather than a one-way transmission of evaluative feedback. Similarly, all contributors agree that peer review should be expanded beyond peer observation and that there are opportunities for peers to contribute to better teaching beyond the lecture hall itself. As we will see, collegial review by peers can be used to improve teaching artefacts (e.g. unit outlines, assessment questions) and elements of educational design.

Peer Review of Teaching: Considerations and Challenges

It has often been said that life in classrooms and what goes on in those classrooms is one of the last vestiges of privacy. In many universities teaching remains a highly private, personal and individual activity. At its best, peer review opens the classroom to review in a safe and supporting way with a focus on improvement and professional learning. At its worst, it becomes a management tool to monitor and control the practices of teachers. The perspectives offered in this volume advocate the former, while recognising that a more widespread acceptance of peer review demands combating the latter.

There are a variety of approaches to peer review of teaching that can be mapped along the dimensions of the intention, purpose and implementation of management and its take-up and acceptance by academics. Moreover, its level of support and acceptance from administrators, managers and teachers themselves is highly disparate—some support it while others deny its usefulness. Broadly, perceptions map to national boundaries. In North America peer review is an accepted part of academic life. As we will see in the contributions from our North American colleagues they have developed impressive peer review programs that are well supported and robustly tested. In the UK, under the influence of Gosling and a number of government-sponsored initiatives, peer review has gained a firm stronghold. In Australia, peer review is neither systematically supported nor generally perceived to be a high quality developmental activity.

There are a number of reasons why peer review of teaching is not viewed positively by some academics. Perhaps the most pernicious is the view that peer review is a form of surveillance aimed at, or at the least prone to, undermining academic freedom. The view is only plausible in relation to formal models of peer review. An informal chat over coffee between colleagues on improving assessment tasks, engaging large cohorts or innovative approaches to online pedagogy is clearly not an opportunity for management to monitor or control staff. It is only ever systematically supported peer review that can sensibly be perceived as a potential instrument of managerial control. This creates something of a dilemma. On the one hand, formal, systemically supported peer review can be viewed suspiciously leading to academic staff only engaging at the most perfunctory levels. The result is a system that fails to support enhancement. On the other hand, highly informal peer review is by its very nature almost impossible for universities to systematically support. The result is piecemeal improvements that are unsustainable. One of the broad aims of this volume is to provide a middle-way that avoids both horns of the dilemma. The response that emerges is a model, or range of approaches, that can be systematically supported but is neither overly formal nor owned by management.

The contribution this monograph makes to the field is in providing answers to the question: how do you promote and sustain a systematic approach to peer review to improve teaching quality? In order to find answers to this question, especially from a quality enhancement perspective, the contributing authors examine:

- What might be the best model or models for embedding peer review into institutional practices?
- How do you ensure that peer review leads to enhancement of teaching quality?
- How can peer review be implemented across a variety of contexts inside and outside of the university?

These questions are examined through both a theoretical and a practical lens. Part I provides the theoretical foundation. It offers a general discussion of models of peer review, and examines the critical issues of communication and leadership. Part II provides the practical expression. It offers case studies to provide the reader with some concrete examples against which they can compare their own practice, together with innovative programs that have successfully extended the range of influence of peer review of teaching. The interplay between theory and practice is not merely the organising principle for the structure of the volume, but is used as a central exploratory method within many of the chapters themselves. The chapters in Part I are all informed by, and discuss to varying degrees, specific approaches to peer review. Similarly, the chapters in Part II contain often subtle discussions of the theory underlying the particular practice. The various authors provide models of good practice from North America, Europe, South Africa and Australia. This global perspective enables us to juxtapose practices that have evolved in response to very different institutional environments, cultural contexts and external pressures. The volume concludes, in Part III, with two chapters that embody the two overarching methodologies used in the volume. In the penultimate chapter, Spencer marries theory and practice in a discussion of his own experience leading the implementation of peer review systems. The chapter provides the reader with specific actionable principles for engaging academics in meaningful peer review. The final chapter provides the global perspective of five academics from three continents. It provides a penetrating and wide-ranging analysis of an array of issues relating to peer review internationally. The model of peer review that emerges from the volume is in stark contrast to review methodologies that are managerial, formal and centred on quality assurance. Rather, when you look at good practice internationally and you are mindful of the interplay between theory and practice, you find peer review that is collegial, focused on quality enhancement and relatively informal.

Structure

Theory

Part I on theory is organised around four themes which provide the conceptual scaffolding in support of peer review: namely, models of peer review, leadership and stewardship, the importance of effective communication and the necessity for a planned implementation.

The first contribution is by David Gosling. Gosling's work in the area has been highly influential and informs many of the models presented in Part II. He has previously identified three types of peer review of teaching: evaluative, developmental and collaborative. From his perspective, which is rooted in both theory and practice, the collaborative approach is the most effective because of its collegial intent and its clarity concerning purpose and outcome. Moreover, this approach is inclusive of a range of capability activities: designing, delivering and assessing teaching and learning. In his contribution to this volume Gosling goes beyond his previous defence of collaborative peer review to defend a model termed Professional Learning through Collaborative Peer-Supported Review (P-SR) that is focused on change and enquiry. Enquiry generally and the scholarship of teaching more specifically will be taken up in later chapters, especially by Kilfoil and Healey et al. Gosling also provides concrete advice on how to achieve value for individuals involved in peer review that focus on their choice and autonomy. This is a central concern of the Hitchens' chapter.

Buskit et al. describes a comprehensive, practical approach to peer review and provide detailed practical advice that can be adapted to any institution. The contribution is significant for the central place of students' feedback. In the model the traditional portion of the class lasts for the first 30 minutes after which the teacher leaves the room allowing the reviewer to collect feedback from students. This innovation provides a wealth of data for the reviewer to inform both her written report and post-observation interview. The post-observation feedback sessions are deliberately and explicitly engaging and positive, with comments based on specific observations and student commentary and avoiding broad evaluative statements. The authors argue that the most effective peer reviewers are those individuals who have (i) acquired a sound working knowledge of pedagogy; (ii) developed keen observational skills; (iii) cultivated strong reflective listening skills and sound social skills; (iv) are familiar with the teaching and learning literature; (v) are thoroughly immersed in teaching; and (vi) are keen observers.

The next two chapters are based on the same data set: interviews with academics at Macquarie on their experience with and perceptions of peer review. The authors use different methodological techniques and examine different issues. Napier et al. explore the impact of leadership on engagement with peer review. They use content and thematic analysis to examine practices and perceptions of peer review across four faculties. Ambler et al. explore communication in peer review. They allow the participants from across the entire university to speak by extensive use of quotations to underscore significant issues related to communication between university teachers.

The primary concern of Napier et al. is to investigate whether top-down support for peer review is viewed suspiciously and whether models of review that emerge from the bottom-up are more acceptable to academic staff. *Prima facie,* peer review processes with high-level institutional support would seem particularly susceptible to accusation of management attempting covert surveillance and control. Processes that emerge organically from the interests of those at the coalface would seem immune to such suspicions. Hence it would seem plausible to suppose that review processes supported by a distributed leadership group would be accepted as quality enhancement and more enthusiastically engaged with than processes or systems imposed by senior management. What emerges from the investigation is far subtler and more nuanced. It points to the importance of leaders actively encouraging a culture of learning and a collective community of practice.

Ambler et al. explore communication in the context of peer review. For many educators the thought of having another person reviewing their teaching is confronting. This is another reason why peer review of learning and teaching is not well supported. A review relationship, even when it is between peers, places the person being reviewed in a position of vulnerability. As such, if the review is to be a quality enhancement exercise then communication in peer review needs to be sensitive; the reviewer needs to recognise a review relationship as a risky relationship for the person reviewed and communicate in a way that respects this risk. Ambler et al. argue that intersubjectivity and affective experiences are instrumental in creating a climate of communication that can produce enhancement-focused peer review. This views the relationship between reviewee and reviewer as "messages" that are necessarily intertwined with the people sending them, and their meanings are inextricable from the responses of their addressees. The chapter provides an illuminating discussion of the role of space in peer review. "Space" is defined as the manner in which places are experienced through social relationships. Using this socially constructed view of space the authors examine the impact of formal (e.g. offices) and informal spaces (e.g. corridors and tea rooms) on review. Informal spaces are highly valued as they allow warm personal relationships and can be the most productive sites of peer analysis.

Hitchens discusses the process of review. He argues that although much has been written on peer review, most models fall short of a complete and practical guide for implementation. By discussing some earlier proposals for implementation and highlighting how they fall short he suggests some goals and guiding principles for a successful model, including the need for reflection, communication, choice of reviewer and the recognition of the cost of implementation. Hitchens concludes the chapter by posing six key questions: *why*, *what*, *who*, *how*, *how to report,* and *how to follow up.* The questions are framed to make peer review of teaching accessible to those who have not experienced it before. As a consequence of focussing on these questions he develops a model that is flexible and generic.

Practice

Part II presents five models of good practice. It is organised around five themes: quality assurance, distance education as an alternative model of delivery, the use of foundations programs to facilitate peer review of teaching, peer review as an integral part of departmental reviews and peer review as a whole of institution program.

Wendy Kilfoil examines peer review as a form of quality assurance, which is a significant issue in higher education in South Africa. She offers an exploratory study undertaken at the University of Pretoria (a research-intensive South African university) on peer review as quality assurance. Kilfoil argues that a quality assurance approach to peer review is not necessarily arbitrary or negative in impact and should complement a culture of collegial responsibility for quality teaching. The chapter examines a gap in the literature around why universities need to be accountable. In South Africa there are statuary requirements around which universities must comply. At a government level, the Council on Higher Education (CHE) is the statutory quality assurance body for higher education through its standing Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC). The CHE/HEQC audits Pretoria in cycles of peer review. At a university level, Pretoria University's Human Resources policy statements sets the tone for peer review as a human resources process related to performance management, probation, promotion and special awards. Interestingly, although the university's policy framework does briefly mention more formative types of peer review (mentoring, coaching and classroom observation, for instance), there is no systematic implementation of such a conceptualization of this activity. Hence, high-stakes (summative) peer review is a key element in the evaluation of teaching and research at the university and nationally. In this context, Kilfoil examines peer review as a quality enhancement strategy in a small pilot study. The key finding is that the university lacks a systematic approach to the implementation of formal and informal peer review. She argues that in order to reach successful outcomes, in a research intensive university there is the need to take a systematically scholarly approach to the development of teaching through peer review which is likely to be more valued as it would be more rigorous.

Appleby examines the challenges of implementing a program of peer review for distance programs. Peer review of distance learning has not received a great deal of attention in the literature. Appleby provides a model based on an open-source online system that promotes a scholarly approach to peer review of online learning and teaching resources suitable for distance learning. Using a case study of Think College—a private, Australian higher education provider—she examines both distance learning and online lecturing. The online educators did not know each other prior to the commencement of the peer review and were expected to observe each other teaching within, to some, a novel teaching portal. The challenge was in how collegial trust and respect, key pre-conditions for effective developmental peer review, would be built when the challenges of time and space can be seen as disadvantages. In the Distance education case, peer 'sharing' originated from a request from lecturers inhabiting the same physical office although teaching via distance mode. This posed the reverse situation: as the distance lecturers knew each other well, did that mean they wouldn't be as 'impartial' in their comments? In the case of the distance lecturers, both novice and experienced, respondents reported feeling more confident after the review cycles. The online lecturers reported feeling more confident in their own teaching and their ability to support peers in an ongoing fashion. Hence both peer review programs were a success. Appleby identifies a number of challenges including workload, lack of contact and impartiality. Interestingly, she argues that the tension between quality assurance and quality enhancement can be exacerbated in distance education because of time and distance.

Most universities offer a program to prepare their academics for university teaching. One common focus of these programs across Australia is that of developing academics as reflective practitioners. A variety of approaches and strategies are adopted towards achieving this outcome. Harvey and Solomonides describe a model for embedding peer review into a foundations in learning and teaching program. They argue that this achieves an enculturation of ongoing and sustainable reflective practice that has been identified as a 'key' and 'central' fundamental element for successful implementation. In their detailed case study of Macquarie University they argue that there is a need to move towards a critical synthesis and reflection of explicit and tacit knowledge, which they claim will enable the development of metacognitive ability and/or appropriate conceptions of teaching and learning. Significantly, it is peer review that provides a nexus between professional development, through teacher preparation programs, and developing reflective academics. This chapter provides a series of protocols and advice for implementing peer review across an entire organization. In particular the focus is on how to establish what could or should be observed; hints and tips on how to give and receive feedback; and, 'health warnings' about how to maintain the impetus and focus of peer review.

Maureen Bell teams up with Paul Cooper to describe their experience of implementing peer review across a department at Wollongong University (Australia) of which Cooper is the head. The authors identify the many benefits peer review brings. These include not only the direct benefit to the observee of the observer's objective feedback but also less tangible benefits such as the reinforcement of a collegial culture, and the opportunity of academics from diverse cultures to learn new approaches as well as to share their own traditions. They present practical guidelines for implementing a peer observation program, emphasising some key elements such as the benefit of preparatory workshops; getting participation from senior management; and integration with existing administrative protocols such as promotion processes and provide details on how to implement such a program to receive the best results. They suggest that peer review should be structured and organised, but voluntary with the option to participate at a later stage. For Bell and Cooper success at departmental level depends on clear leadership from within the department through direct participation by the Head of Department. Importantly, the process must be viewed as unbiased and objective, suggesting using a non-faculty coordinator to provide administrative support. They provide details on what to avoid focused on the need to clearly distinguish between summative peer observation policy/practice and formative programs in order to allay reservations and concerns.

Goodburn details the evolution of UNL's peer review project from a small grant-funded local program to a thriving institutional program. The program she describes is a year long, structured faculty development program that promotes educational reform at multiple levels. Participants in the program engage with the research literature in a series of group meetings and half-day retreats, and as a concrete outcome of the program produce a course portfolio that serves both formative and summative purposes. The course portfolio documents events that have occurred throughout the program, highlighting what worked and what did not, showcasing the student learning, and outlining modifications and goals for future iterations. It serves different purposes for academics at different stages of their careers. For more senior faculty, peer review often reenergizes their teaching by helping them answer those persistent questions they have about student learning. For some retiring faculty, course portfolios are a means of capturing the intellectual work entailed in years of course development and leaves a legacy to their colleagues. This contribution is significant for a very important and often overlooked reason: the program Goodburn describes has used three national instruments—The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE); the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) and the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP)—to evaluate the impact of the program on student learning and engagement.

Conclusion

The volume concludes with two chapters that combine theory and practice, and examine peer review from a deliberately global perspective.

Deriving his observations from a review of the literature, David Spencer observes that some university teachers have difficulties in engaging in peer observation of teaching as there is a view that the main stumbling block is the threatening nature of a peer observing teaching practice. Others suggest that taking a punitive approach to peer observation runs counter to the developmental and collegial underpinnings that lie at its very heart and act as a significant disincentive to participation. This chapter reviews the research on why at times peer observation suffers from a lack of engagement. Based on the author's experience in introducing peer observation of teaching to a small and large academic unit in two Australian universities, it sets out the "Ten Commandments" of a developmental model that will lead proponents to successfully engage academic staff in the establishment and maintenance of peer observation of teaching.

The final chapter is offered by five authors from four countries spanning three continents from Lund in Sweden to Melbourne in Australia. Healey et al. demonstrate that peer review of teaching at higher education institutions can mean many things to different individuals, faculties, universities and governments. In this chapter the authors cover a broad canvas, drawing upon the expertise of international academics as well as the results of studies at several different universities around the world. The result is an incisive analysis of a range of issues relating to peer review. Healey et al.

begin by exploring the wide varieties of peer review mechanisms and then focus on the central aspect of any peer review method: how to establish trust between the participants. Importantly they examine the tension between peer reviews for *evaluative* versus *formative* purposes, and provide a case study on how that gap can be closed. Healey et al. provide a scheme for how to inquire in ways that not only takes forward our collective understanding of the world but provide exemplars. Significantly, the authors argue for the scholarship to be expanded to include students. Increasingly students are being viewed as essential and active collaborators working with academics in different types of peer learning activities. The authors advocate an extended range of peer relationships that involve academics and students often working together as: pedagogical consultants and mentors, co-designers of courses, and partners in research into and strategic development of teaching and learning. This is followed by some practical advice on the usage of educational developers to help set up successful peer review programs, and suggestions for areas of training for participants. The chapter concludes with a proposal that peer review be seen as an important subject for inquiry-based scholarship.

Conclusion

To achieve the greatest benefit to both individuals and institutions requires commitment and engagement through the following interrelated elements. First, and foremost, peer review is a collaborative activity and requires an approach that brings people together in the common enterprise of improvement. Second, peer review requires strong leadership from all levels of the university—deputy vice-chancellor (academic), Dean, Head of Department and Course Coordinator. Third, peer review requires clear messages about the benefit of engaging in review and a common understanding of the approach to be implemented. Finally, it requires an understanding by all members of the university community of the complexity and nuance required to ensure that the review relationship is clear and transparent, and that different approaches can be required when review is aimed at different institutions or different levels of the one institution. The volume hopes to provide the theoretical foundations and some practical examples to enable a more informed conversation about how best to implement and sustain peer review at your institution.

Part I
Theory

Chapter 2
Collaborative Peer-Supported Review of Teaching

David Gosling

Introduction

Academics are familiar with the idea of peer review within the context of research and in quality assurance but, traditionally, teaching has not been peer reviewed to the same extent. The forms of peer review deployed in higher education may be differentiated by contrasting assumptions about the purpose or function of peer review and the implications the function has for authority and power relationships between academics. Three broad 'types' of peer review may be distinguished on this basis—'evaluative', 'developmental' and 'collaborative'. In this chapter I outline the arguments for 'collaborative review' as the most effective, and ethical, framework to support professional learning about teaching, learning and related issues such as course design and assessment.

Role of Peer Review in Higher Education

Peer review has been conceptualized as a social judgment process of individuals and their products within a defined social group (Bornmann 2008). Peer review is a key feature of self-regulation within the professions and is 'an essential component of scholarly communication, the mechanism that facilitates the publication of primary research in academic journals' (Ware 2008, p. 1). It plays a critical role in certifying knowledge and in the allocation of resources (through the review of grant applications) (Kihara 2003). Peer review is also used extensively in quality assurance processes to determine which courses are offered and to pass judgement on departments' and institutions' academic standards.

Peer review has been subject to criticism particularly in the context of determining which research proposals receive funding, which conference papers are accepted and which papers are published in peer review journals. The principle criticisms are that

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there is a lack of reliability between reviewers' judgements, it creates systematic bias in the system, and there is a lack of connection between review judgments and the quality of the reviewed work (Bornmann 2008; Ware 2011). It has also been said that peer review is inherently conservative and has a 'retrospective bias' (Kihara 2003; Ware 2011) because reviewers are typically using their existing frames of reference to judge new work, which can hold back genuinely innovative research. A 2002 metastudy in The Journal of the American Medical Association by Jefferson et al. concluded that 'Editorial peer review, although widely used, is largely untested and its effects are uncertain' (Jefferson et al. 2002).

Nevertheless peer review of research outputs continues to be supported by the majority of academics. Halsey found that 'there was general agreement that peer review is the best principle of evaluation' (1992, p. 199) and in a more recent survey Ware and colleagues found that some two-thirds of researchers described themselves as satisfied and only 12 % dissatisfied with the operation of peer review. Asked to consider specifically their last published paper, researchers overwhelmingly (90 %) said that it had been improved by peer review. (Ware 2008, p. 26).

Despite the overwhelming evidence of the value of peer review in the context of research and publication, it is a remarkable feature of higher education—until recently—that the processes relating to teaching and learning have not traditionally been subject to formal processes of peer review. This was noticed by one of the early proponents of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in the USA, Lee Shulman. He argues that, in 1993, there was no community of teachers within which ideas and experience about teaching could be exchanged. Rather, what he found was not a community of teachers, but isolation:

> We close the classroom door and experience pedagogical solitude, whereas in our life as scholars, we are members of active communities: communities of conversation, communities of evaluation, communities in which we gather with others in our invisible colleges to exchange our findings, and methods and our excuses. (Shulman 2000 (1993), p. 24)

He went on to argue that:

> For a scholarship of teaching, we need scholarship that makes our work public and susceptible to critique. It then becomes community property, available for others to build upon. (Shulman 1999, p. 16)

Shulman concluded that if teaching is to be deemed valuable then 'we have an obligation to judge' and that 'our judgements will be enacted within the disciplinary community'. This means that what he called the 'terrifying phrase' peer review must be applied to teaching (Shulman 2000 (1993), p. 25). In the USA, the success of the argument for making teaching more 'visible' has now produced a context in which peer review of teaching has become common in many routine activities at colleges and universities—for example, hiring faculty, establishing communities of practice, coaching faculty, reviewing faculty for salary increases, deciding on contract renewals, judging promotion and tenure cases, approving teaching sabbatical requests, choosing teaching award winners, doing post-tenure reviews (Chism 2007, p. 3). It is noticeable that most of these functions involve making a judgement about individuals' competence as a teacher.

In the UK teaching quality also became the subject of peer review judgements through the process known as 'Subject Review' (Harvey 2005). A feature that became particularly controversial was the evaluation of teaching quality based on the observation of teaching sessions. Many departments began to introduce peer observation of teaching in preparation for Subject Review, and as a result, in the UK, there is a tendency to associate the observation of teaching with the idea that a peer is judging the quality of the teaching observed. I will discuss the observation of teaching in more detail in the next section.

The judgements arrived at by reviewers of teaching quality have been called into question in a more fundamental way than the peer review of journal papers. Some issues derived from peers projecting their priorities on to the reviewed and some elite organizations resented having 'peers' thrust upon them (Morley 2003, p. 113). The dilemma of using peer review is well summarised by a philosophy lecturer cited by Morley who argued that peer review is valued because 'we wish to be self managing' but that there are 'endemic problems'. . .

> The fact that what appears to be a neutral and above the board process, thoroughly transparent process, in fact can turn out to incorporate judgements based on prejudice. (Morley 2003, p. 120)

Others have questioned whether it is right to assume that 'a university is first and foremost an organisation whose performance as an organisation can be observed' (Strathern 2000, p. 313). On this view, to reduce the educative process to that which is visible is inherently reductionist. The second challenge is to 'the proposition that if procedures and methods are open to scrutiny, then the organisation is open to critique and ultimately to improvement' (Strathern 2000, p. 313). These are critical issues to which I shall return later in this chapter.

A key word in the discussion of the ways in which peer review has been used in all the contexts discussed above is that of 'judgement'. Whether the decision is to publish a paper or to award a grant or to assess teaching quality an evaluative judgement is made by those that have been given authority to pass that judgement. It is because peer review is understood as a *judgemental* process that Morley has said:

> Peer review appears benign and collegial, but is underpinned with a set of values and hegemonies that are highly problematic. (Morley 2003, p. 112)

Chism (2007, p. 5) distinguishes between '*formative evaluations*' where teachers are provided with 'information that they can use to improve their teaching', which may be offered confidentially and can be 'informal, ongoing, and wide-ranging' and '*summative evaluations*' which are used to make personnel decisions for example, hiring, promotion, tenure, merit pay.

By differentiating between the central purposes of peer review processes, it is possible to distinguish between those forms of peer review that have evaluation or decision making as their central purpose—for example, whether to promote a staff member, to make an award or to publish a paper—and those which have professional development as their principal function. The models of peer review are shown in Table 2.1. 'Development' implies a value-laden judgement based on assumptions

Table 2.1 Models of peer review (revision based on Gosling 2005, p. 14)

Characteristic	Evaluation model	Development model	Collaborative model
Who does it and with whom? (peer relationship)	Senior staff, or chosen 'evaluators' or 'auditors' review other staff	Educational developers observe/review probationers; or expert teachers review others	Teachers/peers/colleagues
Purpose	Identify under-performance, confirm probation (tenure), appraisal, promotion, quality assurance, assessment	Demonstrate competency/improve teaching competencies; part of accredited course	Improve teaching through dialogue; self and mutual reflection; stimulate improvement
Outcome	Report/judgement	Feedback/report/action plan for improvement to teaching and learning	Analysis, reflection, discussion, wider experience, SoTL activity, improvement to teaching and learning
Status of peer review judgements	Based on authority, seniority, and/or expertise	Expert diagnosis based on experience and expertise	Peer shared understandings and perceptions
Relationship of observer to observed	Hierarchy of power/seniority	Hierarchy of expertise -expert/learner; tutor/student	Equality/mutuality. Peers share understandings and perceptions.
Confidentiality	Between manager, reviewer and the reviewee	Between reviewer and the reviewee, might include manager, or course tutor	Between reviewer and the reviewee—could be shared within learning set. Public outcomes with permission.
Inclusion	Selected staff, staff being confirmed in post, or applying for promotion, or teaching award	Staff on initial training course (eg PG Cert), staff identified as needing to improve teaching	All involved in supporting student learning
Judgement	Pass/fail, score, quality assessment, confirm tenure, or promotion	Feedback on how to improve teaching	Non-judgemental, constructive facilitated dialogue
What is reviewed?	Teaching performance, course design, learning materials, student feedback	Teaching performance, course design, learning materials.	Any aspect of course design, teaching, student learning and assessment chosen by reviewee.
Who benefits?	Institution, department	The reviewee (one way interaction)	Mutual benefits for both peers (two way interaction)
Conditions for success	Effective management	Respected 'developers' or senior staff	A culture in which teaching is valued and discussed
Risks	Alienation, lack of co-operation, opposition, resistance	No shared ownership, lack of impact	Confirms existing practice, passive compliance, perceived as bureaucratic

(whether made explicit or not) about what constitutes 'improvement' in the context of learning and teaching.

Both these forms of evaluation entail a power relationship between the one who makes the judgement and the other who is judged, or the one who is being 'developed' and the 'developer'. This raises the question: is it possible to have a form of non-judgemental peer review? If so what would this look like? Could there be a form of peer review based on *collaboration* between the parties? The possibility of this third form of peer review or peer-supported review (Gosling and O'Connor 2006, 2009) is the main subject of this chapter.

Peer Observation of Teaching

The form of peer review of teaching that has become most common in the UK and Australia is peer observation of teaching (POT). Although, as we observed above, the growth of POT was linked to TQA and Subject Review, the process was typically promoted as a developmental tool (Brown et al. 1993). A considerable literature has grown up supporting the use of peer observation as a valuable tool for the development of teaching (Bell and Mladenovic 2008; Bell 2001, 2005; Hammersely-Fletcher and Orsmond 2004, 2005; Kemp and Gosling 2003; Kinchin 2005; MacKinnon 2001; Martin and Double 1995; McMahon et al. 2007; Washer 2006). There are many advantages to using the observation of teaching sessions as a basis for a dialogue about teaching. Providing that both parties are committed to valuing the process and trust each other, then, the immediacy of the shared experience of the teaching session, the direct observation of students' responses, the opportunity to ask questions which promote reflection—all contribute to the value of POT.

> In reflective practice the teacher is in control of the outcome, indeed it is the teacher who sets the process in motion. The observer is seen as an 'enabler', someone who helps and supports the development of the teacher. The enabler aids the reflection process by describing observations, offering feedback and asking questions. (McGill and Beaty 1995, p. 3)

And yet there have always been some reservations about peer observation. As Peel, (2005, p. 498) says 'the potential discomfort of POT should not be underestimated'. Cosh (1998) referred to some 'concerns' about 'the value to the observed, implicit judgements being made, and the effect on students, or the dynamic of teaching, of having observers in the room' (p. 175). Cosh raised a more fundamental issue:

> Given the subjective nature of notions of good teaching, different learner preferences, and the lack of proof of how students learn most successfully, it seems that none of us are qualified to make judgements on the teaching of our peers, and that our judgements are, therefore, of questionable value to anyone other than ourselves. (Cosh 1998, p. 172)

In response to the suggestion that notions of good teaching are 'subjective', it is possible to point to a large literature on what constitutes 'good teaching', (Biggsand and Tang 2007; Chickering and Gamson 1987; Kember, 2007). However, as Chism has pointed out, 'the literature on teaching effectiveness reveals a complex and often contradictory record of claims' (2007, p. 50) and many of the characteristics of good teaching use ‘high inference’ terms. For example, Ramsden’s list of the ‘key principles of effective teaching’ all require high levels of inference. For example, ‘making material interesting to students and providing clear explanations’, ‘concern and respect for students and student learning’, ‘appropriate assessment and feedback’, ‘clear goals and intellectual challenge’ (Ramsden 2003, pp. 96–103). Because these are ‘high inference’ terms, observers may agree that these are desirable characteristics of good teaching, but the judgements they make about some observed teaching behaviour can still differ. I have found that participants in workshops, when shown a video of a teaching session, make widely differing judgements about the ‘quality’ of the teaching observed. This supports the view that many staff are ill-equipped, without further training, to evaluate and provide effective feedback on the effectiveness of others’ teaching (Cosh 1998; Keig 2000).

Another range of issues concern staff responses to institutional POT schemes. Shortland (2004) has suggested that staff often engage in POT in order to comply with institutional policies rather than through a real desire to transform their practice. These problems typically occur when peer observation is introduced as an institution-wide policy. As Peel says ‘the normative aspects of POT raises a raft of philosophical issues about whether making POT compulsory would reduce its potential for supporting individuality and empowerment.’ (Peel 2005, p. 501). Although staff can be required to undertake a task (such as observing others or being observed) they cannot be required to benefit from the task, and arguably, as soon as a development task becomes a requirement its potential for development is reduced. When POT schemes include a standard ‘feedback form’ there seems to be an even greater likelihood that it will quickly become what has been called a ‘tick-box exercise’ driven more by compliance than a desire to improve teaching and learning.

Strathern’s concern about the reductionist tendencies inherent in focusing on what is visible or observable applies specifically to the observation of teaching. Placing the observed teaching session at centre stage emphasises performativity and takes attention away from other important aspects of teaching and learning. Keig (2000) suggests that observation of teaching has limited scope because it ignores the fact that students’ learning depends on a blend of tutor-led, tutor-directed and student-directed learning activities. Good course design, including reflection on goals, academic level and learning outcomes, as well as valid and reliable assessment of students and timely feedback, are critical for effective teaching and learning, but are not visible in a teaching session. Much of higher education is now ‘blended’, using combinations of distance and face-to-face teaching. POT has to be radically reconsidered to accommodate this form of delivery (Bennet and Barp 2008; Swinglehurst et al. 2008; also see the discussion by Applebee in this volume). This suggests a need to move to a model of peer review of teaching, learning and assessment that is more flexible and more inclusive of the complete range of activities involved: designing, delivering and assessing teaching and learning.

In most forms of observation of teaching the observer gives ‘feedback’ to the teacher who has been observed. In the traditional feedback model it is assumed that the reviewer is in a position to make a judgement about what is done successfully and what is less successful and is required to offer constructive advice to the teacher about ways of improving their teaching. Guidance has traditionally been offered on ways of giving feedback sensitively, but the underlying reality of the power wielded by the observer remains. It is this fundamental realisation about feedback which causes many staff to be anxious, and ultimately alienated, by the process of peer observation, though it is fair to say that many welcome 'feedback' and feel strong enough in their professional identity to accept criticism.

These limitations of POT suggest that is worth exploring the possibility of a form of peer review of teaching which (1) is not necessarily focused on the observation of teaching sessions (2) allows for collaborative dialogue between peers rather than one giving 'feedback' to the other and (3) is non-judgemental (though nevertheless based on a discussion of evaluative judgements). In the next section I elaborate on the principles underpinning collaborative peer-supported review.

Professional Learning through Collaborative Peer-Supported Review

The discussion of POT above is premised on the assumption that the goal of the activity is to promote professional learning that will contribute to the development of teaching and learning. Any proposal for ways of promoting professional learning must take into account what is known about how professionals learn and how that learning can impact on their professional behaviour. Professional development in universities has often been based on 'event based' learning—that is workshops, away days, courses, conferences and so on. While these are useful for promoting new ideas and practices, participants often have difficulty applying the learning to their workplace for a variety of structural and motivational reasons (Blackwell 2003).

There is good evidence to suggest that much of the most effective learning occurs in non-formal situations at the workplace (Brookfield 1985; Eraut 2000), not least because it is socially located or 'situated learning' (Knight and Trowler 2000; Wenger 1998). But there is nothing automatic about work-based learning. Knight et al., in their discussion of the professional learning of teachers in higher education, concluded that three conditions were necessary to have workplaces that 'evoke learning':

> Firstly, spaces need to be found for this activity, for the creation of shared meaning. Secondly, power relationships within activity systems need to encourage collegiality and participation. Thirdly, appropriate procedures and practices are needed; in higher education this is often represented by the capacious notion of 'reflection'. (Knight et al. 2006, p. 332)

The idea of peer-supported review (P-SR) has emerged as a 'space' which meets these conditions. The first important point about P-SR is that it seeks to avoid the problems with 'evaluative' and 'developmental' reviews and seeks to be based on 'collaborative' principles—while recognising that there is permeability between the three approaches (Boyd 2009, p. 34).

The key features of collaborative review are that it:

- promotes reciprocal learning
- recognises professional autonomy of all parties
- is based on dialogue, or more simply conversation
- is non-judgemental
- focuses on changing or developing professional practice
- incorporates enquiry or investigation.

The goal of collaborative review is that all participants stand to learn from the process of talking to each other about a chosen topic or issue relating to student learning or teaching problem—where 'problem' is understood to be like a research problem—a feature worth investigating (Bass 1999). They have the opportunity to learn from each other through dialogue and by investigating the focus of the review in a systematic way (reciprocal collaborative learning). The intention is to facilitate 'A non-judgemental dialogue where staff feel safe to reflect on their established practice and underpinning values' (Kell 2009, p. 38) and to develop their professional practice to supporting student learning.

Observation of teaching can still take place in P-SR schemes and in some cases seems to have remained the normal expectation (Barnard et al. 2011), but in other cases there is an active attempt to move away from the limitations (discussed above) of observation- based schemes (O'Connor and Gravestock 2009; Purvis et al. 2009). P-SR opens a wider space for learning which can include those aspects teaching and learning not accessible to observation, but which through conversation can be discussed, investigated and critiqued.

In order to create the 'space' within which collaborative reviews can occur, some parameters are typically laid down—agreed at an institutional or departmental level. These parameters, for example, might seek to define the range of topics that are regarded as relevant to a scheme aimed at developing professional knowledge of teaching and learning. Some schemes allow the staff member being reviewed to have a free choice of the aspect of teaching, learning, course development or assessment s/he wishes to review, whereas others have found that focusing on themes allows greater opportunities for post-review discussions at department and institutional level. Discussions of research would typically be excluded unless it was to discuss how research can be incorporated into teaching (Healey 2005; Jenkins et al. 2003).

In order to ensure that participants have personal agency within the P-SR process it might seem preferable for individuals to be able to choose a topic for the review. But evaluations of existing P-SR schemes suggest that staff do welcome some guidance on themes for the peer review of teaching. There may be key concerns at an institutional level—for example, internationalisation of the curriculum, feedback to students on assessed work or blended learning. Where there are agreed themes, individuals or groups can investigate related topics and bring their findings back to department seminars each contributing to increasing the collective knowledge of the department (Maguire 2009, p. 51).

Professional Conversations

Although there are variations in the details of how P-SR schemes operate (Barnard et al. 2011; Byrne et al. 2010; Gosling and O'Connor 2009) the fundamental assumption on which they are based is the same, namely that reflective practice based on dialogue is an effective form of professional development.

> Reflective practice based-dialogue, occurring in an environment of trust and mutual ownership, will help both parties 'unpack' their practises as instinctive teachers and go beyond the assumptions both take for granted in their approaches to teaching (Kell 2005, p. 10)

But are claims like this based on evidence? The value of 'dialogic engagement' is sometimes based on a vision of ways in which academics can, and should, work together, based on collegiality. This is found in the writings of scholars who are in the tradition of 'critical theory' such as (Brookfield 2005; Walker and Nixon 2004) where dialogue is linked to ideological commitments to 'liberation', democratic ways of working, re-envisioning possible futures

> It is through dialogue that the space of the possible can be worked with. Through dialogic engagement and inquiry, academic staff development may be viewed as a space of possibility, a process of becoming, understanding and engaging with teaching and learning in increasingly critical, creative and co-constructive ways—a pedagogy of possibility. (Southwood, 2013 (forthcoming))

The most common approach is to look for evidence in the form of statements made by staff who have been involved in peer review. There is good evidence that once the evaluative, or judgemental, element is removed from peer review, respondents report that they have found peer conversations 'useful' for their professional development. Purvis et al, found in their evaluation of a P-SR scheme, that '90 % of responses thought that their LTA practice had improved as a result of P-SR' (Purvis et al. 2009, p. 26). Barnard et al. quote respondents saying that peer-partnership is 'one of the most valuable tools we have to offer staff' and 'It's been really useful to have another person who is fairly impartial and supportive looking at what's going on' (2011, p. 441). Similar responses have been reported by others such as O'Connor and Gravestock (2009) and Bell and Mladenovic (2008).

Few studies have attempted to measure the 'impact' of schemes in terms of either changes to teaching behaviours or improved student learning. One of the few international studies which reviews research into the impact of educational development activities, looked at '29 faculty communities of practice, defined here as groupings of a cohort of faculty members engaged in dialogue about teaching for a semester or more.' According to Chism et al. (2013) these 'studies document solid gains for participants; some even are able to trace these to impacts on student learning.'

While there is evidence that professional conversations within the context of peer review can promote learning, there is no guarantee that teachers talking about their teaching will generate new learning. Palmer has suggested that:

> We rarely talk with each other about teaching at any depth—and why should we when we have nothing more than 'tips, tricks and techniques' to discuss? That kind of talk fails to touch the heart of the teacher's experience. (Palmer 1998, p. 11)

In contrast to the 'technicist' language of 'teaching tips' which inevitably fails to inspire or challenge, there is the type of conversation discussed by Haigh (2005, p. 14) 'about my emerging ideas' which 'have also helped ensure that they have been subject to on-going critique' and which have 'also allowed me to explore ways of articulating those ideas'. Haigh quotes Zeldin:

> Conversation is a meeting of minds with different memories and habits. When minds meet, they don't just exchange facts; they transform them, draw different implications from them, engage in new trains of thought. Conversation doesn't just reshuffle the cards; it creates new cards. (Zeldin 1998, p. 14)

To enable peer review to achieve its potential as a vehicle for professional learning, attention must be focused on finding ways of promoting dialogue between teachers that maximise the benefits to everyone involved.

Two Principles: Parity and Reciprocity

There are two important principles underpinning collaborative peer review that I would like to comment on further. The first is parity of power relations and the second is reciprocity of learning.

We may approach the first issue through a consideration of the work of Jurgen Habermas (1984) who has suggested that successful communication is that which is not distorted by imbalances of power or other blocks to open and rational discussion. When there are no distortions to communication resulting from unequal power or from differences in the participants' orientation to the communication, we can achieve what Habermas refers to as 'the ideal speech situation.' Failures to optimise communication are due to 'communication pathologies' when the intentions of the parties to the conversation fail to match each other:

> Communication pathologies can be conceived of as the result of confusion between actions orientated to reaching understanding and actions orientated to success. In situations of concealed strategic action, at least one of the parties behaves with an orientation to success, but leaves others to believe that all the presuppositions of communicative action are satisfied (Habermas 1984, p. 332).

The 'ideal speech situation' is one in which *all* the parties have an 'orientation to understanding' and are committed to rationality, openness, equality and to finding truth. In Habermassian terms, this is the way to arrive at shared truth.

> A communicatively achieved agreement has a rational basis; it cannot be imposed by either party, whether instrumentally through intervention in the situation directly or strategically through influencing the decisions of opponents. (Habermas 1984, p. 287)

Using this analysis, peer review would be seen as a learning process in which both parties (reviewer and reviewed) must be jointly engaged in a search for truth which is only achievable when the communication between peers is open to challenge from either side, and not distorted by power relations which inhibit criticism.

Power can be exercised in peer review in a number of ways. Some use their personal power deriving from a dogmatic or over-bearing manner to dominate the conversation and impose their own agenda. Difference in status deriving from seniority, age, gender or reputation can create pathologies in the discussion between individuals. Whether the power is personal or a reflection of institutional hierarchies the result can be one way conversations in which one party feels disenfranchised and disempowered. When unequal power is wielded without consideration for the other person peer review can create 'abusive power relations and bad professional practice' (Morley 2003, p. 112). It is for this reason that the principles of collaborative review must include parity between peers—at least within the peer review process (whatever may be the case outside of peer review).

Participants in the P-SR process can also be disenfranchised if the principle of *reciprocity* is not taken seriously. The potential for P-SR to be a significant opportunity for professional learning is maximised if both parties to the review process accept the space created as one for mutual or reciprocal learning. In this respect P-SR is significantly different to either an evaluative or a developmental approach to peer review (see Table 2.1). If the power relationship in P-SR is one of equality, then there is no ground for one of the parties to either pass judgement on the other, or to 'give feedback' on the basis of some assumed superiority of knowledge or experience. Both parties, acting as collaborative peers, are equally open to professional learning.

Is this realistic? Certainly it is always possible that one of the parties will know (or claim to know) more about specific aspects of the topic under discussion. The claim to knowledge may be derived from previous professional experience or study of the field (though few academics are experts in learning and teaching). On the other hand, it is equally possible that the reviewer is relatively inexperienced and does not (and would not want) to claim any special expertise. Cosh (1998), as we have seen, argued that 'none of us are qualified to make judgements on the teaching of our peers', though in practice, judgements are made all the time. However, my argument is that in P-S R the principal responsibility of the reviewer is not to provide solutions from the position of being 'the knower', but rather to ask questions that will help the staff member being reviewed to reflect on and investigate their own practice. We cannot assume that reviewers will come with 'answers' to the problems posed but rather with informed questions that will encourage a more scholarly approach to teaching. Furthermore, the reviewer needs to be open to his/her own learning through the investigative peer review process. This means that the knowledge and experience that each of the parties bring to the conversation can be shared without one assuming superiority over the other.

Implementation: Evidence from Some UK Case Studies

This section considers some of the issues arising in the implementation of P-SR from formal and informal evaluations of the case studies reported in Gosling and O'Connor (2009). However, I want to link these, largely informal, findings with wider theoretical considerations which will help us understand how the critical features of P-SR have been received.

As with any intervention aimed at enhancing teaching and learning, the reception of P-SR cannot be separated from wider contextual issues relating to organisational structures and culture. It is well known that pre-existing organisational culture has a strong influence on the 'absorptive capacity' of individuals to benefit from opportunities for professional learning.

> Prerequisites for absorptive capacity include the organization's existing knowledge and skills base (especially its store of tacit, uncodifiable knowledge) and pre-existing related technologies, a "learning organization" culture, and proactive leadership directed toward sharing knowledge. (Greenhalgh et al. 2004, p. 606).

This suggests that attention must be paid to the wider organisational culture if P-SR is to thrive. Barnard and colleagues have suggested that as well as having a peer-partnership 'toolkit' it is also important to establish the following cultural conditions:

- establishment of a supportive and constructive collegial environment,
- provision of experiences that affirm educational excellence,
- development of a culture that values scholarship of teaching,
- promotion of self-assessment, reflection and personal growth,
- enhancement of teaching and learning based on evidence and constructive support and (Barnard et al. 2011, p. 438)

In the UK case studies, organisational factors (both positive and negative) were found to be influential. In one case study, where individual lecturers felt under threat of redundancy, the organisational culture was clearly not conducive to encouraging peer review of teaching. Nevertheless, up-take of the scheme was increasing where the leadership within the School (or Faculty) demonstrated their commitment to the value of P-SR. In another case, the institution was highlighting teaching as a priority area for consideration within revalidation processes. In this case P-SR was increasingly being valued because there was a clear link between it and other institutional structures relating to quality assurance. P-SR was being used in two ways—firstly to provide a legitimating framework within which groups of teachers could research aspects of the curriculum and teaching and, secondly, evidence that was emerging from P-SR was being used to illustrate the ways in which subject groups were taking a more reflective and scholarly approach to teaching and learning. In another case study, programme leaders were using the P-SR to encourage groups of lecturers to research aspects of the programme that had been highlighted as needing attention, through for example student evaluations.

An emerging theme from the case studies is the way in which P-SR is being explicitly linked to continuous professional development (CPD). Some institutions in the UK, are strongly encouraging lecturers (through incentives, and in some cases requirements) to become fellows of the Higher Education Academy. One route to Fellowship status is through the submission of a portfolio of evidence. P-SR offers the opportunity to gather evidence relating to teaching, assessment and the curriculum which can contribute to the portfolio and become accredited.

These examples show how policy at institutional level can establish links between elements of teaching and learning processes, but middle-managers play an important role in university structures interpreting and mediating policy (Knight and Trowler 2001). The evaluations of the case studies have shown that the heads of department are often critical in influencing the attitude of lecturers to P-SR. Positive or negative attitudes to P-SR by heads of department can make the difference between an almost 100 % take-up and no take-up at all. This is particularly noticeable where a report from the P-SR process is formally part of the annual 'performance review' or 'appraisal'. If the line manager pays attention to, and takes an interest in, the outcome of the P-SR process within the annual review the take-up is more likely to be high. There is evidence, however, that when there is a formal link to annual review, some will simply 'go through the motions' in order to fulfil formal requirements rather than valuing P-SR as an opportunity for professional learning.

These variations in individuals' responses to P-SR illustrate a more general point, namely that while individual agency is conditioned by existing structures, it is not determined by them. This is because:

> ...human beings have the powers of critical reflection upon their social context and of creatively redesigning their social environment, its institutional or ideational configurations, or both (Archer 2004, p. 308).

Individual academics and groups therefore respond to institutional initiatives in a variety of ways which reflect their own background experience and context.

Fanghanel (2007a, b) has suggested that there are four 'filters' through which university lecturers 'position' themselves in relation to their institutional context—*experiential* filters (his/her professional trajectory and background), *epistemic* filters (his/her knowledge frame, often related to the discipline s/he is teaching), *ideological* filters (what s/he believes about society, the function of higher education, and generally his or her values) and finally, *pragmatic* filters (relating to practical contingencies which impact on each individual).

Using the framework of these four filters, it is possible to understand some of the differences in the response of individuals to P-SR. Previous experience of teaching and learning initiatives, the 'experiential filter', will impact on the perception of any further innovation. Erica McWilliams refers to the "current weariness of staff in relation to being endlessly 'developed'" (McWilliam 2000, p. 240). P-SR can, in these circumstances, be perceived as just another bureaucratic requirement. The response in the case studies has been to give as much freedom as possible to individuals, or groups, about how to proceed with the P-SR. Generally staff respond favourably to the fact that P-SR can be adapted to their own perception what is important and that it can be subject specific. It does not involve attending generic courses or staff development activities—unless it is to learn how to make the best use of P-SR.

There is some informal evidence that those who understand P-SR through the experiential filter of 'reflective practice' find it easier to adopt the critical, reflective stance required in P-SR than those with no previous experience of this approach. Some teaching staff, without previous experience of a 'reflection' have a preference for being given clear solutions to problems (by someone who knows how to solve the problem) and do not appreciate being asked by a peer to work through a process of self-reflection. This does point up the need for some staff development with departments prior to the implementation of P-SR. In particular, it is helpful to give guidance on framing the sorts of questions that will enable the conversation to challenge assumptions and engage in new ways of thinking:

Epistemic filters may influence the way in which P-SR is conducted, though there is no firm evidence on this point. However, disciplinary thinking can influence approaches to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. Mary Huber has argued:

> In fact, disciplinary styles empower inquiry into student learning not only by focusing attention on certain kinds of problems, but also by giving faculty by ready-made way to imagine project and present their work—for example, metaphors such as the classroom's laboratory as text, fields, sites or theatre might point to different methods of inquiry and styles of analysis. (Huber 2003 p. 92).

Disciplinary-based epistemic reference points for P-SR does raise a concern that mirrors the 'conservative bias' of peer review in other academic contexts. As within any community of practice, discipline-based groups will tend to reinforce existing practice. While this can be an excellent way for newcomers to the field to learn from those more experienced than themselves, there is also a risk that it leads to the reproduction of past practices which are not best suited to new circumstances and act as a brake on innovation. There are two ways that P-SR can minimise this risk. The first is to encourage cross-disciplinary reviews so that ideas from outside the discipline are fed into group enquiries and the second is to utilise people who have the role of 'animators of learning' (Boud and Miller 1996). The conception of the reviewer as I have described it within collaborative review is to 'animate' the learning of the peer partner, but sometimes an outsider can fulfil this role more effectively by asking the more challenging questions.

The role of the animator may be fulfilled by someone from the central learning and teaching unit (Bell 2001; Bell and Cooper 2011; MacKinnon 2001), but may equally be a peer within the department or a related field. The purpose of the role is to challenge assumptions, suggest new lines of learning, and to tease out tacit beliefs so that they can become public and therefore open to critique.

Ideological filters may also come into play in the reception of P-SR. The significance attached to teaching-related activities, compared with research, comes down to a value choice by individuals which organisational cultures can influence but not determine. Ideological resistance to perceived managerialism in universities can also influence the way P-SR is perceived if it is seen as a tool for controlling behaviour, or for surveillance, imposed from above. This perception can only be countered if collaborative peer review is independent of management purposes such as probation, promotion, firing or hiring, or performance management. If it is seen as judgemental then it will cease to be collaborative.

The emerging consensus from the (informal) evaluations of the case studies is that, for most lecturers, P-SR is ideologically more acceptable than the observation of teaching, principally because it is more explicitly based on professional autonomy and collegiality. The P-SR schemes described in Gosling and O'Connor (2009) are all thriving and gathering support. Institutional commitment remains strong and while there have been minor changes (for example, reducing reporting requirements and improving monitoring) the principles of the schemes (the ideological foundations) have remained in place and have been re-affirmed.

Pragmatic filters lead individuals to evaluate the worth of potentially time-consuming activities such as P-SR against some critical criteria. Is this a valuable activity? What do I stand to gain by engaging in peer review? Are there pressures on my time that I perceive to have a higher priority? It is well known that 'Innovations have a greater chance of success if they are seen as profitable (in a broad sense) by staff in areas that matter to them—or that are made to matter to them' (Trowler et al. 2003, p. 32). To ensure that P-SR is not rejected as a 'waste of time' the outcomes need to be valued by both individuals and by the institution. The best ways of achieving pragmatic value for individuals are:

1. allow participants to choose the topic for review (even if there is also an option to work within a theme),
2. allow participants to choose their review partner,
3. provide opportunities for the outcomes of the P-SR processes to make a difference to approaches to teaching and student learning—not just for the individual but also for others working within the same community of practice,
4. ensure that the outcomes are heard and discussed in an appropriate forum—for example team meetings,
5. ensure that expectations about the time to be spent on P-SR are realistic and not over-burdensome,
6. reduce reporting requirements to a minimum, while encouraging those who wish to elaborate on their findings to do so within a meaningful scholarly context (such as a teaching and learning conference, publication, or portfolio).

Conclusion

The form of peer review of teaching (peer-supported review as I have called it) is a relatively open ended, flexible and non-bureaucratic process, designed to open opportunities for professional learning. It allows individuals to choose their own line of enquiry and build on their existing knowledge, because:

> Learning is seldom linear, more often it is recursive, it involves us adapting what we already know (our past-present), and who we are now, to new (present-future) conditions of possibility (Walker, 2006, p. 58)

The objective is to create approaches to teaching which are more scholarly and critical so that, ultimately, students can benefit from more reflective and more effective teaching. As Andresen (2000) argued, the three characteristics which constitute scholarship in teaching are:

- critical reflectivity as a sensibility, a habit of mind;
- scrutiny by peers, which is what publication permits, as a modus operandi; and
- inquiry, as a motivation or drive.

Collaborative peer review provides a framework, which is relatively unbureaucratic and non-managerial, which encourages critical reflection, peer scrutiny (though not necessarily leading to publication) and which supports individuals and groups to engage in inquiry into their teaching and its impact on student learning. It requires teachers in universities to act as collaborative peers so that in Pat Hutchings words 'faculty can be more effective colleagues to one another' (Hutchings 1995, p. 9). When there are multiple pressures on academics' time, it may seem unreasonable to add another expectation, but it is the argument of this chapter that there is an obligation on teachers in higher education to think critically about their teaching and undertake professional learning to improve their practice. Collaborative peer review provides a set of principles and a practical framework within which this obligation can be effectively met.

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Chapter 3
A Practical Model for Conducting Helpful Peer Review of Teaching

William Buskist, Emad A. Ismail and James E. Groccia

Introduction

Peer review of teaching is a common means of assessing and improving instruction at many colleges and universities worldwide. In its simplest form, peer review involves one person, generally a colleague from the same scholarly field, unit, school, or college (peer review model) or a faculty developer (developmental model) observing a teacher instructing students for a single class period (Gosling 2002; also see this volume). The peer reviewer generally takes notes on the teacher's performance and shortly afterwards offers feedback in the form of criticism and advice for improvement (Cavanagh 1996). Although peer review may be used for either formative or summative purposes, the formative peer review model is the typical form of peer review on most university campuses (Chism 2007; Perlman and McCann 1998).

However, a teacher's classroom performance is only one aspect of teaching any particular course. Groccia (2012) provided a holistic model that describes seven interrelated variables involved in understanding college and university teaching: learning outcomes, course content, teacher and student characteristics, learning process, learning context, and instructional processes. The use of such a model can enable university instructors to develop teaching and learning environments that capitalize on and integrate a holistic understanding of the multiple variables that encompass teaching and learning. The variable that draws instructor, learner, learning process, learning context, and content together is instructional processes, or pedagogy. How the content is taught, the choice of one teaching method over another, should be made after consideration of desired learning outcomes, a careful review of the evidence on the effectiveness of different teaching approaches, the prior knowledge

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and present needs of learners, the expertise of instructors, and the limits or advantages presented by the classroom context.

College and university instructional practice involves, among other things, development of learning objectives and a course syllabus; preparation of class presentations, which may include lecturing and active learning activities; development of exercises and relevant examples that highlight key features of the subject matter, communication with students in and out of the class room; assessment of student learning; and assessment of one's pedagogical skills and teaching effectiveness. Thus, meaningful peer review can focus on different elements of Groccia's model and can include a comprehensive analysis of all aspects of any given teacher's approach to teaching and learning.

In this chapter, we describe a practical model of peer review that we have found to be useful in helping college and university teachers to (a) identify and build on individual strengths as teachers, (b) identify areas in need of improvement, and (c) develop strategies and tactics for enhancing their teaching effectiveness. We discuss this model in light of practical considerations in conducting peer review and the personal and professional qualities that characterize helpful peer reviewers.

A Practical Model of Peer Review

Combined, we have over 50 years of experience in conducting peer review, and the model we present here is the result of continued and ongoing development and refinement of its components. Our approach is formative and the feedback we offer teachers stays strictly between the peer reviewer and the teacher. The model has four basic components: (a) the pre-observational meeting; (b) the classroom observation, which includes a discussion with the teachers' students; (c) drafting the written report; and (d) the post-observational feedback meeting.

Of course, peer review can be initiated by either a teacher seeking constructive feedback about his or her teaching or by someone else, usually an administrator who has concerns about a particular teacher's instructional quality. In either case, prior to the pre-observational meeting, it is necessary for the peer reviewer and the teacher to communicate with one another via e-mail or telephone to establish the time and place of this meeting.

The Pre-Observational Meeting

The purpose of the pre-observational meeting is for the peer reviewer to become better acquainted with the teacher to be observed and to outline the details of the peer review process. During this meeting, the peer reviewer solicits information that reveals the teacher's approach to teaching and the teacher learns about the peer review process and what to expect from it. In many cases, we do not personally know the person we will be observing, so this meeting may also serve as a "get-to-know" each other session. Regardless of how well we might know the teacher, though, this meeting is critical to establishing a comfortable and collegial working relationship—mutual trust and respect between faculty and peer reviewer is essential to a successful peer review.

This meeting is generally short, usually less than 60 min. It begins with brief introductions followed by a discussion of the teacher's thoughts on teaching in general and the course we will be observing in particular. We often ask for a copy of the course syllabus and a copy of the teacher's statement of teaching philosophy. We briefly skim these materials and ask any relevant questions that come to mind. We also ask questions related to the teacher's goals for the course and the teacher's self-perceived strengths and weaknesses as an instructor, but we never offer feedback or criticism during this initial meeting. To do so this early in the peer review process may come across as off-putting and make the teacher feel overly anxious about being observed.

We then move on to a concise description of the rest of the peer review process focusing especially on classroom observation and discussion with students. We review the "teaching observation form" we use to record notes taken during the classroom observation (Millis 1992). We offer the following suggestions to the teacher for conducting class during the observation and student discussion:

1. Introduce the peer reviewer to the class and let the students know that the purpose of peer review is to help the teacher enhance his or her teaching and thereby students' learning.
2. Tell the students that the "lecture" portion of the class will last for 30 min (for a 50-minute class or 45 min for a 110-minute class) after which the teacher will leave the classroom and the peer reviewer will collect additional feedback about the teacher by speaking candidly with the students about the substance and style of their teacher's instruction.

We conclude the pre-observational meeting by stressing both the formative and confidential nature of the peer-review process and inquiring about any concerns or questions the teacher may have about the process. Finally, we confirm the date, time, and place of the classroom observation.

The pre-observation meeting is fundamental to successful peer review because it establishes a collegial tone for the entire process and is useful for gathering strategic information about the teacher's pedagogical habits and practices along with any problematic issues or areas of concerns that he or she is experiencing in the course. Armed with this knowledge, peer reviewers are well positioned for the classroom observation and for offering suggestions on how to address specific problems they may observe.

The Classroom Observation and Meeting with Students

The actual class observation involves two distinct phases: observation of the teacher and a brief discussion with the teacher's students using a procedure called Small Group Instructional Feedback (SGIF). Each phase is crucial to compiling a complete assessment of the teacher's instructional strengths and areas in need of improvement—with the SGIF providing valuable contextual information regarding our observation of the teacher.

We have found it extremely helpful to use a teacher observation form during the observation phase of peer review. The form we use is shown in Table 3.1. It is divided

Table 3.1 A sample teaching observation form used to record the peer reviewer's assessment of a teacher's instructional skills and other notes. (Faculty teaching observation sheet (©William Buskist; Revised Spring 2012))

Scale:

1 = Very Poor; needs serious substantial improvement

2 = Poor; needs much improvement

3 = Good; needs a fair amount of improvement

4 = Very good; needs a little improvement

5 = Excellent; needs no improvement

Content and Delivery	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**N/A**	**Comments**
Appropriate use of time (begins and ends on time)							
Provides introduction/overview of topic/daily goals							
Appropriate level of presentation (Depth and breadth)							
Clarity of presentation (Prepared; explains jargon)							
Relevance of information (Stays on topic)							
Knowledge (Uses citations; answers questions clearly)							
Logical flow (Well organized, useful transitions)							
Pace of presentation							
Poses appropriate and clear questions							
Repeats Students' Questions and Comments							
Use of relevant examples in presenting topic							
PowerPoint (Avoids direct reading off of screen)							
PowerPoint (Grammar and spelling)							
PowerPoint (Clarity—Proper font size)							
Use of Demonstration/Links to Concepts							
Use of Active Learning Techniques							
Handouts (Useful in understanding topic)							
Provides conclusion/take home							
message							
Physical Presence	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**N/A**	**Comments**
Makes eye contact with general audience							
Makes eye contact while speaking toindividuals							
Facial expression							
Movement about room							
Posture							
Professional attire							
Use of appropriate hand gestures							
Voice—Audible							
Voice—Variation in inflection and tone							
Voice—Appropriate pace of speaking							
Social Presence	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**N/A**	**Comments**
Composure/Confidence							
Reinforces student participation							
Relaxed teaching style (may include sense of humor)							
Engaging (Interesting and informative)							
Respectful							
Use of student names							

Other Comments:

into three sections, each corresponding to particular categories of teaching behavior: content and delivery of the subject matter, the teacher's physical presence (body language), and social presence (rapport). We rate each behavior using a scale from 1 (*Very Poor*) to 5 (*Excellent*). The form also has ample space for recording notes. An important advantage of using this form (or any teaching behavior observation form) is that it cues the peer reviewer to attend to particular teacher behaviors that might otherwise be overlooked.

The procedure for conducting the observation is straightforward and involves the following steps:

1. Arrive a few minutes early to class so that the teacher's interactions with students can be noted from the very beginning of class
2. Select a seat near the back of the room, including large lecture halls, in order to be at a good vantage point to observe behavior of both the teacher and students—some peer reviewers choose to sit about two-thirds back from the front of the classroom and toward one side of the room, which permits them to see student behavior from a near 180° perspective
3. Once class begins, the teacher, as per the discussion in the pre-observation meeting, should introduce the peer reviewer to the students and explain the purpose of the classroom observation and SGIF.
4. Observe and note the actions of the teacher and the students' reactions to the teacher's presentation using the teacher observation form. Pay particular attention to any areas of concerns that the teacher described during the pre-observation meeting

Once the observation phase is finished, the teacher leaves, and the peer reviewer begins the SGIF portion of the peer review process. Keep in mind that the typical peer review process provides information only about what the peer reviewer and teacher discussed during the pre-observational meeting and what was observed during the classroom visitation. What is missing, of course, is the rest of the story: How do students experience the day-to-day learning environment established by the teacher? Only by talking directly to the teacher's students and involving them in providing feedback can the peer reviewer learn the details about which aspects of the teacher's instruction are helping or hindering their learning and the extent to which students are enjoying the learning process.

Like the observation process, conducting the SGIF is also straightforward. It involves the following steps:

1. Once the teacher leaves, the peer reviewer moves to the front of the room, and reintroduces herself or himself. The peer reviewer introduces the SGIF process by describing the purpose of meeting with them (to discuss their experience in the course up to this point in the academic term and to hear their suggestions for how their learning experiences in the course might be improved). The peer reviewer also stresses that this discussion is not a "gripe" session and reemphasizes that the focus of the discussion is their teacher's instructional effectiveness and gathering constructive feedback about their teacher's instructional abilities.
2. The peer reviewer divides the class into small groups (3–4 students each for small classes; 6–8 students each for large classes)

3. The peer reviewer distributes a single sheet of paper with two questions on it to each group: (a) What is going well in this course so far that enhances your learning? and (b) What suggestions do you have for your teacher in terms of improving your learning in this class? Ask one student in each of the groups to server as the "recorder" and jot down answers to each of the two questions.
4. The peer reviewer gives groups 5–10 min to discuss and answer both questions.
5. The peer reviewer gives a 1–2 min warning to wrap up discussion.
6. The peer reviewer calls the small groups back together and begins a whole-class discussion. The peer reviewer asks each group to share what they discussed with the entire class and chooses one student from the class to serve as the recorder for this discussion. One at a time, the peer reviewer asks the recorder in each of the small groups to list items that were discussed, starting with the first question (What is going well in this course so far that enhances your learning?) In large classes, the peer reviewer may not have the time to call on all of the small groups to report back to the class. In this case, the peer reviewer calls randomly on several different groups to report, and at near the end of the discussion, inquires whether anyone in the class has any other information to add.
7. The peer reviewer repeats this process for the second question (What suggestions do you have for your teacher for improving your learning in this class?).
8. During the discussion of these questions, we encourage the recorders in each of the small groups to jot down additional notes if they agree or disagree with comments being made by other groups. In this way, we can determine the extent to which the students in the entire class are in agreement on the issues they raise during the SGIF.
9. The peer reviewer does not address students' comments with evaluative remarks, even if they are positive. However, if needed, the peer reviewer may ask students to elaborate or clarify the points they offer. If the peer reviewer notes anything peculiar about the teacher's behavior during the observation, he or she may inquire about it during the SGIF. The peer reviewer may also discuss or highlight comments from one group that contradicts or conflicts with comments from other groups. This tactic helps students to understand how their opinions may or may not be shared by others in the class, highlighting the difficulty of addressing the variety of student needs and learning styles.
10. Once students finish addressing the two questions, the peer reviewer collects all of the small group notes and recorder's notes on the whole-class discussion. The peer reviewer thanks students for their time, comments, and suggestions and then dismisses the class.

It would be difficult to overstate how valuable students' answers to the two questions are in providing a basis for interpreting the peer reviewer's observational data and providing additional information about a teacher's instructional effectiveness that would otherwise be missed during the actual observation. For example, an observation typically does not reveal any meaningful information about the nature of the teacher's homework assignments; testing, grading, feedback, and remediation; accessibility and availability outside of class; and communication with students outside of class (e.g., e-mail; course management system or website).

The Written Feedback Report

The written report of the observation and SGIF is the backbone of the post-observation meeting with the teacher and serves as the basis for the feedback that the peer reviewer offers the teacher. We recommend that the peer reviewer prepare the written report as soon as possible after the observation and SGIF to maximize the peer reviewer's ease of recall in preparing the report. It will take at least 30–60 min for the peer reviewer to analyze and thoughtfully review the teaching observation form and the students' SGIF comments before writing the report and at least another 30–60 min to write the report. For larger classes, preparing the written report may take up to 30 min longer because the peer reviewer must take into consideration more student comments than he or she would in a smaller class.

We use the following procedure in preparing the 1–2 page written report:

1. Carefully review and reflect on the teacher's course syllabus and statement of teaching philosophy.
2. Carefully review and reflect on the scores and comments on the teaching observation form and the students' SGIF comments.
3. Begin the typed report by summarizing the teacher's strong points.
4. List aspects of the teacher's instruction that need improvement, focusing primarily on the most key elements.
5. Couch comments regarding the teacher's strengths and areas of improvement amidst any relevant information from the teacher's course syllabus and statement of teaching philosophy (i.e., is the teacher's classroom instruction consistent with the course syllabus and the statement of teaching philosophy?)
6. Offer gentle advice for addressing any areas in need of improvement and offer suggestions on how to prioritize these areas.

The written report should contain sufficient detail to be practically useful to the teacher, but not so much information that it hinders the teacher from knowing where or how to begin improving his or her teaching. The secret to offering effective suggestions in the written report is to focus on those areas of teaching that are likely to produce the largest gains in improving the teacher's instructional effectiveness. This point is especially salient when the teacher has many areas in need of improvement. Rather than identifying all areas in need of improvement, we select only those items that are, in our opinion, the 2–4 areas that are likely help the teacher the most in improving his or her teaching.

We give the teacher a hard copy of the typed report and following the post-observation meeting we send him or her the electronic copy. We also give the teacher the teacher observation form. We strongly recommend that the teacher not be sent the electronic copy before the post-observation meeting because of the tendency of most teachers to focus on negative aspects (areas in need of improvement) of the report rather than the positive, which can cast a dark cloud over the post-observation meeting from start to finish.

Once we have e-mailed the electronic copy of the written report to the teacher and received confirmation of receipt from him or her, we delete it from our computer (both from our desktop computers and from the "Sent" folder. We retain a copy of the written report because some instructors misplace the copy we provided them and thus often later request another copy from us.

The final task prior to the post-observation meeting is to thoroughly review all data that have been collected during the pre-observation meeting and during the observation and SGIF. Familiarity with all aspects of the teacher's instructional approach, including the syllabus and statement of teaching philosophy, will be critical to the success of the post-observation meeting in terms of painting a clear picture of the teacher's strengths, areas of in need of improvement, and suggestions for developing his or her teaching skills.

Post-Observation Meeting and Feedback

Typically, the post-observation meeting lasts for about an hour. The meeting should not simply be a reading of the list of the aspects of the teacher's instruction that need improvement. Rather, the peer reviewer's task is to keep the conversation engaging and positive, with a focus on both strengths and areas of improvement. The post-observation meeting should be more of a conversation than a monologue. We use the following guidelines to structure this discussion: We

1. listen carefully to what the teacher has to say in response to our observations and suggestions.
2. wait until the teacher has had a chance to offer his or her perspectives on our observations before offering any suggestions for improvement.
3. avoid making broad evaluative (e.g., fantastic job yesterday!) and negative (e.g., "not very good," "bad," "lackluster") comments—neither are very helpful in giving teachers precise insight into their pedagogical strengths and weaknesses.
4. are specific in all our commentary and focus on specific teaching behaviors.
5. base our comments solely on our observations and on the students' perspectives.

Post-observation meetings cannot be totally scripted in advance. The best we can do is to enter the meeting with a good working knowledge of what we observed in the pre-observational meeting, the classroom observation, and what the students shared with us. We try to remain flexible and allow the conversation to change course as needed so long as it remains relevant to helping the teacher improve his or her teaching. To the extent possible, we recommend that the peer reviewer loosely guide the post-observational meeting as follows:

1. The meeting should begin informally, perhaps with a bit of small talk to diminish any tension that the teacher might be experiencing about this meeting.
2. Once both the peer reviewer and teacher are comfortable, the peer reviewer asks the teacher to share his or her perspective about the class that was observed. To begin this part of the conversation, we pose questions such as: What do think

went well during class? What would you have changed about your teaching of the class? What are your thoughts on how students reacted to your teaching? What do you think students believe is going well in the course? What do you think their suggestions for improvement will be?

3. Avoid discussing the areas of the teacher's instruction that need improvement until later in the meeting so that you can first discuss the teacher's strengths in the attempt to set a positive tone for the meeting. If the teacher wishes to begin the meeting with a discussion of his or her "weaknesses," try to move the conversation in a more positive direction by stating something along the lines of "Let's talk about some of your teaching strengths first..." or "You bring up some good points about your teaching, but let's talk about them a bit later in the context of what you are already doing well."
4. Listen non-judgmentally and reflectively to what the teacher says, but don't hesitate to ask the teacher to expand or elaborate on points that he or she raises.
5. Attend to the teacher's body language and vocal tone—respond calmly if you perceive that he or she is getting anxious or uncomfortable; reassure the teacher that the peer review process is confidential and formative.
6. Share your classroom observations with the teacher, beginning with a summary of his or her teaching strengths as noted in the written report. Place these comments within the context of students' perspectives as revealed in the SGIF.
7. Use focused, positive language regarding the teacher's specific behaviors and approach such as "You did this well..." "I appreciated it when you..." "Your students commented that they liked..." "Your students appreciated..."
8. Following a discussion of the teacher's strengths, segue to areas in which the teacher needs to improve, for example: "Would you change anything about the class next time you teach this topic?" or "Although there is much to appreciate about your teaching, there are also a few areas that could use some attention..."
9. Unless the teacher engaged in a gross ethical violation related to teaching, avoid the use of strong, authoritarian language such as "You ought," "You have to," "You must change," or "You should stop doing..."
10. Avoid being too picky of the teacher's behavior. Be sure to summarize students' commentary and suggestions, focusing on areas that would improve student learning and their enjoyment of the course. Be sure, too, to let the teacher know that students appreciated the chance to offer suggestions to improve the quality of the class and their learning experiences in it.
11. Ask the teacher to share with you his or her overall thoughts about what has been said during the meeting and share any personal insights, experiences, and reflections that you think might be helpful to the teacher in improving his or her instruction.
12. Ask the teacher to share with his or her students, at the next class meeting what he or she has learned from the peer review process, including his or her areas of strengths and areas of improvement; and what areas, if any, he or she cannot change and why. It is critical to complete the feedback loop: teacher to peer reviewer→students to peer reviewer→peer reviewer to teacher→teacher to students.

13. Ask the teacher if he or she would like to develop an "action plan" that outlines steps to reinforce his or her teacher strengths and make improvements in other areas. Also ask the teacher if he or she would be interested in scheduling a follow up observation and SGIF to monitor his or her progress in working toward becoming a more effective teacher.
14. Finally, give the teacher the marked teaching observation form and a copy of the written report and let him or her know that you will be sending along the electronic copy
15. End the meeting with a handshake and in a positive manner; state how enjoyable the peer review process with the teacher has been.

From beginning to end, the entire peer review process requires about 3–4 h of the peer reviewer's time, although experienced peer reviewers can whittle the time frame down to less than 3 h. The vast majority of peer reviews we conduct are "one-time only" observations and SGIFs over the course of a single academic term. Only in rare circumstances have we worked with a teacher conducting multiple observations/SGIFs within a single academic term, although we have frequently conducted observations/SGIFs with the same faculty member across two or more consecutive academic terms. For example, a former dean approached one of the authors and asked him to work with a faculty member who was coming up for tenure and promotion. This faculty member was an outstanding researcher but struggled mightily with teaching. The dean indicated that this teacher would not be granted tenure and be promoted unless this teacher's instructional skills improved significantly. The author worked on a monthly basis with the teacher conducting observations and SGIFs, as outlined above, over two academic terms. The result was positive—the teacher's instructional skills improved significantly and as a result, this teacher was granted tenure and promoted.

Outcomes

With few exceptions, the faculty for whom we conduct peer review approach us voluntarily through Auburn University's Biggio Center for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning. These faculty are generally either teachers who (a) are good teachers who wish to become better teachers or (b) struggling teachers who recognize their instructional deficiencies and wish to remedy them. Both kinds of teachers value undergraduate education and have deep desires to contribute positively to it. Thus, we generally work with teachers who are motivated to improve their craft, and as a result, we see remarkable improvement in virtually all the teachers whom we observe and for whom we conduct SGIFs. However, teachers are not the only beneficiaries of the peer review process: students, peer reviewers, instructional units, and institutions also reap rich rewards from the peer review process.

Teachers

Teachers most often request a peer review of their teaching for the simple purpose of improving their teaching: clarifying their understanding of teaching and how it impacts student learning, gathering a colleague's perspective and feedback on their teaching, and learning how to capitalize on their strengths and eliminate their weaknesses (Weimer 1990). If peer review is conducted by a colleague from a different discipline or by a representative of a teaching and learning center, it would mainly focus on the teaching process. However, if review is conducted by a colleague from same academic discipline, it would focus primarily on the teacher's subject matter knowledge, selection of learning objectives, appropriateness of student assessment procedures (Chism 2007; Fernandez and Yu 2007; Keeley 2012).

Obviously, teachers being observed can benefit tremendously from the peer review process. The benefits span all three categories outlined in the teaching observation form (see Table 3.1): delivery of content, social presence, and physical presence. The benefits we observe in content delivery range from something as simple as changing the font size in a PowerPoint slide show to enhance visual clarity of the presentation to more complicated issues such as enhancing the logical flow of a lecture through the use of strategically placed transition statements and well-chosen examples.

Many teachers, when they think about how to teach, tend to focus only on delivery technique, neglecting two important sets of contextual variables that frame their message: physical and social presence. For example, physical aspects of the teacher, such as the use of hand gestures, vocal inflections, and changes in facial expression contribute to students' perception of the teacher's enthusiasm for the subject matter and for them as learners (Lowman 1995). Likewise, the teacher's social presence, as reflected in the use of students' names and the establishment of rapport (e.g., Wilson and Ryan 2012), contribute to students' perception of a supportive and safe learning environment. When students perceive that the teacher is a trustworthy collaborator in the learning process, they are more willing to participate actively in their class discussions and other classroom activities (e.g., Brookfield 2006; Keeley et al. 2012). Because our model of peer view emphasizes aspects of the teacher and the learning environment in addition to teaching technique and the raw transmission of information, we are able to offer advice to teachers that impact student motivation for learning. Tables 3.2 and 3.3 provide representative examples of the feedback we have provided teachers through the peer review process (Table 3.2; observation and SGIF) or through SGIF only (Table 3.3).

Students

Although the main point of peer review is to improve a teacher's instructional skills, the ultimate beneficiaries of peer review, at least in theory, are students. After all, if teaching improves, there should also be some improvement in student learning and enjoyment of the learning process. Interestingly, though, there is another benefit to

Table 3.2 Sample peer review of teaching and small group instructional feedback Report (for an education professor)

This report is based on a 45-minute observation of your in-class teaching followed by a 25-minute discussion with your students. I broke the class into four small groups and each group independently addressed the following questions: (a) What is going well in this course—what do you like about it? and (b) What aspects of the course might be improved?

General Comments:

Based on both my observation and discussion of your teaching with your students, your teaching in this course is very solid, and approaches excellence. You demonstrated strong content and delivery skills and equally strong social and physical presence. Your class was well organized (but see below) and accented with an impressive array of content knowledge, relevant examples, probing questions, give-and-take, and feedback to students. Socially, you demonstrated excellent classroom rapport, appropriate humor, knowledge of student names, and a high level of trust. You also exhibited excellent eye contact, facial expression, vocal inflections, and hand gestures.

Specific Comments—Strengths:

Class is interesting; students are engaged and appreciate your good humor
Students have a strong desire to attend class and participate; they love your energy/passion
Examples are insightful and practical
Students appreciate the positive feedback and your encouragement of their good work
Students appreciate your rewarding their hard work and effort
Students like the opportunity for participation you provide them
Students like the fact that you listen to them and are open to their ideas/suggestions
Students feel like the materials are relevant to their future work
Students appreciate the fact that ALL class materials are available anytime during the semester
Students enjoy/appreciate the fact the class is project based
Students appreciate your thorough preparation for class, including online materials
Students appreciate your flexibility

Specific Comments—Areas for Improvement:

Students enjoy your stories, but would like to have you make them to be more succinct
Students would like you to provide a review at the end of each class to tie material together to drive home key points—students reported having difficulty seeing these main points.
Sometimes class is not well focused—"all over the map," as a few students expressed
Student do not always appreciate the amount of repetition of material in class
Sometimes students have difficulty seeing the connection between course material and the projects
Your expectations for them on projects and other class activities are not always clear to them—students would like to have your expectations and project criteria clarified
Students would like to see you improve your tech skills, although they reported you are better than many of their other professors in education
Transition between PPT shows—moved from one slide show to a different one with no introduction or transition, which came across as abrupt and confusing to students

Other Comments:

Sometimes (3X) had hand over mouth while talking, which made it difficult to hear what you were saying
Even after mentioning the importance of pausing after asking a question, you often did not give students very long to answer your questions before you answered the question yourself

students that accrues as a direct result of participating in the SGIF: they become more generally aware what constitutes effective college teaching and learning. For many, if not most, students, participation in the SGIF is the first time they've participated

Table 3.3 Sample small group instructional feedback report (for a chemistry professor)

Strengths:
Presents interesting conceptual ideas and lectures are bountiful with detail and depth
Very helpful in assisting students in working through difficult material and concepts they find difficult to understand
Provides relevant information to supplement text information
Provides just the right amount of homework
Always available for outside and extra help
Excellent skill in integrating historical and future issues into the subject matter
Projects are consistent with lectures and course materials
Projects are interesting and useful
Areas for Improvement:
Surprised students on midterm examination by including material that they didn't feel was covered in class
Not enough time to take the midterm given the nature of the material covered on it
Instructions for projects are unclear at times
Lectures are "crammed" into the class; students feel you are covering too much material in class without providing enough time for them to understand it
Your pace of presentation of material and your rate of speaking are too fast for students
Sometimes runs over class time and makes students late for their other classes and appointments
Sometimes explanations for some difficult material is difficult to follow; doesn't always link or connect topics together very well
Because of the pace of class, students find it difficult to participate
Students would like you to review the previous lecture materials for a few minutes at the start of class before introducing new materials

in a meaningful, albeit semi-structured, discussion about the relationship between faculty teaching and their learning. The experience is eye-opening for some students, particularly when they encounter other students' perspectives that differ from their own in terms of how the teacher's habits and practices impact learning. For example, a student in one SGIF group may state that the teacher's exams are unfair because the questions are unclear or do not cover what the teacher said the tests would cover, whereas the majority of students in that group (and the other groups) express the opposite point of view. This difference in perspective may come as a revelation that prompts students to reconsider how they perceive the teacher's tests and how they study for those exams.

In our discussions with students, we have learned that they genuinely appreciate the opportunity to talk with us about their learning experiences with their teachers. They appreciate the opportunity to have an honest discussion about their teacher's instructional effectiveness and frequently express gratitude for their teacher's caring enough about them as learners to devote part of class time to discuss the matter with them. In fact, we usually get asked why SGIF is not done more frequently by other teachers and students often indicate that one or two (or more) of their teachers would greatly benefit from such a process. Participating in the observation and SGIF process creates a more favorable impression of the teacher because he or she cared enough about students' learning to initiate the discussion. It also creates a favorable impression of the instructional unit and institution for permitting such frank discussions to occur.

Peer Reviewers

Peer reviewers, especially newer ones, also benefit from their participation in the peer review process. As peer reviewers, they witness first-hand a wide array of pedagogical habits and practices—some that are highly effective in positively impacting student learning and some that are not. They quickly learn which of these practices they might be able to use efficaciously in their classes and which ones to avoid.

However, the learning process that peer reviewers undergo about their teaching is not simply due to observational learning. The opportunity to draft a thoughtful written report and to talk frankly with teachers about developing their pedagogical skills prompts most peer reviewers to think deeply about teaching in general and their own teaching in particular in terms of what it is, how it impacts student learning, and how to do it better (Bovill 2010; Gosling 2005).

This self-reflection often leads to peer reviewers changing their approach to teaching in terms of adopting new attitudes and perspectives on teaching that broaden and enhance their pedagogical skills. Consider, as a simple example, the peer reviewer who observes a teacher using active learning techniques such as think-pair-share or problem-based learning. During the SGIF, students show near universal agreement that these teaching techniques have caused them, relative to their other courses, to become more engaged in this class, enhanced their perceived understanding of course content, and increased their enjoyment of the course and the teacher. The peer reviewer, who up to this point has been primarily a lecturer in his or her courses but has been concerned about the lack of class participation, decides to incorporate active learning in his or her teaching. He or she soon begins consulting the pedagogical literature on active learning, and talking to colleagues about how they have implemented active learning techniques in their courses. After careful thought, he or she gradually begins to integrate active learning techniques into his or her courses. In our experience with training new peer reviewers and working alongside experienced ones, this sort of outcome is quite common. Indeed, each of us has seen our teaching improve enormously as a result of serving as peer reviewers.

Instructional Units and the Institution

If the peer review process improves the overall quality of teaching, which in turn enhances the overall quality of student learning, then both the instructional units that implement peer review and the institution obviously benefit. This residual accrual is marked, as we have witnessed at Auburn University, by an overall heightened impression by students, faculty, and administrators that teaching is an important activity of departmental units and the institution. This benefit may seem banal, especially by those faculty and administrators who work at smaller institutions that focus primarily, if not exclusively, on undergraduate instruction. However, at institutions that focus largely on research, this outcome is significant in elevating the status of teaching within all spheres of the academic community.

Skillsets of Effective Peer Reviewers

Palmer (1998) noted that "good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher" (p. 10). Likewise, effective peer review of teaching cannot be boiled down to merely the procedural guidelines that one uses to observe others teach. Equally important is the set of personal and professional skills that the peer reviewer brings to the process. In our experience in conducting peer review of teaching as well as preparing faculty to become peer reviewers, we have found that the most effective peer reviewers are those individuals who have (a) acquired a sound working knowledge of pedagogy, (b) developed keen observational skills, and (c) cultivated strong reflective listening skills and sound social skills (see also Chism 2007). Although some writers have argued that, for obvious reasons, peer reviewers should be tenured faculty (e.g., Brent and Felder 2004), we have found that through training and practice new faculty and graduate students can become highly effective peer reviewers. In this section, we briefly describe the skillsets of effective peer reviewers.

Pedagogical Knowledge

In order to provide feedback to teachers on the quality of their teaching and how to enhance it, peer reviewers necessarily must be knowledgeable about pedagogy. Although experience in the classroom is no guarantee that one is an expert on teaching effectiveness, being a seasoned teacher increases the likelihood that one has successfully negotiated many critical issues that contribute to being an effective and knowledgeable teacher. These issues include, but are not limited to, the following: creating a well-organized course as outlined in the syllabus; developing a rationale for why a course should include particular content, and how to best present that content to students (preparing coherent and compelling classroom presentations); helping struggling students become more effective learners; motivating students to attend class and become better prepared learners; creating fair and reasonable assessments of student learning; and using appropriate technology in classroom presentations and in managing a course.

We also have found that the most skilled peer reviewers are also familiar with the ever-burgeoning teaching and learning literature. Indeed, there is no shortage of books (Buskist and Benassi 2012; Davis 2009; Nilson 2010; Schwartz and Gurung 2012; Svinicki and McKeachie 2011) and journals (e.g., *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*; *Journal on Excellence in College Teaching*; *The Journal of Higher Education*) on college and university pedagogy. In addition, there exist disciplinary-specific teaching journals that publish both evidence-based articles and tips on teaching (e.g., *Journal of Engineering Education*; *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*; *Teaching of Psychology*).

In short, effective peer reviewers are thoroughly immersed in teaching—they are generally excellent teachers who devote considerable time and effort to attempting to improve their craft. Their enthusiasm for teaching spills over from their own instructional activities to desiring to help others improve their pedagogical skills. Thus, they also spend considerable time talking with their colleagues about teaching and teaching-related issues.

Observational Skills

Effective peer reviewers are keen observers of all activities that occur within the confines of the classroom—including paying attention to students' behavior. In general, these observational skills include nine distinct categories of awareness:

1. Awareness of the teacher's behavior (paying attention to students, responding to their comments, questions, etc.)
2. Awareness of the teacher's facial expression and body language (smiling, hand gestures, etc.)
3. Awareness of the teacher's language (clarity, level, tone)
4. Awareness of the teacher's social skills (politeness, respect, use of names)
5. Awareness of the students' behavior (taking notes, talking, using their cell phones, etc.)
6. Awareness of the students' emotional reactions to the subject matter (positive or negative reactions)
7. Awareness of the students' level of interest (contributing to discussion, paying attention)
8. Awareness of the students' body language and verbal behavior (slouching in chairs, facing the teacher, etc.)
9. Awareness of shifts in the classroom environment during the class (changes in mood)

Clearly, being an effective peer reviewer is more than simply casually observing a teacher's classroom performance and jotting down a few notes about his or her lecture delivery. Rather, an effective peer reviewer observes the dynamic relationship between teacher and students and attempts to identify those factors that contribute to it, good, bad, or otherwise. Discussing a teacher's approach to teaching prior to the observation, observing a teacher's classroom performance, and conducting the SGIF provide multiple opportunities for the peer reviewer to gather key observational data and insight into the teacher-student relationship and how it might be enhanced to maximize the quality of the students' learning experience.

Interview Skills

Peer review is not a uni-directional process marked by the peer reviewer telling the teacher how to become a better teacher. Instead, the peer review process is a two-way conversation between the peer reviewer and the teacher. The quality of this conversation is heavily dependent the ability of the peer reviewer to listen and *hear* what the teacher (during the pre-observational and post-observational meetings) and the students (during the SGIF) are attempting to communicate. In this case, listening does not simply mean that the peer reviewer sits backs and takes notes while the teacher and students speak. Rather, the peer reviewer takes an active role in soliciting information through the use of specific listening techniques. We have found that skilled peer reviewers use a combination of four different interview techniques in their conversations with teachers and students during the peer review process: probing, reflecting, counseling, and self-disclosing.

Probing involves posing questions to learn more about the individual and his or her perspective on a topic. It is an effective technique to use when the peer reviewer would like the teacher to elaborate on items that he or she noticed while perusing the course syllabus, something that happened in class during the observation, or a comment made by students during the SGIF. For example, during the pre-observational meeting, the peer reviewer might ask "Can you tell me a little bit more on how you use critical thinking exercises in your class?" Or, during the SGIF, the peer reviewer might inquire "Do you all agree that your teacher uses clear and relevant examples to highlight important points she is making?"

Reflecting entails paraphrasing the teacher's words, and perhaps body language, to encourage him or her to elaborate on a point. Reflection is useful when the peer reviewer wishes the teacher to elaborate on certain points he or she is expressing. Like probing, it can take the form of a question or a simple statement, such as "Are you saying that your students are actually working harder and enjoying class more now that you have added an online component to your class?" or "In other words, you use your learning objectives for the course to determine both what you teach and what you test your students over?"

Oftentimes, though, reflection involves paraphrasing an entire statement that the teacher has just made. For example,

> Teacher: "I've changed my teaching style to include a little bit of lecture, some think-pair-share exercises, and then I usually use the last 20 min of class using group work involving a problem-based learning exercise. I've found that my students are learning more and enjoying it more than ever before."
> Peer Consultant: "So instead of using only a straight lecture, you are now providing a lot more variety to your classroom presentations, and your students are doing better and enjoying class more than they ever have. . ."

Counseling involves offering ideas, suggestions, and advice regarding issues that the peer reviewer and the teacher discuss during the pre-and post-observational meetings. Counseling may involve pointing out potential solutions to particular issues or problems and suggesting improvements in any aspect of teaching. For example, the peer reviewer may say to the teacher, "Have you ever thought about using group work to increase student engagement in your classes?" or "A colleague in my department faced a similar issue. What he did to prevent one of his students from monopolizing class discussion was simply to talk to the student after class 1 day and gently ask her to let some of the other students have a chance to contribute to class discussion. It worked very well for him—perhaps it might work for you, too."

Finally, in self-disclosing the peer reviewer shares his or her personal insights and experiences with the teacher. For example, a peer reviewer might state “I’ve found that students seemed bored with my lectures, too. I changed them up a bit with some better, more true-to-life examples, and stopped and asked questions every now and then, which has really helped keep students more interested in my lectures.”

In our experience, effective peer reviewers take an active role in gathering as much relevant information as possible during the peer review process in an effort to learn as much as they can about the habits and practices of the teachers they observe. Armed with this wealth of information, peer reviewers are in an excellent position to offer insightful comments on the nature of the teacher’s pedagogical strengths and helpful suggestions on actions that teacher might undertake to become a more effective teacher.

Conclusions

Successful peer review entails more than simply one teacher sitting in on another teacher’s class, jotting down a few notes on what is occurring, and then later chit-chatting together about the observation over coffee. Instead, successful peer review is the product of planned and intentional discussion of pedagogy with the teacher, thoughtful observation of the teacher’s instructional behaviors, and detailed analysis of the teacher’s pedagogical practices and how those practices impact student learning and enjoyment of their university education. In this chapter, we described one such approach, and provided step-by-step guidelines for its implementation. The approach is based loosely on the common four-step model of peer review (e.g., Bell 2002). A major difference between our model and other models of peer review is that our model includes receiving feedback from the teacher’s students regarding (a) all aspects of the teacher’s approach to teaching that particular class and (b) how that approach affects their learning and enjoyment of the learning process. Our model also differs from other common models of peer review with regard to the emphasis it places on examining written materials such as the course syllabus and student assessments that the teacher has developed for the particular course in which the teacher will be observed. Thus the model we describe in this chapter offers a truly comprehensive approach to peer review.

Conducting successful peer review—peer review that is instrumental in identifying and reinforcing a teacher’s strengths while at the same time pinpointing areas in need of improvement—has important positive consequences that transcend assisting the teacher in becoming a more effective instructor. Indeed, successful peer review not only benefits teachers, but also benefits (a) students by enhancing their learning, (b) peer reviewers by expanding their awareness of effective pedagogical practices, and (c) the instructional units and the institution by a increasing the perception among students, faculty, and the public that teaching is valued by the academic community.

However, the peer review process is ultimately only as effective as the individuals who actually conduct peer review. Just like not all faculty are good teachers or good researchers, not all faculty make effective peer reviewers. In our experience, we have found that the most effective peer reviewers possess specific skillsets that are particularly useful in helping teachers improve their instruction. These skillsets include being knowledgeable about college and university pedagogy, being a keen observer of teaching and learning activities, and the ability to conduct a conversational and non-threatening interview with both teachers and students. This latter skillset is heavily rooted in the peer reviewer's active listening abilities—probing, reflecting, counseling, and self-disclosing—while interacting with the teacher during the pre- and post-observational meetings and with students during the SGIF.

Fortunately, these skillsets are learnable and can serve as the foundation for developing effective peer review training programs. For example, our approach to peer review training is based on a workshop model in which faculty first discuss the elements of sound pedagogy and the model of peer review we have described in this chapter. The rest of the workshop centers on microteaching in which faculty practice observation, feedback, and listening techniques with one another. The workshop leaders then provide feedback to participants aimed at developing and refining their peer review skillsets. Faculty emerge from the workshop with greater confidence in their peer review ability, deeper working knowledge of effective peer review, and a more developed set of skills that start them on the path to becoming competent peer reviewers.

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Chapter 4
Leadership: A Cultural Perspective on Review as Quality Assurance Versus Quality Enhancement

Jemina Napier, Mehdi Riazi and Christa Jacenyik-Trawoger

Introduction

From an academic development/learning and teaching enhancement point of view, peer review is well accepted as being a beneficial process for academics to engage in. Regardless of what model is used and for what purpose, the importance of the process of peer review being primarily collegial and developmental is also broadly accepted and acknowledged. Nonetheless, the reality is that in the Australian higher education sector peer review is currently being discussed as a potential teaching quality indicator. Therefore there is a perception of peer review as a form of 'surveillance' (Parsell 2011). Consequently, it is timely to have an examination of the tensions that lie at the intersection between the collegial/developmental aspects of peer review versus the reality of quality assurance pressures for higher education institutions.

We were particularly interested to explore the culture of leadership at Macquarie University, and how that might influence the culture of engagement with peer review.

A Leadership team was formed within a larger Australian Learning and Teaching Council funded project. The team consisted of the three authors and six other Macquarie academics (see acknowledgements). The team focused on how macro and micro cultures within the university informed perceptions and practices of peer review. This chapter compares the practices and perceptions across the four faculties in the university; and in particular explores views of "top-down" and "bottom-up" approaches to peer review. The primary goal of this chapter is to present a narrative

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of how institutional policy on peer review contrasts with the perceptions of the same policy by staff.

Framing Peer Review in the Context of Socio-Cultural Perspectives of Learning and Leadership

Bernstein et al. (2006) highlight the need for peer review to exist within a 'collective learning community.' Collective learning is an area of educational research and pedagogy with broad reach across educational domains: distance education (Stacey et al. 2004), vocational education (Moore and Brooks 2000), higher education (Smith and Bath 2006) and online education (Trena 2005). Collective learning involves a community learning from experiences drawn by its members while working together. 'Collaborative' and 'cooperative' learning are distinct approaches used when learning collectively in a community (Rose 2004). According to Lewis (1996), cooperation depends upon a supportive community of people who agree to help one another in activities aimed at attaining the goals of each person involved. Alternatively, collaboration depends upon the establishment of a common meaning and language in the task, which leads to the community setting a common goal. Both terms refer to group learning activities, but the key difference is in relation to how the groups approach the learning task. Co-operative learners often divide the task between themselves, each individual (or subgroup) then take responsibility for that sub-task. The result is the conglomeration of each of the sub-tasks to making a whole. Collaborating learners work together to solve a complete learning task, which, often, they would be unable to solve individually or prior to the collaboration.

Peer review can be considered as a form of collective learning, in that a community of academics can support each other and learn from one another. Three key socio-cultural perspectives on learning assert that learning occurs more effectively in a community. Vygotsky (1978), Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998) all consider that learning is situated with some form of activity, is collaborative and relies on some form of social interaction. However, each theorist states that the relationship between the learner and the teacher/expert/mentor is different.

Vygotsky (1978) states that learners have to be guided by a master (expert). The learner's development is dependent on the teacher and the experience within the 'Zone of Proximal Development'. The process of learning is controlled and structured, with various contextually related activities to challenge thinking and develop deep learning. According to Vygotsky, without the expert, learning would not occur. When applied to peer review, although supposed to be collaborative, there is the potential for the review to be seen as occurring in only one direction, and for junior academics to learn from more senior academics.

Lave and Wenger (1991) advocate for a less structured approach, and for learning to occur through 'Legitimate Peripheral Participation' by engaging in social activities and interaction, but also through observation. They assert that the learner is the important person—that a person's participation and engagement in a community of practice is the key. The learner collaborates with experts, but their learning does not necessarily follow one path. In a peer review context, this would mean that various academics could observe and learn from one another, regardless of their position and status; and that peer review may take place in an informal way.

Although similar in perspective, Wenger (1998) does recognise the value of experts and states that experts (teachers/mentors) are present in the learning context to assist the educational experience within a community of practice. Although learning is fluid and does not have to be structured, the expert plays an important role in guiding the learners through modeling behaviour and skills in a community of practice. In considering this model in relation to peer review, there is scope for academics to identify suitable experts to review their teaching, depending on the skills or competencies that they want to develop.

In summary, the key differences are that Vygotsky believes the role of the expert is to provide guidance through scaffolded learning; for Lave and Wenger, the role of the expert is less active, he or she models expertise; Wenger deems that learning occurs between all members of a community and that there is no one expert.

Peer review could be considered as working successfully within all three socio-cultural perspectives. Ultimately, the key is for leaders to create a culture of learning within a community of practice, which encourages peer review as a form of quality enhancement rather than quality assurance. Such a model would promote peer review as a learning, developmental process. In a review of the peer observation literature, Southwell and Morgan (2010) note that although attitudes towards peer review and observation have evolved, there is still a detectable tension between quality assurance and quality enhancement, and whether the process is used for formative or summative purposes. In their report they discuss several different schemes where teachers formed small communities of practice, but that the introduction of peer observation still caused problems. To enhance the scheme it was suggested that groups should be organised on cognate interests and identity; group autonomy should be ensured (within a framework of support and advice); realistic time needs to be provided; and 'appraisal' needs to be distinguished from the developmental element of observation.

According to Southwell and Morgan (2010) peer review works most effectively when it can tangibly be seen to enhance collegial relations (quality enhancement), and when it is expressly *not* used for appraisal purposes (quality assurance). They report on a large UK study of 100 participants by Lomas and Nicholls (2005), who stated that where peer observation was noted to be one of many imposed requirements, 'academic developers face a major challenge in their efforts to change organisational culture and influence the assumptions, beliefs, values and behaviours of academic staff' (Southwell and Morgan 2010, p. 61).

In sum, they state that Lomas and Nicholls' (2005) study reveals that 'the practice [of peer review] can enhance quality when it is a formative and developmental process involving collegial conversations rather than judgments, and where the implementation of the scheme is carefully managed, with due attention to the culture of the institution, the sub-cultures of a particular department and the concerns and anxieties of academic staff' (Southwell and Morgan 2010, p. 61). They also note that 'departments having an active part in the design, development and implementation

Table 4.1 Gosling's model of peer observation of teaching

Characteristic	Evaluation model	Development model	Peer review model
Who does it and to whom?	Senior staff observe other staff	Educational developers observe practitioners; or expert teachers observe others in department	Teachers observe each other
Purpose	Identify under-performance, confirm probation, appraisal, promotion, quality assurance, assessment	Demonstrate competency/improve teaching competencies; assessment	Engagement in discussion about teaching; self and mutual reflection
Outcome	Report/judgement	Report/action plan; pass/fail PGCert	Analysis, discussion, wider experience of teaching methods
Status of evidence	Authority	Expert diagnosis	Peer shared perception
Relationship of observer to observed	power	Expertise	Equality/mutuality
Confidentiality	Between manager, observer and staff observed	Between observer and the observed, examiner	Between observer and the observed – shared within learning set
Inclusion	Selected staff	Selected/ sample	All
Judgement	Pass/fail, score, quality assessment, worthy/unworthy	How to improve; pass/fail	Non-judgemental, constructive feedback
What is observed?	Teaching performance	Teaching performance, class, learning materials,	Teaching performance, class, learning materials,
Who benefits?	Institution	The observed	Mutual between peers
Conditions for success	Embedded management processes	Effective central unit	Teaching is valued, discussed
Risks	Alienation, lack of co-operation, opposition	No shared ownership, lack of impact	Complacency, conservatism, unfocused

of the scheme together with strong support from the senior management at the centre of the university ... [can] assist in the development of effective peer review of teaching' (Lomas and Nicholls 2005, p. 145; cited in Southwell and Morgan 2010, p. 61).

Gosling (2002, p. 5) proposes a model of peer review and observation of teaching, shown in Table 4.1, which illustrates how peer review can be presented as a quality enhancement or quality assurance exercise depending on various characteristics, such as how the process is structured, and the institutional culture that promotes the use of peer observation. This investigation of peer review at Macquarie University will evaluate the perceptions of participants in relation to this model.

The *evaluation* model correlates with the Vygotskian notion of learning through scaffolded expert guidance, where mostly senior staff would observe early career teachers. The *development* model reflects Lave and Wenger's belief that teachers can model expertise, whereby educational developers would observe practitioners; and the *peer review* model aligns more closely with Wenger's philosophy that learning occurs between all members of a community and that there is no one expert. Therefore teachers would observe teachers on an equal level, and there would be no issue of power relationships or fear of evaluation. Gosling argues that the ideal model for peer observation of teaching is the *peer review* model, as it encourages a collective learning community, and peer review as quality enhancement rather than assurance.

Methodology

This qualitative study used a date mining technique to investigate what factors encourage or discourage engagement in, or a continuation of, peer review at Macquarie University. Interview data was mined using content analysis (Krippendorff 2004) and thematic analysis (Silverman 2006), to identify key themes that pointed to the cultural perspectives throughout the university.

Participants

Interviews were conducted with 24 academics that represented all four of the faculties at Macquarie University: the Faculty of Arts ($n = 5$), the Faculty of Business and Economics ($n = 4$), the Faculty of Human Sciences ($n = 8$) and the Faculty of Science ($n = 7$). All members of the Leadership team were also interviewed as part of the project, and therefore had a dual role in the project.

Data Collection Process and Procedure

An expression of interest for participation was sent out across the university, and respondents were contacted to organise a suitable time for interview. The data collection involved semi-structured interviews, and all participants were sent a copy of the questions beforehand in order that they could prepare for the interview.

Interviewees were asked about their perceptions of culture and leadership in peer review, and what the notion of peer enhancement meant to them. The interviews were divided into five parts:

1. General reflection on peer enhancement;
2. Feedback to and from peers;
3. Contexts of peer enhancement;

4. Cultures affecting peer enhancement; and
5. Recommendations and policy suggestions

Participants were individually interviewed in a place they chose, which was usually their own offices. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed, and interviewees were offered the opportunity to review the transcript of their interviews.

The average length of interviews was 36.7 min, and it was clear from the data that engaging in a discussion about peer review empowered participants to discuss their values and explore what the concept meant to them, and their consideration of the culture of leadership at Macquarie University in relation to peer review.

Analytical Approach

The interviews were transcribed and then analysed in two stages. The following four main themes were addressed by the Leadership team and were the focus of analysis in the interview data:

1. Discipline Culture
2. Group Leadership
3. Management Support
4. Teaching Culture

The first stage of analysis involved several members of the leadership team blind-coding the data, by reading through the interview transcripts and conducting a content analysis, identifying key words and phrases that throughout the interview data and coding the content thematically into categories and sub-categories to find common themes that aligned with the four strands as outlined above. The various data coding was then compared, and a final in-depth analysis was conducted using N-Vivo discourse analysis software to identify various thematic nodes.

The team searched for micro and macro cultural references: Micro-culture in terms of peer review schemes occurring at a departmental, section or program level; and macro-culture in terms of values around peer review at the university level. We were particularly interested to contrast whether there were similarities or differences between those micro and macro cultures.

Results and Discussion

Initially we present results based on an evaluation of the general attitudes towards peer review at Macquarie University, followed by a discussion of patterns that emerged across the four themes of Discipline Culture, Group Leadership, Management Support, and Teaching Culture in relation to perceptions of the macro and micro cultures across the university. Finally, we will drill down into the data to present extracts that highlight issues around formality of peer review, top-down versus bottom-up processes, and operationalization, which were the three key issues presented that illustrate the tensions concerning peer review at Macquarie University. Table 4.2 provides an overview of the thematic nodes that emerged from the N-Vivo analysis.

General Attitudes Towards Peer Review at Macquarie University

Overall, participants referred to the fact that engagement in peer review in teaching can lead to positive outcomes. Interviewees were aligned in recognizing that if suitably encouraged by leaders in the university within a culture of learning and collective community of practice, that peer review can be beneficial. Their general attitudes are encapsulated by the following key themes, which highlight that peer review can:

- Bring enlightenment (Consciousness raising)
- Empower
- Share knowledge
- Give confidence
- Be constructive and beneficial

The following quote from one interviewee reveals the general attitudes conveyed by most participants: ‘People feel enlightened, empowered, because they were to say something positive about their teaching experience and share things.’

Nevertheless, although general attitudes were positive, participants noted that the culture within the university did not necessarily promote participation in peer review as a form of quality enhancement. In fact, there were definite perceptions that formal peer review schemes could be detrimental and contradictory to a community of practice philosophy.

Discipline Culture

Within the theme of Discipline Culture, interviewees often referred to the micro-culture (of the department) as a major factor in influencing the uptake of peer review. In particular, several of them mentioned the possible tensions between a wider (macro) culture in the discipline/faculty or university and the departmental level (micro) culture. So, although the respondents seemed to intimate that peer review could be a constructive and beneficial thing, it would not necessarily be accepted and adopted. Many of the comments suggest that academics within some faculties would be resistant to change and would see the introduction of peer review as an imposition. Several references are made by participants to ‘in fighting’, which implies that people would be suspicious of engaging in peer review in case it was taken as an opportunity to be criticized by others, so people would rather not expose themselves to that vulnerability.

Table 4.2 Overview of thematic nodes

Peer (who)	Feedback (what)	Culture	Communication	Context (why—purpose)
Relationship	Mode – Location – Format Time	Management support	Interaction between reviewer and reviewee – Collegiality	Formal
Choice (who chooses)	Focus (what)	Group leadership (embedded/pervasive/ integrated leadership)	Emotion – Sensitivity – Trust – Respect	Informal
	Output	Discipline culture	Attitude	PDR
	Outcome	Teaching culture	Effective communication	Policy
	Lack of feedback			

Thus it would seem that in this case, the discipline culture influences the individual perception of peer review, but that a common discipline is not a pre-requisite for knowledge sharing or effectively providing feedback. Ultimately, the interviews revealed that participants believe that the principles of learning and teaching transcend the discipline, and coming from different disciplines could potentially enhance reflections on principles of learning and teaching.

Group Leadership

In relation to Group Leadership, participants brought slightly different perspectives to the concept of leadership and peer review, depending on their faculty. Some participants saw a top-down approach to encouraging peer review through a wider university policy as being the preferred option, where as others advocated for a bottom-up approach; being driven by academics in departments to identify what works for them (i.e. quality enhancement). Another regular comment was that peer review should be for all—it should not be an individualistic exploit, but rather embedded within a collective culture of engagement.

Management Support

In discussing Management Support, one central theme that emerged from the data was the existing tension between top-down encouragement versus top-down directives to engage in peer review from the university management. A consistent message was that peer review needs to be encouraged on a wider macro-culture level by management introducing policies and building it into workloads. Some interviewees suggested that it could be built into performance development review supervision so that people are required to complete peer review, but others rejected the quality assurance idea. The majority who mentioned a need for policy also stressed the importance of funding the implementation of peer review so that it could work effectively. The final main theme was that even if introducing policy (i.e., a top-down approach) there still needs to be flexibility to allow academics to adapt the peer review system to suit their needs within their own departmental micro-culture (bottom-up).

Teaching Culture

The interview data revealed further tensions around whether there is a culture at Macquarie University that values teaching. The majority of participants had the clear perception that teaching (and therefore peer review) is not valued in their department. Some interviewees intimated that the same culture exists on a wider level throughout the university, as teaching was not as highly valued as research, and the only way to make it work would be to give incentives. Generally, the comments point to the university as having an individualistic teaching culture, not a collective, collaborative teaching culture (community of practice); although some individuals expressed eagerness to engage in peer review and the opportunity to work more closely with colleagues.

It can be seen from the overview of the four leadership themes above that there are clear tensions between perceptions of peer review as a form of quality assurance or quality enhancement of teaching. The two main areas of concern are in relation to: formality (top-down) versus informality (bottom-up) and operationalization.

Formality (top-down) versus Informality (bottom-up)

One clear issue that came through from the data was that although participants were generally positive about the notion of peer review, they were concerned about the procedures, that is, how it would be implemented. Generally, participants favored a move from a formal (controlled) approach to an informal (promoting teaching and learning) approach. They were more in favor of a collaborative ‘peer enhancement’ process that could function within a community of practice, and believed that directive ‘peer evaluation’ schemes do not work; as illustrated by the following quote:

> I guess, peer observation, to be successful, it has to have a human side to it. It can’t be just tick box, it can’t be just writing half a page or a page or 20 pages document. It has to have a human side of it. So to be able to have this human side, we have to have relationships and to be able to have relationships, we have to be given opportunities to create that relationships. (Participant 3)

One interviewee used the metaphor of a carrot or a stick to discuss how a formal process would not be successful:

> Anything that you make mandatory, people hate. Peer review is such a sensitive area that I feel that it would not work if you make it mandatory. But if you give them a carrot it will work. Yeah I think the stick approach in peer review will not work. (Participant 4)

The notion of formal or informal peer review intrinsically relates to the concepts of ‘top-down’ versus ‘bottom-up’ peer review, that is whether it is instigated as a directive from the management/leaders at either the macro or micro culture levels, or whether it emerges from a community of practice. For example, in the Faculty of Business and Economics at Macquarie University, academics are expected to engage in peer review; it is built into their workload and it is understood that in order to gain promotion, academics must participate in peer review. This is a top-down directive at the macro (discipline) level.

Participants clearly believed that peer review in teaching is affected by different kinds of cultures, some of which may be in conflict with each other:

- culture of the discipline and the department
- culture of the faculty
- culture of the university
- culture of the society

The following quote from one participant illustrates how the culture is very much influenced by leadership:

> I think that, to be honest, the culture is very much influenced by who the leaders are in the department, who runs the program, who runs the unit, all levels. Who is the unit convenor, who’s the program convenor, who’s the section leader, who’s the department leader and it trickles down, I think. (Participant 7)

A competitive culture (e.g., one that encourages teaching awards) may not be conducive to a collective learning community and peer review as quality enhancement:

> But I think yeah, it’s a competitive culture. People are worried and protective of their own good ideas that are going in their own PDR [performance development review] or their own applications for things, Dean’s awards and things. So amongst some of my colleagues there’s a competitive culture and what I consider, coming from my... background, to be a non generous attitude towards collaboration. (Participant 10)

In sum, the participants noted that any kind of formal, top-down scheme of peer review would be hard to make attractive for academics, as they would engender a competitive culture rather than a collaborative community of practice. In the context of leadership, individual leaders/managers seem to play an essential part in influencing the culture and values around teaching and peer review as a form of quality assurance or quality enhancement.

In addition to concerns around the purposes of peer review, and the potential tensions between a collaborative versus competitive approach, interviewees also commented on the feasibility of peer review, that is, its operationalization.

Operationalization

Throughout the interview data, there were clear discussions about the interaction between different factors that could influence the operationalization of peer review. In particular, people referred to the success of peer review in relation to the agents involved (i.e., the academics themselves as well as the leaders), and the way that they might engage differently in terms of their perceptions and their personality; and also in relation to the institutional culture in the form of policies developed and disseminated by the university across faculties and departments.

Some participants believed that having, or creating, a collective learning community culture is more important than having a formally operationalized structure. One participant noted that it becomes problematic when there are competing structures within the university:

> [when it becomes] problematic is when the competing structures that departments have—local structures—don't correlate with the structures and priorities that have been set either by a faculty or across the university. (Participant 11)

This quote is an example of the potential tensions between micro and macro cultures and structures within the university. The relation between culture and structure is no doubt complex, but Participant 19 recommended focusing on culture:

> So if you want to increase the amount of peer enhancement, you need to look more at the culture than at the structure. Once you've got the culture, the structure will be easy to get. If you don't have the culture, you're wasting your time trying to build a structure. That's my opinion, anyway. Of course, it's much easier to build structures than it is to build culture. (Participant 19)

Some participants made suggestions that one way to mobilize peer review would be to form communities of practice, which can be operationalized in the form of team teaching, as illustrated by the following quote:

> I've really encouraged team teaching and I think we're starting to see a shift in the culture in our section because of that and not just because of me because there are a couple of other people, a few other people, who've really engaged with it. When I started to encourage that, they've really engaged with that and said, yes, let's do that. Then they've also done the same thing. So it's become a few champions, I suppose, that have started to really encourage that philosophy. (Participant 7)

Another form of mobilization suggested was through informal conversation among colleagues who teach the same units, or more widely through networking at inter- and cross-disciplinary levels (such as establishing special interest groups to explore teaching themes). This process would enable the exchange of ideas with colleagues from other disciplines:

> I'm always very open to collaborating across disciplines and working with anyone. I just think you can learn from any number of people. One of the reasons why I often put myself forward for university wide projects like this one and I've put myself forward for a couple of other things as well, just to have the opportunity to meet people from other faculties and other departments and talk to people. (Participant 7)

Many of the suggestions closely parallel the central characteristics of 'critical friends:'

> A trusted person who asks provocative questions, provides data to be examined through another lens, and offers critiques of a person's work as a friend. A critical friend takes the time to fully understand the context of the work presented and the outcomes that the person or group is working toward. The friend is an advocate for the success of that work (Costa and Kallick 1993).

Developing a network of critical friends is effectively developing a collective learning community.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we relate our findings to the literature, and in particular to Gosling's (2002) model of peer review (see Table 4.1). Gosling outlined three explicit models: the *evaluation* model, the *development* model, and the *peer review* model, and advocates for the latter as the ideal model as it facilitates distributed leadership, a collective learning community, and peer review as quality enhancement.

The participants in our case study generally have a perception of peer review that is very close to Gosling's (2002) model of *peer review*, that is, what they want is a culture of leadership that encourages peer review as quality enhancement. In Gosling's *peer review* model, teachers of any level of expertise observe each other and receive mutual benefit from the experience. Our participants endorse this model, as they desire a collaborative approach to review.

However, their observations of what is actually happening at Macquarie University is that the purpose of peer review falls between the *development* and *peer review* models. Our participants state clearly that they were interested in improved teaching (*development*); but also believed that improvement occurs by mutual reflection and discussion (*peer review*).

In terms of the outcomes of peer review, our participants clearly aligned with the *peer review* model, in that they wanted discussion and analysis together with increased exposure to teaching practices; and they were less interested in reports and action plans or formal assessment (which would be central to the *development* model). Our participants also clearly endorsed the *peer review* model in terms of who benefits from the engagement in the process, as a clear theme.

So overall, the participants in this study articulated the view that Gosling's (2002) model of *peer review* is preferable to the models of *development* or *evaluation*. This can been see in the central concepts identified: enlightenment (consciousness raising); empowerment; knowledge sharing; feelings of confidence; constructive and beneficial.

Our findings suggest, however, that if peer review is going to be successful at Macquarie University, then there needs to be a shift in the leadership culture to move from a more formal, management based form of peer evaluation to a more collective, distributed, community of practice model of peer review, whereby academics can engage in dynamic and meaningful interaction between peers and colleagues in order to enhance their teaching.

To sum up, the overriding theme is that there does seem to be a tension between the micro and macro culture and the need for formal/informal or top-down/ bottom-up schemes. Participants seem more inclined towards an informal, collaborative, bottom-up *peer review* model; they want to participate in it, but they feel strongly that you cannot impose it from the top. They want to be driving it at the micro-level to prevent a culture of competitiveness or quality assurance, otherwise people will not want to engage in it. Conversely, there was also recognition that you need a system in place at the macro-level (policies, procedures), otherwise people get so busy that they will not find the time to do it; they will not necessarily take the initiative. Therefore the tension arises as there is a clear message that they need encouragement to engage in peer review, but they do not want to be directed to do it.

So there is evidence of tension at Macquarie University between peer review as quality enhancement versus quality assurance. The leadership will have a challenge ahead to explore how to find that balance. But the most important thing to note is that all participants agreed that peer review in teaching is something that is worthwhile.

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Chapter 5
Climates of Communication: Collegiality, Affect, Spaces and Attitudes in Peer Review

Trudy Ambler, Meena Chavan, Jennifer Clarke and Nicole Matthews

Introduction

Our focus in this chapter is on communication and its role in peer review. It is easy to imagine an exploration of this theme which would centre on modes of communication in the process of conducting peer review: the comparative effectiveness of email and face-to-face conversations, for example. Equally, one might imagine a discussion that focuses on the management of information flow around peer review: how misinformation about peer reviews might be redressed, or how 'best practice' models of peer review might be disseminated. Or one might envisage a consideration of the importance of the communication 'skills' of those initiating and implementing peer review schemes and the way in which such skills might be developed. Indeed, despite our own involvement in the research reported here, as participants as well as scholars, in setting out to analyse the results of this research, we expected to find these kinds of themes.

One of the merits of qualitative research, however, is its capacity to surprise; in the words of Willis and Trondman (2000, p. 4) "to produce knowledge not pre-figured in... starting out theoretical positions." The potential framings of communication in peer review described above have as their underpinnings a rational and linear understanding of communication that have been commonplace in both everyday life and in management studies. Quirke (1996, p. 69), for instance, describes common assumptions about communication within business and management, including the notion of communication as delivering information. Daymon (1999, p. 245)

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notes that "public relations practitioners, consultants and management-oriented researchers have mostly followed structural-functional conceptions of communication" in which employees are understood as "passive receptors of management communication" (p. 242) and "communication is treated as a tool for the managerial control of a rationally organised system" (p. 243). More sophisticated accounts might suggest that the message is encoded by the sender and decoded by the receiver (Riggio et al. 2003; Quirke 1996). A less than skillful sender might fail to communicate effectively, or the message might be misunderstood due to 'noise' in the moment of communication.

However, this account of communication has long been critically interrogated within disciplines such as media and cultural studies. For instance, foundational research on the way in which various audiences understand news bulletins, points out that viewers with different political commitments understand the very same news broadcast quite differently. Perhaps more significantly, the emotional engagement of viewers with the programme, its genre as well as its content was found to have a profound impact on the way in which a broadcast was interpreted, or indeed if it was watched at all (Morley 1980). Such research suggests a very different account of communication, in which 'messages' are intertwined with the people sending them, and their meanings are inextricable from the responses of their addressees. Understandings, orientations and emotions, not just skills in effectively 'encoding' messages, become central to this account of communication. The findings emerging from the research reported in this chapter speak to this very different account of communication, where intersubjectivity and affective experiences are instrumental in creating a climate of communication that can enhance peer review.

A starting point in this chapter is a brief account of the methodology; we then explore four themes that emerged strongly in interviews and questionnaires when participants discussed communication. We discuss each of these themes—collegiality, attitudes, affective experiences and spaces—in turn. While an understanding of communication as shaped by these themes—notably affect – have begun to emerge in recent research within education after a long period of neglect (e.g., Trigwell 2012; Postareff and Lindblom-Ylänne 2011; Harrison and Cairns 2008; Temple and Fillippako 2006) very little of this less technicist and rational account of communication is to be found in research on leadership, communication and peer review in higher education. Our aim here is to use this case study, based on participatory action research, to start thinking through the implications of this reframing of communication for practices around peer review.

Methodology

The primary data collected for the research were qualitative: narratives (stories of teachers' experiences of peer review) were collected through the use of a questionnaire and one-on-one interviews (Connelly and Clandinin 1999; Kooy 2006). Participants/researchers/co-investigators engaged with the narrative data through a process that involved reading and discussion whereby they were able to interrogate their experiences of peer reviews to learn from them (Boud and Walker 1998).

The process for this research included three key phases. Phase 1 of the research involved members of academic staff from Macquarie University (an Australian Research Intensive University) nominating to become co-investigators in the project. The co-investigators were both research participants and they had the opportunity to be active researchers in the project; they also self-selected to be in one of three research groups. The three groups were designated leadership, peer review and communications. In phase 2, staff at four universities—Macquarie and La Trobe (Australia), Lund (Sweden) and Pretoria (South Africa)—completed an online questionnaire that documented their understandings and experiences of peer review. Phase 3 of the research involved co-investigators and members of the lead research team participating in one-on-one interviews that were conducted by the research project manager. These interviews explored the peer review of teaching and the social, communicative and interpersonal leadership skills that supported the peer review process. All the interviews were externally transcribed and de-identified transcripts were returned to the interviewee to check for accuracy and further de-identification. Subsequently, the transcripts were analysed by the three research groups. In total, 81 academics from three different countries completed a questionnaire, and a further 30 academics from the lead institution participated in one-on-one interviews where they explored their experiences of peer review.

The first stage of data analysis involved members of the Communications Group reading an equal number of the transcripts from the one-on-one interviews and the open-ended questionnaires that sought to solicit narrative answers. (Please note that quotations from the interviews will be identified by a participant number, while quotations from anonymised questionnaires will be described in general as 'questionnaire'.) Key words or themes (thematic analysis) related to communication skills, knowledge, strategies and understandings required to lead and enhance learning and teaching through peer-to-peer interactions were noted, specifically in the context of Peer Review. The Communications Group then met and shared their observations and agreement was reached concerning the overarching ideas related to the development of understandings about communication in the context of peer review. In order to trace a theme within one transcript as well as across all transcripts and questionnaires, NViVO (a qualitative research software program) was used to code the data. Having completed this process of analysis, the authors of this chapter engaged with the data to learn about communication within peer review. This final process involved identifying recurring terms and themes, noting absences and elisions, and observing relationships between themes. This chapter presents snapshots from the research interviews and questionnaires that explore the major characteristics of communication that the academics recognised as most important in contributing to the process of peer review.

Collegiality in Peer Review

A cardinal in the Catholic Church is reported to have said that the only passage in Scripture that he could find in support of collegiality was Matthew 26:56: *And they all fled* (Gray 2008), which is apparently the action many wish to take upon hearing the words: peer review.

Collegiality has been considered a *conditio sine que* for teachers' professional development and, in many instances, a solution to all problems, including over-coming negative attitudes towards peer review (Little 1990; Clement and Vandenberghe 2000). The findings of the current research suggest that participants repeatedly and consistently linked collegiality with communication around peer review. However, Little (1990) eloquently points out that "the term collegiality has remained conceptually amorphous and ideologically sanguine." Similarly, Balsmeyer et al. (1996) note that the "behaviors synonymous with collegiality are frequently unwritten within the academic community as well as being poorly defined in the literature." Regarding collegiality and the process of peer review of teaching, one interviewee stated:

> . . . people need to be able to practice and work in the knowledge that their colleagues will be respectful and professional of who they are as people and what they do. (Participant 11)

In the same vein, another participant stated that:

> My understanding is that this (peer review) is the process of collaborating with teaching colleagues through having them observe my practice and vice versa; sharing ideas about strategies, teaching activities and developmental activities such as writing for conference presentations and journal articles, and giving and receiving critical feedback on these. (Questionnaire)

Similarly, Balsmeyer et al. (1996) have described collegial behaviours as including the willingness to provide guidance and help colleagues in their professional duties, respect for the ideas of others, and conduct of one's professional life without prejudice toward others.

In addition to collaboration and collegiality (two terms that are often used together in teaching), autonomy appears to be essential for professional growth. As one participant put it:

> I don't think people learn very well when you take a kind of "I know and you don't" position. Learning is much better when people feel like, hey let's exchange ideas . . . there are so many good teachers who do it in so many different ways. (Participant 13)

Wildman and Niles (1987, p. 6) also observed that "complex learning demands that learners have substantial freedom to direct their own growth. To suggest otherwise is to miss the point of several dozen years of research and exploration into human learning and development." These researchers noted that collaboration naturally complements autonomy and that the freedom to direct one's learning is an essential component of collaboration (Wildman and Niles 1987).

However, from the data it was apparent that participation in peer review cannot be forced upon teachers by imposing 'unnatural' alliances. As one respondent revealed:

> I think that in a cooperative and collegial environment, peer review can be facilitated and encouraged, but I think that, unless there is confidence and good will on all sides, imposing

> requirements can be counterproductive. For example negative comments, even if the intention is constructive can undermine confidence, but bland positives can be a waste of time. (Questionnaire)

In this regard, another referred to a 'microculture' of collegiality:

> . . . I have observed some colleagues are not that willing to open themselves to other people and receive feedback. . . So to some extent I think the personality of the person and the people are important. Maybe we can refer to it as microculture. (Participant 2)

Hargreaves and Dawe (1990) clearly distinguish between 'collaborative cultures' and 'contrived collegiality.' They describe collaborative cultures as being composed of relationships characterised by openness, trust, and support, in which teachers define and develop their goals as a community. In contrast, 'contrived collegiality' is described as consisting of "administratively contrived interactions among teachers where they meet and work to implement the curricula and instructional strategies developed by others" (Hargreaves and Dawe 1990, p. 227). In effective peer review of teaching, specific methods are not forcibly imposed; rather, suggestions are made and accepted, rejected, or modified in an open and respectful environment. Furthermore, collegial groups are dynamic and change over time as experiences and needs vary. The teaching environment is not static in any regard. As a participant stated:

> Later on in my career, I found it very useful to share ideas with colleagues and have colleagues comment on my work and teaching. (Participant 2)

This quote alludes to what Wildman and Niles (1987) proposed: that effective collegial groups will form and disintegrate as the needs of individual teachers change. Thus, in light of these differences, collegial groups must be flexible in their configuration and goals. Wildman and Niles (1987, p. 8) also contend that it is the teachers themselves who must decide on the specifics of their collaboration and that "control of collegiality, either externally or hierarchically, is antithetical to the basic concept." This was also echoed in numerous responses in the questionnaire to queries regarding the instigation and process of peer review:

> Too much control is stifling and can evoke the impression that academics are not trusted. (Questionnaire)
> It (peer review) should be conducted in a friendly and encouraging environment rather than authoritative or threatening atmosphere. (Questionnaire)
> However, it must be exercised with the utmost care as a support mechanism and not a punitive measure. (Questionnaire)
> Mostly peer review is informal and relies on communication between colleagues who trust one another. (Questionnaire)

In summary, collegiality appears essential for effective peer review and yet individuals have diverse conceptions of who their colleagues actually are: from simply someone with whom one works to a person one respects, trusts and is considered a peer. While collaboration and collegiality are considered critical for professional growth in teaching, these elements cannot be forced or artificial, but should be allowed to evolve with the teachers controlling the interactions. Finally, an open environment (or microclimate) built on trust, support and common goals facilitates the kind of open communication that enables peer review to be successful.

Attitudes and Their Impact on Communication in Peer Review

Clearly emerging from interviews and questionnaires is an emphasis on the role of attitudes in shaping whether communication takes places between colleagues around peer review and, if that communication takes place, how valuable and effective it is. A simple definition of relevance to this research is that attitude is a mindset or a tendency to act in a particular way due to both an individual's experience and temperament (Pickens 2005). This section of the chapter explores some of the attitudes identified by the academics in this study towards key topics that have a bearing on peer review of teaching and communication around it.

Proactive attitudes can be passive or resistant and a proactive attitude is a personality characteristic that can have implications for motivation and action in relation to peer review. The proactive individual believes in the existence of resources in the form of goods, people, services that can be influenced to sustain the attainment of goals (Schmitz and Schwarzer 1999) as one respondent noted:

> I feel that if I get an opinion about my teaching I will be able to improve it. For me now it's kind of a report for myself, to take my teaching to the next level and when you get better at it, you like to show off. So I'm at that stage now where I like to show off all I use in my teaching, so I'm all welcome to peer review now. (Participant 14)

A passive attitude is where people do not take action but let things happen to them because they have to happen, as one of the participants reported about a colleague as follows:

> I'm thinking of one particular colleague who does it because he has to but he doesn't particularly like it. If they feel that it's something that they have to do, then they probably won't want to do it. Yes, because people then will be resistant to it. (Participant 7)

Resistant attitudes may emerge due to lack of knowledge, cultural issues, and resistance to change. Some academics do not understand what peer reviews are, why they are important, and when and how to perform them. One of the most common reasons for resistance is the fear of management retribution and specifically so for those staff who are not tenured:

> The other thing with peer review of teaching is, if you're not a tenured member of staff, there's that added nervousness about performance that, I wish, didn't exist but it's a fact of life here, I think. (Participant 21)

Another barrier is the reviewer's attitude, where they feel who are they to judge someone, and if they are doing the 'right thing', as quoted by one respondent:

> In the first situation, actually, I was not that comfortable because I had to recommend a person or reject them—and therefore I was not that comfortable because I was not sure whether I'm doing the right thing or not, and if actually my judgment would do justice to the person or not. (Participant 2)

It can be seen from the above statement that academics can feel uncomfortable with peer review, as the notion of specialist knowledge and responsibility for others is important. Then there are the many other defences. People who do not want to engage in peer review will expend extensive efforts explaining why reviews do not fit their culture, needs, or time constraints.

Gunawardena et al. (2003) stated that peer review can be readily learned, and it can be tacitly attained. Peer review in the educational context should therefore prove to be a useful tool for facilitating cultural change as the process offers both the means for explicit and implicit learning about new approaches to teaching. However, there are some concerns, that few faculty members have any real pedagogical knowledge base and thus bring to the review of teaching only their own biases and preferences which can be a particularly challenging state of affairs in the context of peer review of teaching (Hutchings 1996). This can be perceived in the quotes from two of the participants stating:

> I feel slightly uncomfortable because I want to know who the peer is. There are peers and peers. (Participant 18)
> But if I am not allowed to choose who is going to review me, that could be a problem. Probably it's because I would value someone's comment more than someone else's. I guess I'm also aware of the potentially intrusive judgemental nature of that. I think a lot of people do perceive peer observation as being potentially judgemental, telling them what to do. (Participant 3)

It is therefore not surprising, that most academics in higher education, not having been educated as teachers nor having practiced teaching in a scholarly manner can find peer review of teaching daunting (Millis 1992).

Openness

The attitude of being 'open' unlocks many doors towards giving and receiving advice about teaching and learning in peer review. This was evident in the account provided by one research participant who states:

> So I think for me the best way is to be an open person who's willing to listen if people have something to say, and then not be afraid to try and offer some advice if I can come up with it, which you can't always. But at least to look like you're open might help . . . If you've got a more encouraging open style as well: I will listen to you. Everyone has a valid opinion and even if we disagree, you're still entitled to give your opinion or to give your suggestions and to talk about this in an open way. It's about being open and willing to listen and actively listening—showing that you're listening. (Participant 17)

But then there are those academics that are not as accepting of another's openness as one respondent articulates:

> I think, actually, to some extent it also depends on people's personality, and to what extent people that you're working with or they will be in a relationship to you as colleagues, are open to these types of ideas, still I have observed some colleagues that are not that willing to open themselves to other people and receive feedback. They think what they are doing is the right thing. (Participant 2)

This view was also supported by a respondent who comments:

> I do think that there needs to be an acceptance of different pedagogical—that is, learning and teaching—styles, of different backgrounds, from different countries and cultures. I've been in plenty of situations where I really felt like turning to some of my colleagues and saying to them "... You know, your attitude really could be improved", but it can be difficult, after all who am to say what sort of attitude they should or shouldn't have? It can be very disappointing when you come up against someone who is quite closed off, not even willing to listen. (Participant 13)

In an open attitude towards peer review, we observed a willingness on the part of an individual to listen, consider new information and the opinions of others, the capacity to confront a challenge, be receptive to new ideas and evidence, and see the 'self' as a work in progress.

Teaching and Research

Attitudes towards teaching and research were identified as contributing to communication around peer review. This focus was not just affected by an individual; it was also considered to be apparent and embedded within a social setting such as a department or faculty. One participant in the research made this idea explicit when they state:

> When we say "attitude" this can refer to peoples' or departments' or faculties' attitude toward teaching. Teaching is often seen as necessary but it is not valued. Research on the other hand is valued highly. Good research gets you promoted, good teaching not really. (Participant 6)

The respondent comments that responses to peer review are not just about "*personality ... [but] also what people perceive as their role in the department.*" The same respondent goes on to link this devaluing of teaching with a critical view of peer review:

> We're a very research-intensive department so there are some people that see that they're here to be researchers and teaching is something that they have to do and it sort of gets in the way a bit. So that if they were then told that they had to—you'd have to be trained if you were going to do peer evaluation—sit through that training and then maybe had to observe other people's teaching or have someone in there that gave them feedback. They might see that as extra work. (Participant 6)

Another participant connected this emphasis on research to a refusal by some staff to respond meaningfully to peer review processes:

> So I guess there are some people on the one hand, and you give them feedback and you know they're going to take it on board and they're constantly reflecting on what they're doing. But there's another group of people, and especially with this unit review process, you sort of come away not particularly satisfied because you've given them all these constructive comments but you know probably there's never going to be any change and they're just going to dismiss it. (Participant 7)

The beliefs expressed by this participant, where research is apparently privileged in relation to teaching, could create the kind of environment where academics would be reluctant to invest time in the peer review of teaching, as the benefits are not valued by colleagues, the department and the university as a whole.

Relationship to the Institution

The was little or no reflection from participants about policies or large scale management or implementation of peer review—perhaps reflecting the fact that most participants were in teaching and lower level leadership roles, and the lack of formal peer review policies at the institutions from whom our participants were drawn. Reflections by our participants on the relationship between academics, peer review and institutions were often articulated in an affective rather than analytical mode. This finding reflects the wider literature on peer review. It has been suggested that academics are often unsure as to the purpose of peer review and may feel a sense of threat from the evaluation that follows. They may also feel that peer review undermines their independence or professionalism (Hodgkinson 1994). Some universities use the peer review of teaching process for appraisal and monitoring systems, which can lead to hostility and resistance (Lam 2001).

The literature suggests an institutional context that impacts on attitudes to peer review revolve around workload and personal control. Ever increasing responsibility, increasing burden by administrators to perform, and the reduced amount of input regarding policies that affect teachers' jobs and academic freedom can lead to "suspicion, mistrust, and resistance" (Shortland 2004, p. 220). Ultimately, this can create fear and conflict in the review process (Conley and Glasman 2008).

The idea of even having a colleague sit in on a lecture could be perceived as threatening (Hutchings 1996) and the reasons for this are cited by one of the participants in the study:

> I think though when we talk about peer evaluation of course it brings up in my mind the neo-liberal context of the university we're living in and the kind of increasing use of metrics and surveillance of jobs and so on. It obviously brings up the spectre of peer evaluation for example being included as part of your Personal Development Review (PDR) process. So I think it's a very off-putting exercise if it's framed within that context. (Participant 13)

However, this relationship with the institution was mediated through interpersonal, collegial relationships which often presented peer review in a less threatening light. The growing interest in interdisciplinary teaching and the increase in the frequency of collaborative or team teaching in Australian higher education, the belief that teaching exists in the 'private' sphere of academic life may be altering. Research suggests that academics who regularly engage in team teaching are far more comfortable with the prospect of having their teaching reviewed by a peer than academics whose teaching is more solitary (Harris et al. 2008). This view was echoed in this study:

> When I consider my teaching or my career in education, I think some of my most positive experiences have been when I have had the opportunity to be with other teachers and to learn with them. Last semester I was only too happy to spend some time observing some of my colleague's and providing some straight forward, constructive feedback. It's not about judging from a template of appropriate teaching. (Participant 14)

Affective Experiences: Fear, Respect and Trust in Communication

Academics regularly work interpersonally or relationally to cultivate an understanding of the human demands of the specific situations in which they find themselves. The academics that were interviewed in this research used a range of words and phrases to talk about their affective experiences in the context of peer review. For the purpose of this research we draw on the work of Shephard (2008, p. 88) who identifies that the affective domain in learning "relates to values, attitudes and behaviours and involves the learner emotionally." The use of language to talk about affective experiences, particularly emotions, is frequently imprecise and idiosyncratic because people express and experience the affective dimension differently. Nevertheless, "in an attempt to understand the situations in which they find themselves" (Dirkx 2001, p. 64) academics tell others about their affective experiences and in this study they talked about how fear, respect and trust impacted on the quality of communication within the peer review process.

Fear was one experience encountered by academics in the context of peer review and it occurred for a variety of reasons (Shortland 2004). The cause of "*fright amongst some teachers*" (Questionnaire) was attributed to the fact that teaching is frequently a solitary, autonomous activity (Jarzabkowski and Bone 1998) and teachers are not accustomed to seeing their work as shared. It was acknowledged by one academic that in the early stages of their teaching career they would have been "*quite upset had somebody come into the lectures*" (Participant 5) particularly if they started to form judgments about what they observed. Academics voiced concern about wanting to be a good teacher and were fearful of appearing foolish in front of their peers. A feeling of being judged was generally unhelpful in peer review situations and usually occurred when academics felt they were imposed upon and this left them feeling "anxious and defensive about the process" (Peel 2005, p. 493). Avoiding the use of language that inferred any judgment (Lomas and Nicholls 2005) and moving towards opening a discussion with a colleague to explain aspects of teaching and unpack the classroom situation was one suggestion for managing this problematic area. Levels of fright in peer review relationships seemed to increase with diminished levels of control over 'who' was observing the teaching and 'what' was been observed. Another factor that incited fear was attributed to the communication style of colleagues and their inability or unwillingness to change their behavior even when it had a negative impact on peers. This was very clearly articulated by one research participant who comments:

> ... in committee meetings or whatever, sometimes you would get a bit upset and he'd [Head of Department] just say, well, "that's my way". I think there's a real borderline between, well, there's a way that people talk and then there's just being a bit rude or not taking into account the way that you talk and how it impacts on other people. (Participant 7)

In situations such as the one mentioned in this narrative extract academics were more inclined to retreat from peer relationships for fear of being "*shouted down or being dismissed*" (Participant 7). A more open style of leadership that encouraged opportunities for listening to others, that valued diverse opinions and created openings for suggestions was more likely to facilitate peer to peer relationships that made the review of teaching possible. It was also suggested that any academic involved in a peer review relationship should be sensitive to what others are saying, listen carefully and take a genuine interest in how others might feel or respond to what they might say.

The way in which peer review is conducted was another quality identified in the study. Respect was a key term used to explain the conditions for a positive peer review experience (Carter 2008). This was something that could be achieved through creating "*a friendly and encouraging environment rather than authoritative or threatening atmosphere*" (Questionnaire) and ensuring that between the reviewer and reviewed mutual respect and good relations were already in existence (Costello et al. 2001). Another factor contributing to respect was the capacity of peers to demonstrate they valued the professional role of colleagues within the teaching space, and also appreciated them as a person, as one participant declared "*taking my Mockingbird quote: we walk differently, we've got different shoes*" (Participant 4). Respect for someone's teaching seemed to be an essential pre-requisite for peer review otherwise academics could be less inclined to act on whatever suggestions were offered by a reviewer. This did not mean that disagreement was not welcome but the grounds for making this possible had to be established first. Respect between peers allowed reviewees the opportunity to share constructive advice and observations about teaching but most importantly feedback was more likely to be acted upon, as one participant notes:

> Whoever does the evaluating needs to be respected—like I didn't respect the fellow who was the head of the department . . . I didn't respect his teaching at all and I would have never wanted him to be an evaluator. . . Sure enough I paid no attention to any of his comments. (Participant 20)

It was recognised that difficulties can arise from peer review relationships thus for respect to be present it was important that anyone involved in planning and organising a process of peer review should be appropriately skilled and prepared to manage any potential issues.

A trusting environment (Marshall 2004; Lygo-Baker and Hatzipanigos 2007) and relationships (Fullerton 1993; Martin and Double 1998; Shortland 2004) were considered to be key qualities for communication between colleagues in the context of peer review. Informal relationships developed between colleagues who might happen to talk about teaching over a cup of tea was one way that trust could be developed. Acting as a role model at the atomistic level through engaging in peer review was another strategy identified as 'infectious' and useful for encouraging and developing trust even amongst staff who might be resistant to the peer review process. There was support for peer review as "*an expected and accepted part of academic work*" (Questionnaire). However, the scope for establishing trust at an institutional level with regard to peer review was almost not worth considering because broad cultural and political barriers seemed beyond the reach and energy of academics. Peer review managed at the local level (Maher et al. 2006) led from within, where a high level of trust and collegiality amongst participants was present was more rewarding, attainable and desirable.

Constructive feedback, provided in a way that enabled peers to learn together and take something from the conversation about "*what works and what doesn't and why*" (Participant 7), helped cultivate trust. An understanding of teaching as a collaborative enterprise, rather than focussing on incentives such as a salary increase or promotion, also offered scope for the development of trusting relationships. Honesty was identified as a feature of trusting relationships and it was manifested in the form of constructive criticism in the spirit of "*look you could have done this better*" (Participant 16). And in some situations to disagree with the opinion offered by the reviewer, thank them for their comment and, over time reflect on their input is an adequate outcome of peer review. The idea of just "*being too nice*" (Participant 16) was considered counterproductive. Not wishing to hurt the feelings of a colleague tended to indicate that the level of trust for peer review to be useful was not evident. Close relationships developed through activities such as co-teaching were seen as positive ways of developing trust. In the process of working together academics are able to understand the context of the teaching situation; this knowledge provides a basis for communication. Peer relationships established over an extended period of time provided grounds for risk taking that often further enhanced levels of trust. This became possible because it facilitated a change in perspective:

> One of my colleagues who was involved with the unit ages, like 10 years, she said, it's not going to work, it's not going to work, you're just going to ruin it... I said, trust me. Leave everything with me. If there are any problems ... using technology in this area, and the tutors will be able to assess the assessment task much faster. They don't have to come and collect papers and everything like that. She was really, really upset that I didn't listen to her because she had more experience with the unit, whereas I didn't. But after a semester, she said, I'm glad we [moved]. Isn't that wonderful? I didn't believe it would work. (Participant 3)

The move to change and learn as a consequence of a peer review relationship, as evidenced in the above narrative, can be a sensitive and fragile process. Many teachers become very involved in their work and any reconfiguration of teaching practices may be seen as a threat because it requires a change in identity. Colleagues discussing teaching with each other and giving advice to one another through informal discussions can create a valuable foundation for peer review. Academics need to feel comfortable and trust that they can take risks, and feel safe to learn.

Spaces of Communication

Participants in the research were specifically asked about the spaces of peer review in interviews. However, space and spatial metaphors emerged throughout the transcripts. The way in which spaces were implicated in communication around peer review strongly echoed important themes in recent work within sociological and cultural theory, and more latterly, education studies, around space.

Space, according to these writers, is much more than simply physical places. Rather, drawing on theorists like Lefebvre (1991) it has been argued that 'space' describes the way in which places are experienced and even constructed through social relationships. Space does not exist independent of the people who use it—rather, space is something that is 'done' (Mulcahy 2006, p. 58). Consequently spaces or topologies (McGregor 2003) are also organised though time. The same physical place may constitute very different social spaces at different times. For example, a study by Rossi et al. (2011) on the role of the staff room in the induction of new school teachers emphasises that the space of the staff room is very different for the specialist physical education teacher who coaches sport during the lunch break, than for other teachers who gather there to eat, socialise and talk about their work (Rossi et al. 2011). McGregor (2003, p. 357) thus evocatively describes educational institutions, "precarious geographical achievements."

Very little has been written about the spaces of professional learning available to lecturers and tutors in university (though see Harrison and Cairns 2008; Hurdley 2010), despite increasing interest in the role of space in the learning of university students (Temple and Fillippako 2006). In the last 10 years, there has been some work done on the spaces for professional education of school teachers. We are well aware of the differences between these sectors. Indeed, one of the participants who had previously been a school teacher explicitly highlighted the differences between her experiences of staffrooms in schools which she suggests are spaces to "*share good ideas, share strategies, share resources*." According to her assessment "*that isn't part of my perception so far—that isn't part of the tertiary culture*" (Participant 10). Nonetheless, we would like to use the framework elaborated to discuss spaces of professional learning in primary and secondary education as a starting point for contextualising and making sense of the observations of our participants.

There has been much discussion of the 'egg carton' geographies of many primary and secondary teachers' working environments, with each teacher in 'their own' classroom, seen as working in isolation (see McGregor 2003). These spatial metaphors are evoked in participants' ways of speaking about peer observations of teaching in particular. Having an observing teacher 'sitting in' is frequently mentioned by participants as threatening. One participant, rejecting an inappropriate paradigm for peer observation, describes the experience as someone "*bursting in*" (Participant 11). The commonsense understanding of lecture theatres and tutorial rooms evoked in many participants' accounts is that such spaces are in some ways places of private communication between teacher and students rather than places for communication between staff.

> . . . as soon as you go down the line of walking into their identity and their teaching, you're walking into very sensitive . . . a personal domain. (Participant 11)

One participant described peer review as a strategy to combat such spatial arrangements: "*It's about conversations that have to take place to avoid this privacy of teaching that happens, everyone working in the room in their office. It's about that*." (Participant 15).

Individual staff offices emerge in the responses of our participants as particular kinds of spaces for communication around peer review. Some participants viewed these spaces as providing occasions for informal conversations about teaching or curriculum design, but offices were seen as mostly for more formal and sometimes unpleasant conversations. One respondent commented, for example: "*the people who are working as tutors and stuff for me, when you have to provide that negative feedback I think you do need to approach that more formally and it is probably best if it happens in your office*" (Participant 1). Such spaces might be characterised by "*the formal sit down*" (Participant 9). Some participants described more formal structures and occasions for peer review as sometimes necessary if not always enjoyable.

In contrast, hallways and corridors came up over and over again as important places for informal communication. Walking and talking emerged repeatedly in the interviews as key moments for peer exchanges about teaching:

> I was quite aware that the students weren't really getting it because it was really difficult stuff... She just gave me an idea of a better way to approach it... I think it worked really well and it was, it was just an informal conversation walking back to our rooms, which were beside each other (Participant 1)

> That conversation actually mostly took place in informal situations, not necessarily in my office, for example... we're walking together ... and discussing some of the issues (Participant 2)

Such comments echo the observations of Hurdley (2010, p. 49) in her "ethnography of corridors." Corridors, she argues, are spaces for "informal exchange of information." While Hurdley (2010) notes that such encounters in corridors can precipitate anxiety, none of our participants described these informal conversations in such negative terms. Rather, they were seen as fruitful and longed for if absent. These accounts of corridor encounters underline the nature of space as socially shaped:

> In the lift, over coffee, the coffee cart, the corridor, over lunch. Lots of informal conversations because that relationship became a friend relationship as well as colleague. So you do tend to talk about the progress of a unit or student feedback as part of your relationship (Participant 10)

In keeping with wider work on informal learning in the workplace which highlights lunchbreak as a time for collaborative problem solving (Boud et al. 2009), this account describes conversations around teaching as occurring in permeable space: 'breaks' from work become key spaces for talking about teaching, and warm personal relationships become the most productive sites of peer analysis of curriculum and delivery. Several participants spoke about their wish for the spaces in which these encounters might occur:

> ... both of the places that I've taught, they had a central kind of tea room... quite often it would happen there and people would just say you know I've got a problem with this student or I've got a problem in this class and people would just talk about it. (Participant 1)
> ... we need a sitting room that we could actually sit together. At [previous institution], it was really wonderful, lovely. They had a room maybe twice as big as my room and that was the lunch, coffee, tea, ... but it was always every day. The morning tea was at always the same time, 10:30am to 11:00am. ... Here, there is nothing like that available, therefore, I have my lunch in my room, and I have my morning tea in my room. I don't have any opportunity to bump into people. I have to stop by somebody's door so that I could talk them. But if they come to the coffee room that shows that they're available to chit-chat. (Participant 3)

We note that that these excerpts emphasise the temporal dimensions of spaces for peer discussion of teaching and learning. Spaces are only social at certain times. Conversations take place in offices "*at the end of the day*" (Participant 12) or before the start, or during the breaks within formal meetings (Participant 9). The generally positive account of such informal learning opportunities that emerges from this research is reinforced by the work of Boud et al. (2009) on informal peer learning. Interestingly, these writers flag up the dangers of trying to formalise these highly valued 'chats':

> . . . we suggest that there are dangers in believing that if only informal learning could be formalised, then learning (and through extension, productivity) could be improved. This is not because informal learning and everyday chat at work are not important. Indeed they are vital, but by naming and managing them as learning, the meanings and experiences change. From governing themselves, workers experience being governed by others. (Boud et al. 2009, p. 331)

The way in which spaces are constituted and used, then, plays a key part in the way in which peer review is understood and located in the terrain between self-government and managerial discipline. Spaces enable some forms of communication and relationships and deter others; in fact, if spaces are constituted through social relationships, we might suggest that spaces are intimately woven together by moments of communication.

Conclusion

The emphases and ellipses within the questionnaire and interview responses from which this article spring have drawn attention away from communication imagined as systems or skills. Instead, our participants' insistence in their accounts of peer review on the importance of the interpersonal, the affective, the attitudinal and the spatial, have directed our attention to a very different dimension of communication. This emphasis on the small scale, the informal, and the spaces in which all-important relationships are constituted resonates a number of key themes in the literature on educational change. Significant changes in education can be characterised by their complexity, their "non linear messiness" in the words of Fullan (2001, p. 207). The significance allocated to difficult-to-manage dimensions of professional communication—informal chats over coffee, attitudes towards the institution and profession, feelings towards one's colleagues—point to the complexity of developing workable peer review processes. Importantly our participants' views on communication in peer review suggest that rather than being an afterthought of large-scale programmatic schemes, the very varied 'microclimates' of communication across departments, faculties and institutions need to be central to the way in which we think about developing opportunities for professional learning from peers in higher education.

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Chapter 6
Six Questions

Michael Hitchens

Introduction

Recent years have seen an increasing focus, including explicit government oversight, on the quality of teaching in higher education. For example, the Australian government has committed AUD1.3 billion to "assuring and strengthening the quality of teaching and learning in higher education" (DIISRTE 2011, p.3) This included the establishment of a new agency to oversee quality assurance in the sector, the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA) and the creation of a website, *My University,* which will have a searchable database of, amongst other things "the quality of teaching and learning outcomes" (DIISRTE n.d.).

Given this focus there has been an understandable interest in how to improve the student learning experience in higher education. One aspect of this is enhancing the performance of higher education professionals. Approaches to this discussed in the literature include compulsory higher education teacher training (Trowler and Bamber 2005), reflective practice (Light et al. 2009) and various quality assurance and audit mechanisms (Westerheijden et al. 2007). These approaches tend to rely on either an enforced regulatory oversight (e.g., quality audit) or the actions of academics in isolation from their colleagues (e.g., reflective practice). They fail to recognise the importance of community to scholarly endeavour. A university is, at least in part, a community of scholars. Cooperation between academic staff is central to improving the quality of learning and teaching in higher education.

One approach that involves collaboration between academic staff is peer review. Peer review has been used in higher education for many years (Wankat and Oreovicz 1993; Fullerton 1999) and an extensive literature has grown up around it. According to Hammersley-Fletcher and Orsmond (2004, p. 489) "Peer observation of teaching can be seen as a means by which the quality of the teaching and learning process in higher education establishments is both accounted for and improved."

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Much of this literature concerns the implementation of the observation. A heavy focus is given to the meetings between the observer and observee. Pre-observation meeting, observation, feedback meeting, are common features across many approaches described in the literature (e.g., see Hammersley-Fletcher and Orsmond 2004; Jarzabkowski and Bone 1998; Rowe et al. 2010; Cosh 2009).

Unfortunately, academics are time-poor and few are education specialists. Many are unaware of, or the lack the opportunity to systematically access, the peer review literature. Beginning the process with the pre-observation meeting ignores any preparation before that point. For example, if the staff member to be reviewed is to meet with a potential reviewer, how was that pairing arrived at? The various motivations for engaging in peer review will impact who should do the observing and what should be the focus of the observation. Approaches that begin with pre-observation meetings, while giving a structure to the interaction between the peers, lack any guidance on preparation that might be done before the interaction begins.

Discussions of peer review are not always readily digestible. For example, the Peer review of teaching in Australian higher education: A handbook to support institutions in developing and embedding effective policies and practices by Harris et al. (2009) runs to over 100 pages. Admittedly it is aimed at institutions, not individual academics, but an academic seeking to engage in peer review for the first time would be likely to seek some guiding framework. Even those guides that are shorter, such as (Rowe et al. 2010), are still not necessarily easily fitted into the schedules that currently confront academics and tend to implicitly assume academics will be able to somehow arrive, fully prepared, at their first meeting with their partners in the observation.

The work reported in this paper aims to fill a gap in the existing literature. Academics who wish to engage with the literature on peer-review need no further assistance. They will be able to assess that material and arrive at an approach suited to their circumstances. Likewise, academics who are experienced in peer review are also able to make informed judgements. However, those academics with neither the time to engage with the literature on, nor with any previous experience with, peer review, have limited resources available to them to undertake their first peer review activity.

This chapter present a process and associated set of materials for peer review of teaching. The process complements the existing literature by adding focus to the preparatory stages of the observation process. The materials, while developed in tandem with the process, are intended for a specific audience. That is, academics unfamiliar with peer review who need accessible guidelines that will produce structured and worthwhile processes and outcomes. Section 2 reviews existing materials and approaches to peer review. Section 3 discusses some of the policy issues surrounding peer review. Section 4 identifies the goals developed for the materials reported here. Section 5 gives an overview of the proposed process. Section 6 describes the enhanced model of peer review. Section 7 gives more information on the materials developed within the project.

Existing Approaches to Peer Observation of Teaching

Much of the existing literature on peer review includes a discussion of the underlying model by which the process of peer observation of teaching is to proceed. The models are reported in varying levels of detail and range from the ones with an emphasis on the process, for example Martin and Double (1998), to more outcomes-based approaches, such as Gosling (2002). A review of this research will provide a context for the current work, which aims to provide guidelines for academics to put peer review of teaching into practice in a convenient and practical form.

The work of Martin and Double (1998) is a representative example of peer review of teaching processes from the 1990's. They present a detailed description of both meetings between the participants in the process and useful guidelines for handling the observation itself. They also place emphasis on the reflective aspects of peer review of teaching, referring to the process as "Peer observation and collaborative reflection" (p. 163). However they give limited attention to the form this reflection should take.

Cosh (2009) also emphasises reflection, entitling her methodology "A Reflective Approach". She distinguishes models of peer review on the basis of those intended for staff development and those intended for staff appraisal; that is, quality enhancement versus quality assurance. She also classifies approaches based on the number of staff involved in the observations: two, three or more. The number of staff involved has obvious effects, both in terms of the amount of feedback received and, if observations are to be reciprocal, the number each staff member must carry out. However, this does not appear to have a fundamental impact on the structure of the actual process. The major steps in Cosh's implementation of peer review of teaching are the practice of observation, feedback and evaluation. Little attention is given to what occurs before the observation, apart from general comments on reflection.

Bell (2002) presents two different ways of modelling peer review of teaching. The first is a two-dimensional model for classifying the process. The first axis is development and training versus performance, mirroring Cosh's distinction between development and appraisal. The second axis is formal versus informal. However, it is not clear how these are meant to be continuous scales, rather than more or less binary choices (especially in the case of the first axis). Also, the diagram leaves the performance/informal quarter blank. It is difficult to conceive how an official performance assessment could be rigorously carried out in an informal manner. It seems better to regard these as choices to be made rather than an actual classifying space for possible processes. The second model presented is a four-step cyclic process, as shown in Fig. 6.1.

A similar four-step process is found in Rowe et al. (2010), where Bell's reflection stage is replaced by "production of a joint statement".

Like Cosh, Gosling (2002) presents a categorisation of peer review of teaching based on the organisational purpose to be achieved. A three way distinction is made between evaluation, development and peer review. The classification is based on his analysis of the terms peer, observation and teaching, as stated in his opening questions

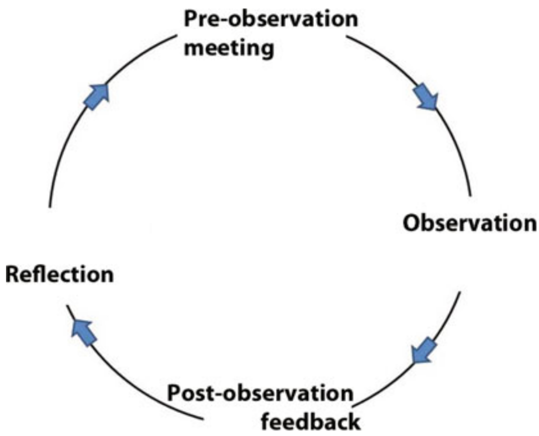

Fig. 6.1 Typical cyclic peer observation process (after Bell 2002)

"What do we understand by 'peers', what is involved in 'observation' and what is our conception of 'teaching'? This concentration on the observable leads to a lack of emphasis being placed on the preparation and collegiate aspects. Indeed, in his tabulation of the three models, discussion is only mentioned under 'Outcomes' for the peer review model. The evaluation model corresponds to the appraisal/assessment aspects of earlier models. The development model involves educational experts, either from within or without the department of the staff member being observed. The peer review simply involves other "teachers". The distinction of purpose between the last two models is between the demonstration/enhancement of teaching competency versus the promotion of discussion around teaching. However it is not made clear how the latter excludes enhancement of teaching competency.

Some authors do begin the process before the initial meeting between reviewer and reviewee. An example from the earlier literature is Jarzabkowski and Bone (1998). They propose a six-step process:

1. Select a colleague
2. Initial discussion meeting
3. Obervsee provides the observer with written description of class to be observed
4. Observation
5. Observee completes written self-appraisal
6. A final meeting to discuss results

Each step in the process is accompanied by some guidance to the participants. The addition of an explicit step of choosing the reviewer, and providing guidance on how it should be done, stands in contrast to other work, where this stage is vaguely described, if at all. However, the remainder of their process is unusually rigid, insisting on a significant amount of written material from the staff member to be observed. They do, in common with many other authors, indicate that the peer review should be accompanied by self-reflection.

Harris et al. (2009) present a handbook to assist institutions in introducing peer review of teaching. The peer review process is presented as a serious of decision points, with various scenarios presented, depending on the goals that an institution decides upon for peer review. Ignoring policy aspects, their decision points are:

1. What will be reviewed?
2. Who will the reviewers be?
3. What form will the review take?
4. What reporting will take place?
5. What type of follow-up will occur?

This structure, with no explicit mention at this level of meetings between the participants, stands in contrast to many earlier models. There is some limited discussion of feedback meetings in the detailed description, but little in the way of preparatory activities.

Many authors emphasise the importance of the peer review process encouraging reflection. In addition to the above these include Kell and Annetts (2009), Hammersley-Fletcher and Orsmond (2005), Beaty (1998) and Blackwell (1996). Hammersley-Fletcher and Orsmond (2005) go so far as to say "At its best, peer observation is a process that encourages reflection on teaching practice." Whether this is true in all cases will depend upon the rationale for undertaking the review in the first place. Even if enhancement is not a primary aim of the review, it represents an opportunity for reflection on the part of both those observed and observing. The process of the peer review itself impacts the quality of the reflections. The actions observed, the material made on them in review and the quality of discussion will all contribute to an academic's ability to obtain the most benefit from their reflections. Rather than discuss the method, Bennet and Barp's work (2008) focussed on applying peer review to the online teaching and learning environment. However, they note the need for reflection. They also emphasise the benefits that accrue to the observer as well as the observee and the opportunities presented for mutual peer learning.

McMahon et al. (2007) take a different approach to most others examined here, categorising peer observation "in terms of who controls the information flow" (p. 504). By examining the process from the point of view of where power lies based on ownership of information and decisions about observation focus they separate models into two basic types: control by observee and control by others. They contend that only the former can legitimately be referred to as peer observation, as the unequal power distribution in the latter leads to situation where it is contentious to call the participants "peers". They examine various points where control may be exercised, including choice of observer, choice of observation focus and control over both pre- and post-observation documentation. However, they give limited attention to how these steps should be carried out.

It is clear from the above that no one model of how peer review of teaching should proceed has met with universal agreement. This partly stems from their being no agreement as to the exact purpose for which it should be undertaken, beyond general comments around quality assurance of and/or improvements in teaching and learning. Rather than attempt a prescriptive approach, it appears more useful to identify the fundamental characteristics and decision points; and place as much choice as possible in the hands of the actual participants. There is some agreement between at least some of the models. Peer review of teaching can be seen as a cyclic process with the results of one iteration feeding into the next. The process consists of a number of fundamental decision points, at which participants can exercise control. Discussion between participants is viewed as important, and can occur at a number of places in the process. If peer review of teaching is achieve its full potential as an enhancement exercise then it must involve significant elements of reflection, on the part of the both the observee and the observer.

Peer Review of Teaching and Policy

If adoption of peer review was left entirely to the discretion of academics it would probably be employed in a piecemeal fashion. Some will decide to engage in it without outside encouragement, some will be inspired by the examples of others, while the remainder will choose not to engage with it. Such are the results of free choice. An institution may decide that a more complete engagement is desirable than would be achieved by the spontaneous actions of individual academics. The route most likely to succeed is to promote the use of peer review of teaching by policy. Any policy, regardless of its subject, needs to be clear in both its rationale and its objectives. The policy should also clearly indicate the place of peer review in the overall policy framework of the institution, for example its relation to the wider learning and teaching strategy.

The most fundamental question at the institutional level in relation to peer review is whether it is used for purposes of quality assurance or teaching development (Lomas and Nicholls 2005). This has been phrased a number of ways in the literature, for example Kell and Annetts (2009) discuss it in terms of ‘summative’ and ‘formative’ approaches, while both Hammersley-Fletcher and Orsmond (2004) and Blackwell (1996) discuss it in terms of ‘judgemental’ versus ‘developmental’. Regardless of the terminology the issue is significant for teaching staff. As long ago as 1971 Falk and Dow discussed the dangers of a negative reaction of staff to judgemental outcomes from a process that is outwardly intended for development. This can lead to resistance and cynicism and end in a lack of worthwhile engagement with the activity. An institution needs to be explicit about the role of peer review in terms of assurance and enhancement of teaching. As noted above in the discussion of peer review approaches, peer review can be used for either quality assurance of teaching or teaching enhancement. Attempting to do both at the same time risks alienating staff. If a policy is to succeed it needs clarity in its objective.

A related issue is the question of ownership, the importance of which in relation to peer review of teaching has been highlighted by a number of authors, including Kell and Annetts (2009), Shortland (2004) and Blackwell (1996). As Shortland puts it “The introduction of managerially owned, capability or quality assurance driven observation schemes can therefore result in suspicion, mistrust and resistance” (p. 200). It has been recognised in managerial studies that “there are material limits to management’s ability to control administrative procedures/systems and thereby employee conformance to an ideal set of standards" (Knights and McCabe 2000, p. 428). Policy around peer review of teaching needs to be framed in a manner that reassures academics that they have an acceptable level of control and that it serves a purpose with which they can identify. The question of purpose, its statement in the policy document and the value which academics give to the statement is apparent. As noted by D'Andrea (n.d.) peer review risks being "hijacked by university managers and used as a mechanism for staff evaluation and personnel decisions regarding tenure and promotion instead of a means to improve the student's learning experience". Whether this is fair portrayal of management motives is beside the point. Regardless, the extent of the occurrence of these views in the literature demonstrates that management must take them into account in both the framing and the operation of policy and ensure that staff are informed of the institution's intended purpose for peer review of teaching.

The attitude of staff will not be uniform. For example, Kell and Annetts (2009) found that newer staff were likely to be accepting of a managerially controlled approach with summative outcomes. This may be due to their relatively junior place in a departmental structure and the expectation that a higher authority will supervise them. For other staff, the autonomy associated with the academic profession leads them to be less accepting of such practices. It is important then that the institution build consensus around the use of peer review. This means integrating it into the culture of the institution, the department/school and the individual academic.

At the department level the questions of culture and ownership become even more linked. The staff surveyed by Kell and Annetts (2009) agreed that "nothing would change if the policy could not be embedded into everyday practice". Given the findings of management studies and the obvious impracticality of constant monitoring, this can only be achieved with the active and willing co-operation of staff. This is unlikely to be achieved if the policy is perceived to be primarily serving the needs of another party, such as management. Given the disparate nature of the various disciplines within a university such a policy will need to be flexible so as to be able to be adapted to the varying needs of different units.

Another factor to take into consideration is the impact of academic staff unions. Shortland (2004) reported on the attitude of National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education in the United Kingdom, where it supported developmental activities but not managerially owned judgemental ones. The industrial bargaining between unions and institutions may cover the scope for summative evaluation of staff and the ability of an institution to employ such measures. Even where it does not the ability of union to disrupt activities that they find objectionable should not be ignored.

Peer review of teaching is not a cost-free exercise. Like any activity it must be properly resourced. This includes both training and workload issues. Academics are not trained observers of each other's teaching. Being able to provide worthwhile feedback to assist in their colleague's reflection is a skill that must be learnt. Peer review takes a variable, but non-finite, amount of time, depending upon the model adopted. The meetings before and after the observation, the observation itself and the time for reflection, are hours that would be spent in some other activity if peer review was not undertaken. Staff need to be convinced that the institution values their participation, regardless of the intrinsic value they extract themselves. Proper resourcing is important for practical reasons (ensuring the peer review takes place), as well as demonstrating the institution's commitment to the very process of peer review. As Shortland (2004) states "If no resourcing is available, this opens the way to speculation that quality is just a smokescreen for some other agenda" (p. 226). There can be little more discouraging of participation in peer review than the promise of support that does not eventuate.

Goals

One of the fundamental goals of this work is to make peer review of teaching accessible to those who have not experienced it before. To this end the approach of McMahon et al. is followed, at least to the extent of placing as much control as possible in the hands of the observee. This is in accord with the findings of the interviews carried out as part of the larger project, as reported by Napier et al. and Ambler et al. both in this volume, where mandatory involvement in peer review was not seen as beneficial. Another salient point of McMahon et al.'s work, and that of Harris et al., is the identification of various times at which important decisions are made. The prescriptive parts of some approaches, especially where specific documentation is required, do not present peer review as something that will appeal to time-pressured academics. They also do not recognise the variations in culture between different disciplines and departments. The amount of documentation produced is one example of a point at which choice should be exercised. Despite the desire to give as much control as possible to the observee, the potential collegiate nature of peer observation should not be ignored. Consultation should be an important part of the process. This will contribute to the culture and leadership building potential of peer observation. This emphasis on choice results in a requirement that the process be as flexible as possible, while still retaining a recognisable and coherent structure. Recognition of the potential audience, those unfamiliar with peer review and its attendant literature means that use of the process should not require the participants gain a familiarity with the literature.

The above discussion leads to the following goals:

- That the process be observee driven, allowing for ownership and the exercise and growth of leadership;
- That consultation between the participants be an integral part of the process, allowing full communication and assisting the growth of a learning and teaching culture;
- That the process and associated materials be both flexible and easy to use, in recognition of the time pressures facing academics;
- The process encourages reflection; and,
- That the materials be accessible to those unfamiliar with the literature around peer observation.

Process Overview

Examination of previous work on peer review of teaching undertaken led to two major conclusions:

1. There is no uniformity of view as to the structure of the process for peer review of teaching.
2. Participants in peer review of teaching should feel ownership of the process and it should fit with their local organisational culture.

There is an obvious relation between these two points. Given the disparities between individual preferences and the influence of existing organisational culture it is no surprise that no single process has gained universal acceptance. Differences in individual circumstances, such as the aims to be achieved, availability of time, etc, will result in different processes being required for each different instance of peer review.

Given these conclusions and the goals enumerated above what is proposed here is a model based around the identification of necessary decisions, derived from the analysis of existing processes. We do not dictate the answers that must be made. For example, unlike some models, especially older ones, we do not explicitly include meetings between the participants as stages of the process. We simply point out the possibilities of such meetings and leave the decision as to whether, and in what form, they should take place to the participants.

The model consists of six major questions, which are discussed in the next section. These can be looked upon as similar to the decision points of other models. We do however propose the process of asking these questions in a defined cycle. For example, identification of the rationale for the review (the *why?* question) precedes the *what?* is to be reviewed and *who?* is to do the reviewing. The aims of the review should guide the choice of the aspect of teaching to be reviewed, and the reviewers should be chosen who are best suited to examine the chosen aspect.

Phrasing the model in terms of decisions to be made is intended to promote in participants a sense of ownership in the process. It does not, however, automatically follow that all participants are equally engaged in answering all questions. Consideration needs to be given to who asks and answers them. For example, the person being reviewed may answer the *why?* question themselves. It could also be answered by the organisation that employs them. Similarly the *who?* may be negotiated, by open invitation or individual approach. This is all part of the flexibility that we have attempted to embed in the model.

The questions, in the order we propose, are:

1. *Why?* Why is the review being undertaken?
2. *What?* What will be reviewed?
3. *Who?* Who will do the reviewing?
4. *How?* How will the review take place?
5. *Reporting?* What form will the reporting of the review take?
6. *Follow-up?* What follow-up will there be to the review?

In a peer review initiated by the reviewee that person would probably be involved in all the decisions, and invite others, primarily their reviewers, to contribute as well. In other cases organisational policy may dictate the responsibility, but this should always be balanced with the need to maintain a sense of ownership in those actually involved in the review.

Each iteration of the process can form the foundation for future activities. This does not require a formal written production of material from a particular iteration, although such artefacts might be useful in the process of reflection and in the preparation of a future iteration.

The Six Questions

Underlying the process presented here are the principles of reflection, communication and choice. Reflection has long been recognised as an important contributor to a successful peer review of teaching process. By opening each stage with a question participants are invited to identify and reflect upon the important issues at that point. In the supporting materials direct encouragement of individual reflection is included where it was seen as appropriate. By presenting the participants with explicit choices they are both encouraged to engage in reflective practice and given a sense of ownership in the process, its associated documentation and any future actions derived from the process. Rather than a rigid process, with defined procedures and outcomes, participants can tailor the experience to one that best suits their needs and circumstances.

The decision to emphasise choice is coupled with a reluctance to define what form communication between the participants should take. Instead, it was thought preferable to let participants interact in the way that they consider most appropriate. This might include face-to-face meetings, email conversations, etc. While we recognise the value of face-to-face interaction we do not see it as mandatory. The interaction between participants could, for example, occur via a wiki or other form of social media. This has the added advantage of potentially extending the pool of possible peers to a worldwide audience, not just those with whom a physical meeting is possible. Emphasising communication, while making it subject to their decision-making, helps meet the goal of consultation between participants.

However, allowing participants the freedom that is entailed in an unalloyed application of the process may not meet institutional goals. Any of the decisions that are part of the process could be superseded by fixed institutional responses. This tailoring to institutional directions should be balanced against the comments already made about the need to encourage participant ownership. Any direction given by the institution needs to demonstrate the policy formulation has taken the needs of staff into account and be supported by management both in its communication and resourcing.

Why?

Interview data, as described by Napier et al. and Ambler et al. both in this volume, indicated that peer review is most successful when it is not mandatory but instead an initiative of the participants. In keeping with the goal of being reviewee-driven we recommend that the process begin with the academic reflecting on why they wish to be the subject of a review. There are many possible reasons, including identified teaching issues and hoping to initiate longer-term learning and teaching discussions. If participants are to gain the maximum possible benefit from the process then they should clearly establish what is the purpose of particular iteration.

This may appear to be simple commonsense planning, and we do not dispute a significant element of that. However, there are some other issues at play. By recommending to potential reviewees that they take time to set their goals and aspirations reflection is introduced into the process from the very beginning. It also gives control over these goals to the reviewee. Thus helping to meet our goal of giving significant control to them.

Institutional policy may dictate both the timing and purpose of reviews. This may be for either the summative or formative purposes discussed above. Reviews that arise (effectively) spontaneously from staff will, all else being equal, be pursued with more enthusiasm than those that are mandated. Clear communication of the goals being pursued by the institution should at least allow staff to evaluate how well that fits with their own motivations. These arguments also apply to the question discussed, in the following section, of what aspect of teaching should be reviewed.

What?

Learning and teaching is a multi-faceted exercise. From the teacher's perspective it ranges from preparation of materials, through classroom activity to marking of student submissions along with other activities such as student consultation and communication. It is not feasible to examine all of these within a typical peer review. A choice must be made, informed by the purpose of the review defined in the previous step. It could be argued that it might be better to identify the focus of the observation in consultation with the reviewer. However, one of the prime objectives of the process presented here is to make the experience of being reviewed as non-threatening as possible. An important audience for this work are those academics that have no, or very little, experience of peer review. Allowing them to choose the focus of the review may make them more open to participating. It may lead them to focus on aspects of their teaching that are less troublesome and which they are therefore more willing to expose to outsiders (i.e., reviewers). Initial experience in peer observation may subsequently lead to willingness to seek feedback about more difficult issues. Alternatively the decision made here could be reviewed and refined once the decision on partner is made. Even in this case it is worthwhile for the reviewee to bring to the discussion some initial thoughts on this question. This helps meet our goal of integrating reflection into the process at as many points as possible.

Who?

By this stage in the process the initiating reviewee has decided upon the rationale and focus of the observation. This allows them to approach the peer best suited to give feedback about the issues identified. This again places choice and control in the hands of the reviewee. Opening up one's teaching to an outsider is a difficult step for many academics. There may be considerable reluctance to engage in peer review if they have little influence over the choice of reviewer. Conversely giving this choice to those being reviewed may make the experience appear less threatening.

Different choices of reviewer will align with difference choices made in earlier steps of the process. The goals set in answer to the questions of why? and what? will shape the selection of reviewer. For example, a peer outside the discipline may have difficulty commenting upon a question about which subject areas to focus on, but one who is a teaching expert may be able to comment on more general pedagogical approaches. Numerous other issues can be taken into account, including levels of experience, relative seniority, personal relationships and related issues. The possibilities depend upon the initiator as they hone the objectives of the particular iteration.

Institutional policy may take this choice out of the hands of the reviewee and specify who is to be the reviewer, for example senior or specifically trained staff (Morris and Mladenovic 2005). Any policy specifying who is to act as a reviewer needs to take account of recognised issues, such as power relations between staff (Kell and Annetts 2009) and overly close relationship between staff leading to a reluctance to apply critical judgement (Blackwell 1996).

How?

Once the reviewer(s) are decided upon and have agreed to participate, discussions between the participants should begin. This may have already been part of the process of recruiting reviewers. The central questions at this stage are how the review will take place and what the reviewer does. Discussion of these questions requires the reviewers to understand the conclusions the reviewee reached in previous steps. This in turn depends upon clear communication from the initiator to those who will be reviewers.

At first glance it may appear that there are relatively few options here. The reviewer simply reviews. Rather than such a simplistic approach the reviewee should use the reviewers to test their plans before the review takes place. For example, does the chosen focus of review (the answer to what?) adequately address the proposed purpose of the observation (the answer to why?). The extent of this discussion will depend upon the aims of the review and the willingness of the participants to engage in discussion. Once the reviewers understand the aims of the current review they will be able to provide feedback. This may result in some modification to the earlier answers. This should not be taken as invalidating the earlier decisions, but should be viewed as a process of refinement.

There are also more mundane issues to be decided; for example, the exact time and place of review. The materials provided to the reviewer need to be decided upon.

This is particularly important if the focus of observation is not a classroom activity. Timing can also be an issue in fitting the review into what may already be a crowded teaching schedule. While staff-initiated reviews can be assumed to occur at times the staff find convenient, policy in this area needs to be mindful of the varying calls upon staff time at different points in the academic year.

Reporting?

Another aspect of the reviewer's task is how they will record and communicate their observations to the reviewee. In one sense this could be seen as part of the answer to the question of how the review will take place. However, the form in which feedback will be given to the reviewee is so crucial to the process that it deserves special consideration. The reviewer being confident that they will record their observations in an appropriate manner depends upon the participants first agreeing to the purpose and form of the review itself.

The participants have a range of choice in recording and relaying their observations. Reviewers could simply rely on memory when giving feedback to the reviewee, but this is not recommended. Notes could be made in an informal fashion, or some form of structured form could be used. The style to be used should be decided upon before the review, so that the reviewer knows what is expected of them and the reviewee is confident that the recording of the review will meet their goals. As with other elements, this decision should be made in discussions between the participants.

As with the actual review recordings, communication of the results to the reviewee can take a variety of forms, ranging from the informal to the very formal. A private chat over coffee brings with it a very different atmosphere to a formally constituted meeting. There are no right or wrong answers here, only the guideline that participants should agree in advance the venue to use and that it should reflect the goals they have for the observation. It was long been noted in the literature that observers have much to gain from the process, so they should ensure that the decisions made will meet their needs.

A final question in this regard is ownership of the documentation. Privacy concerns would normally dictate that ownership be vested in the reviewee. It is then up to them how to use and who to show it to. Even if the documentation is owned by the reviewee it is generally advisable to seek the reviewer's permission to use the documentation in promotions or formal reviews. Institutional policy on peer review needs to be explicit about the ownership and use to which materials will be put. Any lack of clarity here could lead to unnecessary disputes between staff and management.

Follow-up?

Once the results have been communicated participants should be encouraged to consider what comes next. In the short term the reviewee should decide whether the review has produced any feedback that is useful for their teaching. There is no guarantee that it will have and reivewees should be free to decline to make changes based on any or all of the comments made. This follows from the principles that the process is reviewee-driven and built upon choice. If the reviewee was required to make changes the sense of freedom is lost. It may also make the concept of peer review less attractive to those deciding whether or not to engage with it. Asking the reviewees to make this decision encourages them to reflect upon the outcome.

Beyond the immediate issues participants should consider what further follow-up they consider appropriate. This opens up both the possibility of further iterations of peer review and the participants engaging in a broader discussion around teaching. Participants can reflect upon the success of the peer review and how they would improve upon in it in any future reviews. Institutional policy, apart from mandating follow-up, can also give guidance on the dissemination of results and best practice, to those not involved in the review, as outlined in Hammersly-Fletcher and Orsmond (2004)

Materials

The process outlined in the previous section is easily tailored to the differing needs of participants. By allowing choice at key decision points very different actual iterations of the observation process can result. For participants who are familiar with the peer review process it would appear relatively easy for them to follow the steps. However, their previous experience has probably made them aware of both the need for the decisions covered and of the various issues involved. As noted earlier the main target audience of this work are academic staff that are not familiar with peer review. They require more guidance than a simple list of decisions that need to be made. It would appear useful to provide some direction in the issues involved in each decision.

Conflicting with this desire to give more guidance is the goal set earlier that the materials produced to support peer review be accessible and the process flexible. This means that the support materials should mandate very little about the process and not be time consuming to read or apply. As there can be many different variations of successful peer review the approach taken here was to outline, in a straightforward way, some of the important issues around each decision point.

We have produced a set of A4 pages, one for each question, which highlight issues to be considered when participants answer each question. By taking this approach flexibility is retained and participants are encouraged to devise a concrete process which suits them. An example card is given in Fig. 6.2. The entire set is available at http://staff.mq.edu.au/teaching/teaching_development/peer/.

The card format has been adopted to provide a readily accessible summary while still containing sufficient information to promote reflection on the part of participants. The language of the cards is designed to avoid jargon. Peer review can be applied in any discipline, so support materials need to avoid terms and procedures that are not universally understood. There is no sense in which the materials are intended to

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PEƎR

WHO *will be the reviewer* **?**

Peer review of teaching

- *Who should I get to observe me?*
- *It could be one person—keeps it simpler.*
- *More than one reviewer may get more insights.*
- *Regardless of level, discipline, etc., it should be someone you respect.*
- *Think about making it reciprocal.*

---

1. Should it be someone in my discipline?

They will understand your subject material, and look at content issues, but an outsider may give fresh perspectives, and consider more general teaching practice.

Someone from outside your discipline may be able to bring fresh perspectives on teaching.

A long-term conversation might be easier with someone in your discipline.

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2. Should it be someone at my level of appointment?

Someone on a different level may have a different perspective to you, which can be useful in reflecting on your teaching practice.

Someone at a lower level may be uncomfortable critiquing your teaching. Make sure you are clear about how open you are if you partner with someone in this position.

Be aware of the potential problems if one of you is on a contract or is employed on a casual basis and the other isn't.

---

3. Should I get someone who I know has similar teaching practices? Or that I have a good relationship with?

That can make discussion and communication easier.

They may be more aware of the issues confronting you, but be aware that you may share common faults.

They may be unwilling to critique you. If so, make it clear how open you are to criticism.

---

4. Someone in my discipline but outside my department?

If they're from your discipline but at another university they'll understand the content but may be unaware of local issues.

You could even get someone from outside the university system (an industry or clinical professional). They may have valuable insights about discipline practice, but be unfamiliar with teaching principles or specifics.

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5. Should it be staff enrolled in particular professional development programs?

Targeted programs can effectively engage new staff or those with a particular interest in teaching.

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Fig. 6.2 Example peer review question card be exhaustive. Instead they provide an entry-level introduction. The intention is that they can be quickly read and put into practice. By pointing out the pros and cons around various approaches participants are invited to reflect upon the result that will best meet their needs. Interaction between participants is encouraged by reference to discussion and communication, rather than by mandated meetings.

Conclusion

Academic staff face many conflicting demands upon their time, yet one of their most important responsibilities is to their students and in particular providing the best possible learning environment. Peer review provides one possible avenue for teaching assurance and enhancement, although it may not be possible to serve both purposes simultaneously. Review of the literature has demonstrated both the multiplicity of approaches suggested and the importance of staff ownership of peer review. The model proposed here provides both the flexibility necessary for peer review to take its place in a variety of academic contexts and the ability for staff to define a procedure that suits them, providing for the sense of ownership of the process which many authors in the area have identified as being extremely important.

We recognise that there has been extensive work in this area, but this very quantity produces its drawbacks in terms of academics unfamiliar with peer review not being able to easily find a starting point. The process presented here, and the materials developed for it, are intended to fill the needs of that particular audience. The short summaries provide an introduction to the important issues at each step of a peer review of teaching.

Institutional policy faces a considerable challenge in this area. Institutions are understandably concerned with providing optimum outcomes for students and are also under increasing pressures to prove the effectiveness of teaching to outside, often government, bodies. Peer review of teaching is an obvious candidate in both regards, as it can provide direct evidence from the very act of teaching. An overly dictatorial approach can risk the very ownership on which the success of peer review may depend. An overly lax approach may mean an insufficient take up of peer review to satisfy institutional goals. Policy in this area needs to be written in such a way that staff are encouraged to take on peer review voluntarily, rather than regarding it is a requirement. Peer review policy needs to convey to staff the institutional commitment. In the end both staff and management should both be seeking improvements in the quality of the learning experience. However, staff on the front line of teaching need continual reassurance that the management understands their needs in terms of time and other resources and are willing to support them with a clear and properly resourced policy.

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Part II
Practice

Chapter 7
Peer Review as Quality Assurance

Wendy R. Kilfoil

Context

This paper reports on an exploratory study at a large, research-intensive South African university, the University of Pretoria, to investigate the understanding and experience of peer review within the frame of the academy as a peer-review profession and the quality control that such a profession must exercise to fulfil its social contract. The research was conducted in collaboration with two Australian universities and one Swedish university.

The University of Pretoria is part of a national system that rates and rewards research but does not provide similar resources and recognition for teaching. This university faces the same challenges as other national and international universities: growing student numbers but shrinking budgets resulting in large classes; students not necessarily prepared cognitively or affectively for university study; the tension between excellent undergraduate teaching of these students and the need to grow postgraduate numbers and publish; and a national quality assurance environment that sets minimum standards for what quality teaching and learning should be.

Peer-review Professions

Why is peer review necessary in higher education? Basically, the answer might be that it is intrinsically worthwhile in terms of quality improvement but also necessary for internal and external quality assurance and accountability. Much of the literature provides exactly those answers. The gap in the literature concerns why universities have to be accountable. Hamilton's (2009) exposition of the profession of the academic as a teacher and researcher as a peer-review profession provides the necessary context. He classifies academics with doctors, lawyers and other professionals who

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exercise a great deal of autonomy in regulating their professional work. Hamilton's argument is that this type of freedom is the result of a social contract in which the profession takes responsibility for the 'oversight of the competence and ethics of professional work' (2009, 1 footnote). In essence:

> The public grants a profession the autonomy to regulate itself through peer review, meaning that the profession's members (1) substantially control entry into the profession—including qualifying credentials and the necessary university education, which is influenced by the profession—as well as continued membership and upward mobility in the profession, and (2) set standards for how individual professionals perform their work. In return, each member of the profession and the profession as a whole agree to meet certain correlative duties to the public: (1) maintain high standards of minimum competence and ethical conduct to serve the public purpose of the profession and discipline those who fail to meet these standards, (2) promote and foster the core values and ideals of the profession, and (3) restrain self-interest to some degree in order to serve the public purpose of the profession. (Hamilton 2009, p. 6)

Hamilton reiterates throughout the article that a precondition of this social contract is public belief that the profession is focused on the public good, in this case the creation and sharing of knowledge—that is, research and teaching. Professionals enter the world of work with relevant qualifications, practical skills and experience. However, the workplace itself becomes the site both of applying and extending knowledge and practical skills. For academics, it also is a site of induction into their professional identity and an understanding of what it means to be part of a peer-review profession. More experienced academics become accountable for ensuring that they themselves, as well as new members, meet minimum standards for teaching and research, through ongoing professional development.

Hamilton mentions the peer review of scholarship as an example of the nature of academic work. Academics submit to peer review of articles and public comment on conference papers. In South Africa, the National Research Foundation (NRF) has developed a researcher rating system that also relies on peer review to rate researchers on different levels. When it comes to appointments and promotions at universities, the academic has already been well-validated as a researcher by his or her peers. A baseline survey during an Education Induction programme at the University of Pretoria (January 2011) showed that young academics appreciate that they can learn from their fellow academics in addition to attending seminars or opportunities for professional development. For instance, some of the preferred ways of acquiring research skills were departmental membership, departmental research teams and (departmental) mentorship.

Teaching competence is rarely developed internationally through a compulsory graduate teaching qualification. It is far more likely to rely on professional development opportunities within a university by staff in teaching development centres, through experience, and through on site learning in teams and departments. Academics are far less used to peer review of teaching, to making their classroom practices public through observation/recording, portfolio development, review of materials, and so on. It is likely that such peer review is a formal requirement for promotion but literature suggests that there is little focus on it as a mechanism for inducting new lecturers into their professional teaching role.

Hamilton stresses that the type of teaching at a university needs to be qualitatively different from that at a school and more related to the knowledge creation function of the institution, linking to the idea of 'scholarly teaching' much talked of in the literature (Cariaga-Lo et al 2010; Hubball and Clarke 2011; McKenzie et al. 2008; University of British Columbia 2011). He also promotes the idea that teaching as public good should not just familiarize students with what is known but should also develop their ability to analyse critically, to question the body of knowledge they are learning, and understand the ways in which disputes within the discipline can be resolved (2009, p. 16).

Peer-review professions need to own their quality improvement. In teaching, student evaluation should not be the only feedback received nor should feedback from staff in teaching development centres be, although both have their place. Feedback from irregular summative feedback or even regular performance management reviews does not ensure continuous quality improvement (e.g. Keig and Waggoner 2011; University of Cambridge 2011). Continuing professional learning from rich environments in the team, department, school or faculty has to occur to develop reflective practice and professional competence, ethics and identity.

The peer-review profession dimension was not part of the conceptualization of the international research group but it is a very useful frame for looking at quality and peer review, at ownership and accountability. It is about quality control by academics of their own professional standards rather than external quality assurance, a process that has increasingly affected higher education in the past couple of decades at least.

Quality Assurance in South Africa

Quality assurance of universities by external bodies is a common phenomenon internationally (Hammersley-Fletcher and Orsmond 2005; Lomas and Kinchin 2006). At a national level in South Africa, it is a public accountability mechanism that possibly implies that people no longer believe that universities are meeting their side of the social contract. The Council on Higher Education (CHE) is the statutory quality assurance body for higher education in South Africa through its standing Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC). Programme accreditation criteria request information on staff development opportunities because they are regarded as an essential element in quality enhancement.

In response to the cycle of audits instituted by the CHE/HEQC based on its audit framework (2004), universities have set up cycles of peer review of academic and support departments to collect data to ensure continuous quality improvement through self-reflection, internal and/or external peer review and improvement plans. Data from the cycles of peer reviews are used to support claims in universities' audit self-evaluation reports. CHE audit panels more or less expect to be presented with results of internal and/or external peer review reports plus improvement plans. The *Policy on External Review and Accreditation Visits* (2005a) at the University of Pretoria links directly to quality assurance using a six-year cycle. Different levels of review are set out: modules, programmes or departments, School or Faculty, Support Service and Institutional. A quality assurance industry has emerged in the country with every university starting an office to support the audit and then ongoing peer review processes.

The first CHE audit cycle ended in 2011. It focused on all core business (teaching, research and community engagement). Reflection on the processes and reports, as well as wide consultation in the higher education sector, has led to the proposal that the second cycle deal exclusively with teaching and learning.

Policy Environment at the University of Pretoria

The University of Pretoria is a large residential university with a research-intensive mission. The university has a sizeable undergraduate student enrolment so good teaching is promoted to help students' achieve their goals and provide a pipeline into postgraduate studies. The University of Pretoria has a number of policies that discuss peer review and peer observation of teaching for promotion, quality assurance and teaching development (2005b; 2010a, b). HR policy statements set the tone for peer review as a human resources process related to performance management, probation, promotion and special awards. The policy distinguishes between peer review, which is defined as a high stakes, summative process—often conducted by the head of department or a senior member of staff or a panel, and peer observation, which is perceived as a formative process for the enhancement of teaching. The high stakes peer review evaluates teaching outputs such as study guides, student results and student feedback rather than the person or processes. There is also mention in the HR policies of developing new or young staff but no official guidelines. Mentoring is briefly mentioned but the concept is not defined and the practice is not compulsory. It assumes a particular view of mentorship: the wise senior with a junior protégé. The use of a portfolio as tool in the peer review process is also mentioned and it is stated that reports from peer observation could be included in the teaching portfolio. The implementation of HR policies for the more formative type of peer review is not necessarily monitored, which might account for the different understandings of the concept elicited by the questionnaire. There are also very different cultures in the nine different faculties and even in departments within those faculties, which would affect implementation.

There are some inconsistencies in policy documents at the University of Pretoria around the definition of peer review. Unlike the HR documents, the *Framework for Learning and Teaching* (University of Pretoria 2007, p. 17, par. 6.3) does not distinguish between peer review and peer observation but uses peer review only, to mean a process to be followed for formative and summative purposes to gather evidence but also give constructive, critical feedback on the effectiveness of teaching in promoting learning. It expands more on some important considerations such as mutual respect, fairness, collegiality and the use of a reliable instrument. Although formative review is mentioned in the beginning of the section, it becomes clear that the focus is on formal evaluation and reporting as opposed to collegial discussions over tea or all the people working on different sections of the same large class forming a community of practice or any form of mentorship.

It is quite clear from the above exposition that high-stakes peer review is a key element in the evaluation of teaching and research at the university and nationally. Although the university's policy framework does briefly mention more formative types of peer review (mentoring, coaching and classroom observation, for instance), there is no systematic implementation of such a conceptualization of this activity.

Literature Review on Peer Review of Teaching

There is no consensus in the literature on who a 'peer' would be. Some literature defines the term as widely as any lecturer or academic development practitioner, while others define it more narrowly as someone within the same discipline, and yet others define it as someone on the same level within the same discipline. Gosling (2002) provides a useful distinction between peer review, development and evaluation. The way in which the University of Pretoria's policies constructs 'peer' in terms of peer observation is as a senior member of staff or an academic development person, which would fall into Gosling's (2002, p. 5) categories of evaluation and development rather than peer review.

A number of tensions emerge in the literature: formal v informal; peer v supervisory; summative v formative; centralized v local. These are not binary opposites but elements that have to be balanced. This paper has described in some detail the policy environment at the University of Pretoria and there, too, there is a tension between espoused and actual systems that prevail (Drew and Ehrich 2011) with a certain amount of cynicism about the continued privileging of research above teaching despite what policies say.

Questions can be asked about why peer review is necessary (Cariaga-Lo et al. 2010) and there are various answers. For instance, there is a greater diversity in student intake (Boud 1999; Lomas and Kinchin 2006) and we need to develop teachers to facilitate student success: 'when teachers conceptualize teaching as a learning experience that requires uninterrupted observation, reflection and action, student performance increases' (Rodriguez-Valls 2010, p. 29). Furthermore, lecturing staff have themselves become more diverse (Trower 2010) so professional development is required. Hatzipanagos and Lygo-Baker (2006) note that peer observation in the United Kingdom seems to be a managerial response to external agenda for accountability and the professionalization of teaching. Hutchings (England 1996) writes about establishing a nurturing culture to promote collaborative teaching development. Harris et al. (2008) provide a comprehensive guide on peer review for different purposes in Australian universities (the output of an extensive research project funded by the Australian Teaching and Learning Council). One principle in the one-page framework is: 'Recognises university teachers' shared professional responsibilities for monitoring and enhancing the quality of teaching and learning' (Harris et al. 2008, p. 6).

The website of the University of Texas at El Paso (2012) frames teaching development within the understanding of the social contract. The comprehensive resources clearly perceive university teaching to be a scholarly activity as part of a profession that requires reflection and continued intellectual development. Resources show how multiple perspectives on teaching can be developed through self-reflection, constructive feedback and validation from peers and students. The site explicitly discusses academic freedom and the accountability to one's peers that goes with it. It argues for the classroom to be open to professional learning community scrutiny and for teaching to be subject to certain norms and standards. Professional communities are seen to provide mutual support through dialogue, respectful critique and debate, for instance, as well as developing professional identity and a sense of belonging. Websites of other universities also reveal at least some awareness of professional responsibility for improving teaching (e.g. Massey University 2011).

Hammersley-Fletcher and Orsmond (2005) place great emphasis on reflection. They warn: 'If practice is understood purely in behavioural terms, there is a danger that you miss what it is to be a practitioner in professional terms' (2005, p. 215). Their research suggests that too many people perceive peer review as relating to the 'mechanics of teaching' (2005, p. 221). They conclude that lecturers must be more than subject specialists reflecting on subject content; they must also reflect on 'teaching and learning philosophies and cultures' (2005, p. 223). Many resources on university websites also emphasize reflection (e.g. Cambridge University 2011).

Boud (1999) argues that there is a discernible historical progression in the professional development of academics that relates to the shift from internal to external requirements for accountability. Boud's view is that academic development has to be multi-dimensional and distributed because of the complexity, context and collegiality of the academic task. Competence is therefore best developed in sites of practice (Drew and Ehrich 2011; Weller 2009). Central departments for teaching and learning might also need to change their roles to offer support to Deans and heads of departments at local level rather than offering generic training only (Boud 1999). The education consultants at the University of Pretoria have for some time been involved in this type of faculty engagement model in addition to the continuing professional learning opportunities that they offer.

Hutchings (England 1996, p. 6) argues for 'shaping strategies for peer collaboration and review that would be intellectually rigorous, appropriate to the disciplines and of practical use in improving the quality of teaching and learning'. An important idea that emerges from her argument is that teachers need to be in charge of the improvement of their teaching instead of peer review being an imposed accountability measure, 'something that happens to faculty' that 'tends to treat faculty as objects' (England 1996, p. 10). If a collaborative approach is adopted, university teachers become agents and can pay attention to their local needs but it does entail making teaching and classroom practice public within the department or community of learning. England, writing in the same article, warns about local becoming private, as teaching can then not be reliably evaluated, partly because of 'a misguided notion of "academic freedom"' (England 1996, p. 20; see also Harris et al. 2008, p. 12 on the 'closed door' culture in Australian universities). In addition, Hutchings favours peer review as the 'right and professionally responsible thing to do' (England 1996, p. 10), which links to the notion of teaching as a peer-review profession accountable for its own standards. She sees teaching circles or portfolios as providing 'scholarly evidence of teaching' (England 1996, p. 11) not least because they include reflection on teaching theories and practices within a group context. One problem that she highlights is that institutions tend to value 'teaching without visible defects', 'good enough performance' (England 1996, p. 14), which means that there are no complaints from parents or students. This culture is not conducive to improvement, to opening up to learn from others, to approaching colleagues or academic development practitioners for assistance, to be willing to be innovative, take chances, make mistakes and learn from them. Lomas and Kinchin (2006, p. 211) also note: 'A common perception seems to be that if you want to talk about teaching, it is a sign of weakness'. What Hutchings is looking for is an 'ongoing reflective process aimed always at improvement. Excellent teachers would, by this measure, be those who set out to inquire into their own practice, identifying key issues they want to pursue, posing questions for themselves, explaining alternatives and taking risks, and doing all this in the company of peers who can offer critique and support' (England 1996, p. 14).

The notion of professional learning communities is in line with notions of peer accountability for teaching (Boud and Middleton 2003). Stoll et al. (2006) discuss forming such communities in schools but the concept is also applicable to higher education. The authors define such a community as 'a group of people sharing and critically interrogating their practice in an ongoing, reflective, collaborative, inclusive, learning-oriented, growth promoting way' (2006, p. 223) to provide mutual support in the workplace, achieve common understanding and values, arrive at consensus and entertain 'multiple perspectives' (2006, p. 243). One of the most appealing ideas in the article relates to inquiry-led practice (Stoll et al. 2006, p. 233), which links to ideas of participatory action research and action learning. There are clear links to the professionalization of teaching and identity formation. The role of the head of department in creating time for meet regularly and discuss teaching is stressed. The importance of departmental dialogue is paramount, not only about technical issues of teaching observed in a class, for instance, but also about theories that underlie understandings of how students learn.

Weller (2009), working at a research-intensive university in the United Kingdom, warns of the possibility of peer observation of teaching resulting in 'a socialising process that closes down multiple perspectives' (2009, p. 27). The latter would result in a pedagogy in that would stifle individuality, creativity and debate. Weller nonetheless supports development situated within the 'discipline as the primary area of scholarly identification' (2009, p. 26) rather than events-based interventions such as workshops that do not guarantee that the learning will be embedded in practice. She recommends, however, 'that the concept of the peer in teaching observation as the basis for individual, collegial, and cultural transformation and enhancement of practice in higher education should be problematised' (Weller 2009, p. 26) as 'a sameness of perspective and experience ... can have a potentially limiting effect on the genuine transformative outcomes of teaching observation practice' (Weller 2009, p. 27).

She examines Gosling's three models of teaching observation and situates peer observation at her university somewhere between the developmental ('peer' as expert) and the peer review/collaborative ('peer' as equal) models. Peer observation in her study was part of their continuing professional development framework, but not part of formal evaluation, and participation was voluntary. The impact of positive feedback was, however, to reinforce current practice or to encourage progressive improvement rather than to bring about critically-aware innovation.

Not everyone agrees with peer observation as the basis for peer review as it can be intimidating (see Gosling's (2005) 'evaluative' model where there are unequal power relations). Purvis et al. (2009) describe how their university transformed an institutional, high stakes peer observation system into a formative peer-supported review system that is flexible. The new system entails an annual review of teaching, learning and assessment by the individual lecturer who identifies through reflection some aspect that needs attention. The lecturer then chooses a colleague to work with as a reviewer. The review might involve peer observation but could focus instead on assessment practices or other aspects with a view to enhancing practice through reflection and discussion.

Research (e.g. Boud and Middleton 2003) seems to suggest that academics prefer informal peer interaction and to learn from documents, experts, networks and communities of practice rather than from supervisors and this certainly seemed to be the preference of the lecturers who answered the online survey at the University of Pretoria as well (see Table 7.3 below). The preference is attributed by Boud and Middleton to the issue of roles and trust. The trust relationship is highlighted in much of the literature on peer review (Drew and Ehrich 2011; George 2011; McKenzie et al. 2008; Perlman and McCann 1998; Trower 2010).

Formal interventions could be formative or summative (Brent and Felder 2004; Perlman and McCann 1998) and the latter could still provide opportunities for learning. Interventions include training, mentoring (Cariaga-Lo et al. 2010; George 2011; McKenzie et al. 2008), buddy ('critical friend') systems (Cambridge University 2011) and so on.

Cariaga-Lo et al. (2010, p. 21) argue that 'Mentoring and creating an inclusive academic climate is critical to developing scholars at all stages of the academic career ladder, which contributes to building academic excellence at our institutions'. They see mentoring as 'scholarly collaborations' (2010, p. 22). George (2011) recommends an 'appreciative advising' approach to mentoring and states: 'There are many opportunities to build relationships with employees: day-to-day interactions, taskforces and committee involvement, weekly meetings, quarterly evaluations, or even during *ad hoc* encounters. While frequent interaction can help build rapport, mentors should not discount the importance of occasional one-on-one meetings.' As can be deduced, he sees mentoring as a process, not an event. The University of Texas at El Paso (2012) and Macquarie University (2012) also have resources on mentoring.

Within a research-intensive university, scholarly approaches to peer review could also be advocated within the tradition of the scholarship of teaching and learning (Hubball and Clarke 2011; McKenzie et al. 2008; University of Texas at El Paso 2012) or simply participatory action research or action learning. Brookfield's (1995) four lenses on becoming a critically reflective teacher provide a framework for situating peer review within a broader framework of evidence collection and reflection. He starts with self-reflection, the autobiographical lens, and includes students' views through feedback, colleagues' perspectives (peer review) and scholarly literature as the three other lenses. The University of British Columbia (2011) argues for a scholarly approach as well:

> A scholarly approach to peer review of teaching is not only consistent with the ethos of a research-intensive university, it is also driven by institutional guidelines for the evaluation of teaching, the needs and circumstances of discipline-specific communities of practice, relevant literature and conceptual frameworks, systematic methodology for authentic assessment and evaluation, ethical considerations and dissemination.

The PEER model developed at Macquarie University (2010) has three dimensions: 'why', 'who', and 'what'. Between the 'why' and the 'who', the cultural aspects emerge; between the 'why' and the 'what', processes are captured; and between the 'what' and the 'who', structures are important. It is precisely around these dimensions that peer review protocols have emerged at various universities (Brent and Felder 2004; McKenzie et al. 2008; Perlman and McCann 1998). We also need to answer the questions of 'with what', 'how' and 'where' when discussing processes. In terms of 'with what', we might decide to encourage continuous discussion using online instead of face-to-face interactions; we could decide to video-tape a class instead of having a peer observer physically present. Each decision affects the procedures ('how') by which we implement processes such as mentoring, peer observation, peer review, etc. We also have to consider 'where' as it relates to whether improving teaching is conducted by a central department or within the site of practice. Such decisions have their own processes and procedures and might even be used to create a network of opportunities provided for personal or departmental learning.

In summary, the literature and university websites abound with good ideas and practices but also debates about peer review. A strong emphasis is placed on professional development of teaching within the discipline or department by fellow academics. Most of the literature lacks the explicit link to the accountability of the peer-review profession to establishing and maintaining quality as part of a social contract but the end result is the same. There are many references in the literature to quality but it has more to do with developmental, low stakes, formative activities rather than linking to professional standards.

The Research

Data Collection

The research at the University of Pretoria involved administering a small number of open-ended questions designed by the lead Australian university in the project through an online system. The questions sought to gauge participants' understanding of the concept of peer review and participants' experiences of being reviewed as well as their experience of acting as a peer reviewer. Manual coding was undertaken and themes identified. The results are given in the tables below.

Limitations

The unit of analysis for this case study was potentially 1106 permanently appointed academics at the University (figures for the first semester of 2011) who lecture and do research. Invitations to participate were distributed through Deans as well as the online campus news and through personal contacts. Despite the small number of responses ($n = 32$), the baseline data collected by the survey do seem to correlate with themes raised in the literature review, allowing for analytic generalizations.

Research Data and Discussion

The numbers in the tables below do not add up to the total number of responses ($n = 32$) because some respondents gave fairly long answers so their responses covered more than one theme and were captured as such. For every question there were people who did not respond and they have been included under 'lack of understanding'. The codes have already been consolidated into themes in the tables that follow although the original codes are captured in brackets.

The first question related to the respondent's understandings of the concept of peer review at the university. Results are displayed in Table 7.1.

One has the sense that the once-off reviews might be for high stakes performance management or low stakes enhancement of teaching but it is not specified in the answers so a separate theme was used. As many of the answers to other questions related to performance management and reward, it seems likely that they probably relate to high stakes evaluation.

The second theme above (low stakes ongoing review) revealed some rich understandings of peer review that do not necessarily come out in the responses to the other questions. Concepts such as the following emerge: 'network of colleagues'; collaboration; 'peer-support group'; 'selecting or having a colleague assigned/twinned with me in order to offer advice/support/critique on all aspects of my teaching'; 'be able to testify to my classroom competence'; 'a mentoring process'; 'holistic approach' across the scope of the roles of the educator integrating teaching, research and community engagement activities; 'the scholarship of teaching'; 'reciprocity'; reflection; action research; professional development; 'a constructivist process'; 'starts with self-assessment'; 'transforming practice'; 'acting as a critical friend'. The use of video to capture a lecture so that it can be reflected on later is also mentioned as part of the formative use of evaluation in response to this and other questions.

Table 7.1 Understanding of the concept of peer review

Theme	Number of responses
No understanding/no answer	5
Low stakes ongoing review by a mentor or chosen peer (trusted fellow lecturer—from within discipline or from another department, from the university or from another university—or education consultant from the Department for Education Innovation) for purposes of improving teaching, sometimes in a mutually beneficial relationship	13
High stakes, once-off performance management for the purposes of improvement, annual bonuses, promotion or awards (could include student feedback, classroom observation, materials evaluation)	9
The type of evaluation associated with blind peer review of research (academic articles/conferences papers), sometimes with a formative element from reviewers' feedback	4
Peer assessment of one student by another in class	1

The response that related to student assessment of peers is a misunderstanding of the topic and persists across answers to all the questions. The respondent did not realize from the nature of the questions that this might be a misinterpretation of peer review.

The second question related to what peer review of learning and teaching is like at the university. Results are displayed in Table 7.2.

These data suggest that the university lacks a systematic approach to the implementation of formal and informal peer review. This situation is signaled by words such as 'limited', 'random' and '*ad hoc*'. The university does not seem to be doing enough to institutionalize what exists in HR policies (training programme that was not followed-up) or to expand the policy framework to include more formative and informal uses of peer review.

With respect to what is done within one department, the following was noteworthy as a good practice that would be scalable: 'teaching pairs are assigned who review and discuss each other's work or a senior and a junior lecturer are paired so that mentoring can take place'.

The notion that people do not favour peer review came out in responses to other questions as well. A word used more than once was 'punitive'. It has to do with the notion of 'trust' that came out in responses.

The third question tried to elicit what the respondents would like to see in terms of peer review at their universities. Results are displayed in Table 7.3.

The 'ideal' is very balanced. On the one hand, there is appreciation for formative interactions as part of a teaching philosophy within a department, as realized in a variety of practices. The need for formative departmental discussions really came to the fore in various ways. It is clear that the community of practice is respected as a site of reflection and learning in the abstract although it appears that often it does not operate in this way. The main purpose of departmental meetings seems to be focused on evaluation rather than formative discussion of curricula, 'styles of lecturing',

Table 7.2 Peer review at the university

Theme	Number of responses
No understanding/no answer	5
Does not exist or is very limited to formal, high stakes evaluation as it is not part of the teaching philosophy, management requirements or reward systems, but it depends on the department; some training being offered on peer review and portfolios as a teaching and learning tool but not being implemented.	14
Informal or low stakes review relies on random/*ad hoc* requests for peer review of classroom practice or material by peers or education consultants by those who are interested in improving practice or mutual sharing	8
Quality assurance as an academic function (moderation, review of assessment papers and results)	3
Peer review of research output	3
People do not favour peer review	2
Quality assurance cycle of peer review of programmes (QA unit)	1
Peer assessment of each other's work by students (not widely used)	1

Table 7.3 Ideals for peer review

Theme	Number of responses
No response	4
Formative/Low stakes: mentoring of new and junior staff to bring them into a community of learning; part of departmental teaching philosophy for developmental purposes as a basis for reflection and growth; everyone involved in presenting the same module should observe each other's teaching and give formative feedback; interactive sessions to share good practice; annual review of material; more involvement with peers; ad hoc reviews at the request of lecturers	17
Performance management with formal review once or twice a year with monthly formative sessions; acknowledgement of good practice through various rewards; mentoring after poor performance review	13
Internal peer review of research for feedback, assistance in getting published and unbiased screening for funding	3
Specific programme/platform in place	2
Peer assessment among students (especially postgraduates to accustom them to peer review of research)	2

exemplary lectures or materials, and so forth. On the other hand, there is awareness that performance management is a reality. However, it should be conceptualized with formative as well as evaluative dimensions and there should be follow-up to evaluation whether in terms of reward or improvement strategies.

The major, new suggestion that is not part of the formal system at the university is the mentoring of new and junior staff. One respondent wrote 'I would really have appreciated a mentor. There is really no mentoring (formal or otherwise) in place and this can be very frustrating. I find that I end up doing so much reading and

Table 7.4 Formal v informal

Theme	Number of responses
No response	1
Mostly informal based on a relationship of trust	20
Formal and informal (including staff meetings, presenting training)	7
Danger of confusing formative and summative	1
Classroom observation but uncommon	1
External quality assurance review with professionals appointed to act as reviewers	1

Table 7.5 Experience in acting as a peer reviewer

Theme	Number of responses
None	14
None for teaching but some for research	4
Critique of classroom practice	4
Mentoring of younger staff	3
Materials' review	3
Reviews at other universities	2
As part of postgraduate certificate in higher education assignment	2
Full review	2
Running workshops	1
Part of audit quality assurance team in university	1

preparation for research and lecturing because I can't find guidance from colleagues or experts in the field'.

The fourth question related to the range of formal and informal ways in which peer review manifests at the university. Results are displayed in Table 7.4.

The suspicion of peer review persists in a remark such as 'Most colleagues are very wary about letting on that they struggle with something'. Most of the informal networking seems to go on among junior colleagues, who often find senior colleagues unforthcoming, and they are not comfortable asking the managers for advice or guidance. One of the respondents revealed that s/he had had a very bad experience when starting out as a lecturer. Senior members of staff reviewed this person's teaching. S/he thought it would be a mutually beneficial process as they had experience of lecturing and s/he had experience outside the university context in applying the knowledge and skills to be taught. Recommendations were made that the respondent believed were not valid and so they were not followed. One of the senior members then took disciplinary action against her/him. S/he concludes: 'I will be very reluctant to allow any member of academic staff in my department to review my teaching in future'.

The fifth question related to the respondents' experience of acting as a peer reviewer. Results are displayed in Table 7.5.

The responses to this question and the previous one imply that a range of less and more experienced respondents completed the survey. Some of the respondents clearly had extensive experience within and across Faculties and even internationally of mentorship, classroom observation, materials review, peer review of research, and so on, while about half the sample had no experience at all.

Table 7.6 Experiences of being reviewed

Theme	Number of responses
No experience/no answer	8
Materials were reviewed	6
Classroom observation	7
Informal feedback received	5
Research products reviewed	2
As a new teacher at own request	1
For promotion	1
Assessment was moderated	1

The last question dealt with experiences of being reviewed, and the coded responses appear below in Table 7.6.

Respondents' comments revealed how they felt about the experience as well. Only one mentioned that s/he felt 'uncomfortable'. Where others revealed how they felt, words and phrases like 'useful', 'rewarding', 'learnt a lot', 'confidence booster', 'positive' and 'helpful' were used.

The university's policies predominantly depict peer review as a once-off evaluation, often for performance management, and always for promotion and awards. The understanding of the concept (question 1), its personal application within a relationship of trust (question 4) and the ideal use of peer review (question 3) that emerged from the responses all favoured a formative use of peer review. There is thus a tension between official policy articulations and what some of the respondents know works best for them.

The sample was too small to make any except analytic generalizations based on a comparison between the responses and themes that emerge in literature.

- The purposes of conducting peer review (Boud 1999; Cariaga-Lo et al. 2010; England 1996; Macquarie University 2012; Rodriguez-Valls 2010; Trower 2010; University of Texas at El Paso 2012)
- High stakes, summative formal v low stakes, formal or informal, formative (Boud and Middleton 2003; Brent and Felder 2004; Brookfield 1995; Gosling 2005; Perlman and McCann 1998; Purvis et al. 2009)
- Mentoring (Cariaga-Lo et al. 2010; George 2011; Macquarie University 2012; McKenzie et al. 2008; University of Texas at El Paso 2012)
- Scholarly collaboration (Cariaga-Lo et al. 2010; Hubball and Clarke 2011; McKenzie et al. 2008; University of Texas at El Paso 2012; University of British Columbia 2011)
- Trust and peer review (Drew and Ehrich 2011; George 2011; McKenzie et al. 2008; Perlman and McCann 1998; Stoll et al. 2006; Trower 2010)
- Formal training v sites of practice (Boud 1999; Drew and Ehrich 2011; Weller 2009)
- Espoused and actual systems (Drew and Ehrich 2011).

The limitation of the small number of responses can be partly compensated for by other sources of information about peer review at the university. For instance, participants ($n = 40$) at the July 2011 Education Induction Programme for new academic staff were asked how they obtain peer feedback on teaching and learning. The answers were not that direct but they do triangulate with the results of the online survey. Some do not seek feedback as they feel exposed and vulnerable: the opinion was expressed that inviting peer review needs high levels of emotional maturity. Others reported critical discussion among lecturers teaching sections of large classes. One department reported compulsory tea times at which staff shared experiences. In some departments, senior lecturers visit classes randomly. Yet others reported video-taping lectures for later viewing and reflection. The conclusion from the participants was that a department needs a culture of collaboration for a continuum of peer review activities to be successful.

The data are skewed as they do not reflect the wide variety of practices and understandings in the University. One example of a department with a history of regular group reflection on teaching and a strong culture of promoting learning is Mathematics. There are departments where there is continuous formal and informal discussion, leadership and development and some already use participatory action research. Thus, the small number of responses to the online survey does not reflect the rich diversity of practices from across the University.

Two points could be made at this stage: (1) the university is trapped to some extent in a particular paradigm captured in policy documents and (2) there is a need in the future to develop a network of formal and informal, low stakes, peer review, including mentorship. The latter could lead to the enhancement and even transformation of teaching and learning, enabling lecturers to construct new meanings. Peer review should involve mutual learning and extend to a whole department, not just be something between two individuals, so that a professional learning community evolves and good practices are shared. To be transformative, discussions should focus not on techniques alone but be broadened to theories and philosophies of teaching and learning. Learning can be further deepened by cycles of action research into one's own teaching.

Reflections and the Way Forward

Quality Control in University Teaching as a Peer-Review Profession

What the policies, literature and university website survey and research seem to reveal is that the social contract of the peer-review professions is rarely taken into consideration as a motivation for ensuring quality in teaching and learning. Universities 'earn' their academic freedom and autonomy by taking control of quality locally, establishing shared professional responsibility for the quality of teaching and research. Within this professional orientation, teaching is seen as a scholarly activity based in theory and practice as well as reflection on both. In this scenario, review could be formative or summative but should be consultative, self-directed and part of a culture of valuing and developing teaching.

Quality Assurance of Teaching

Quality assurance as opposed to quality control is more likely to be formal, high stakes, evaluative and summative. The following fall into this assurance category for the university in the case study:

- Review for promotion, whether through classroom observation or evaluation of materials;
- Quality assurance panels arranged by the university that include external evaluators from SA and internationally;
- External quality panels comprising a range of staff from other universities, usually senior, plus their own audit staff.

This type of quality assurance is not necessarily arbitrary or negative in impact. Contemporary quality assurance activities usually involve self-evaluation against pre-determined or negotiated criteria or minimum standards. Such self-evaluation can be a valuable learning experience and an opportunity for constructive reflection. It is also currently practice to require an improvement plan to close the feedback loop after the review report is delivered, which provides another opportunity to develop professionally. The problem with such uses of peer review, particularly within an institution, is that they might be perceived as managerial, particularly if used in isolation from regular, formative processes for professional academic development. Quality assurance should complement a culture of collegial responsibility for quality teaching.

Professional Learning Communities

From what has emerged from the survey results and the literature survey, variables that must affect the project as it goes forward are the research-intensive nature of the university, addressing the totality of the lecturer's experience at the university (teaching, research and community engagement with their synergies and conflicts) as well as engaging constructively with external imperatives.

The research and other experiences at the university raised a number of issues:

- There are multiple layers of accountability in teaching as opposed to research.
- Academics need to be self-motivated around developing their teaching and promoting student learning and part of that motivation should come from their understanding of what it means to be part of a peer-review profession.
- A department pulling together on a large scale to promote teaching and learning is likely to support individual growth in teaching and induct all staff into their professional responsibilities and identities as academics.
- A network of developmental activities is important to ensure good communication about teaching and provide sufficient feedback to improve teaching.

- The ethos in the department, the willingness and openness to learn from one another, is important. Only in an atmosphere of trust will colleagues speak out, ask others to come and view their classes, mentor others, etc.
- Junior staff members tend to interact with peers at their own level but interactions with more senior colleagues such as course coordinators and being invited to sit in on classes can stimulate professional development and encourage dialogue and the sharing of good practices across a department.
- Reciprocal learning takes place, with junior and senior staff learning from each other.
- In a research-intensive university, a scholarly approach to the development of teaching is likely to be more valued as it would be more rigorous.

As the international research project into peer review was designed, the Phase 2 of the research started at the University of Pretoria university with a small group of volunteers directly involved as co-investigators. They do not represent all faculties. They decided to elicit further input from their colleagues using a new questionnaire. This would be followed by individual interviews. The research will remain fairly local in a Department, School or Faculty during Phase 3. Co-investigators will investigate their own contexts, analyse them critically, learn from them, effect changes if empowered to do so and reflect on them. In effect, lecturers engage in scholarly work by collecting evidence and theorizing about practice.

At the local level (disciplines, departments, Schools, Faculties), our purposes would be

- To uncover and reflect on what they are doing at the local level to investigate and improve their own teaching practices as individuals or groups at the moment and why and how they are doing it;
- To implement research-based change, capture data, reflect on the progress and success of the change, improve if necessary. This is cyclical/iterative process;
- To build communities of trust.

At an institutional level, our purpose would be

- To facilitate sharing of emerging practices;
- To influence university policies and procedures.

Some of the principles we would like to embed would be that our developing approach would be

- Process not event driven;
- Bottom-up: local leading to institutional;
- Providing a network of opportunities that are mutually reinforcing;
- Focused on continuing professional development to build professional identity as well as teaching competence;
- Scholarly.

What the two original researchers would also like to achieve would be larger patterns of organizational change and connecting individual and local learning to the rest of the organization (Donnenberg and De Loo 2004). designing or adapting policies, procedures and tools to facilitate the use of peer review institutionally. However, because of different cultures and disciplinary practices, this might not be directly possible. Perhaps the good practice to be shared is using peer review in one form or the other. Case studies of initiatives would add value.

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Chapter 8
Peer Review for Distance Educators: Two Case Studies

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Introduction

Collegial and developmental peer observation is readily acknowledged as being a beneficial process for academics to engage in (McKenzie and Parker 2011; McKenzie et al. 2008). Mostly such peer review occurs in the on-campus environment with face-to-face interactions that assist peers to reciprocally share their observations. Increasingly however, many tertiary institutions teach via distance (and online) modes with no face-to-face contact between staff—how then do lecturers engage in peer observation and review? Australia tertiary institutions are also facing the challenge of providing evidence of quality in teaching and many are considering if lecturer observation can be an indicator of teaching quality. Can these two perspectives of developmental and managerial observation co-exist; and if so, how can institutions support either form of observation when teaching is via distance and online?

Earlier chapters have addressed quality assurance, culture and leadership issues related to peer review of learning and teaching. This chapter introduces some of the challenges faced by an Australian dual sector tertiary institution as it grapples with implementing developmental and managerial observation of distance and online lecturers. The challenges faced and lessons learnt from these cases suggest that an institutional-wide scaffolding of review practices may be one answer that could assist others facing similar situations.

Peer observation of teaching or peer review of teaching has traditionally been conducted in face-to-face teaching environments, with observations occurring through personal visits to on-campus classes, lectures, tutorials, workshop and subsequent feedback shared face-to-face within appropriate guidelines (Barnard et al. 2011). Within the Australian tertiary sector the practice of peer observation of teaching has grown in recent years and is argued to play an important role in assisting individuals to improve and augment their professional teaching practice (McKenzie and Parker 2011).

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Historically this formative peer observation of teaching has involved two people, an observer and the observed, or reviewer and reviewee; but this notion is being challenged by the introduction of peer observation 'teams' that can provide multiple perspectives which encourage a sense of shared responsibility (Hendry and Oliver 2012). Introducing peer observation 'teams' is a relatively new concept, which involves a broadening and sharing of the responsibility for peer reviews that offer new opportunities for individual personal growth. Even so, mixed practices exist in many tertiary institutions in relation to peer observation and the uptake of peer review of teaching depends on how the activity is embedded "within the culture and policies of institutions" (Harris et al. 2008b, p. 7). Developmental peer review (whether in pairs or teams) is characterised as being owned by academics, with an emphasis on development and formative feedback that promotes pedagogical conversations that are often of a confidential nature (Taylor and Richardson 2001).

Peer review in some areas is being incorporated into university practices as part of a strategic approach to enhance the quality of their teaching and learning (Barnard et al. 2011; Bennett and Barp 2008; Hendry and Oliver 2012). Internationally peer observation of teaching is well established and strongly influenced by national quality assurance processes and the drive towards 'best practice' (McKenzie and Parker 2011); for example in New Zealand at Massey University, a selection of completed PART (Peer Assistance and Review of Teaching) forms undertake further peer review on an annual basis and are used as an institutional quality indicator.

In Australia, review of lecturers is currently being considered as one aspect for measuring teaching quality. This type of qualitative peer review could be conducted by managers and could also be linked to performance appraisal. Institutions must be clear about the policy requirements and frameworks for reviews to ensure staff are able to implement the processes (Harris et al. 2008a). Tensions, however, can arise within organisations that have to provide evidence of quality assurance using observations as a metric and balancing this with the developmental aspects of peer review. This tension can be exacerbated by teaching modalities that introduce the variables of time and distance into the review process (whether developmental *or* managerial).

Increasing tertiary institutions are offering more of their programs through online and distance modalities (see, for example, Ellis and Goodyear 2010; Ruiz et al. 2007; Wood and Friedel 2009). Peer review in such distance and online environments is still in its infancy and, by comparison to face-to-face reviews, limited research has been reported (McKenzie and Parker 2011; Bennett and Barp 2008; Swinglehurst et al. 2006; Wood and George 2003; Wood et al. 2009). Swinglehurst et al. (2006) mapped experiences of peer review and identified opportunities and challenges of online learning environments, noting the critical differences between peer observation in a face-to-face and online environments. One of these critical success factors is the need to ensure 'sanctioned' time for academics to be able to consider what counts as good teaching and learning.

Furthermore Harris et al. (2008a) argue that there are usually three conditions for effective online peer review (1) the need for collegial trust and respect for all involved parties; (2) the development of supportive and guidance including useful resources and advice, and (3) the incorporation of peer review into appropriate policies within an organisation (Harris et al. 2008a). Indeed at the time of writing, quality standards for distance learning are being developed as part of an Australian Office for Learning and Teaching Fellowship, with the expectation that these standards will be used in self-assessment and protocols for collegial peer review and will be aligned with TEQSA Standards Framework (OLT 2012).

Addressing the challenges of peer observation in online environments has been noted in recent Australian research. McKenzie and Parker (2011) in research sponsored by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) developed, implemented and evaluated a scholarly framework, processes and resources for peer review of learning and teaching in online and blended learning environments, that focussed on improvements, and recognition and rewarding good teaching. Of particular interest from this project are the recommended protocols for formative and summative peer reviews and useful templates. Also sponsored by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council, Harris et al. (2008a, b) developed resources to enable institutions to embed effective peer review policies and practices. Wood et al. (2009) created an open-source online peer review system that promotes a scholarly approach of peer review of online learning and teaching resources. This latter study created and refined an online tool for peer review of online materials and teaching, the availability of which has expanded options for institutions considering implementing online peer review. And finally, although not necessarily in the online realm, the ALTC Peer Review of Teaching for Promotion Purposes project created a peer review promotion framework that used both internal and external review teams (Crisp et al. 2009).

Notwithstanding the wealth of resources generated from these projects, introducing new peer review of teaching programs in any institution can be a complex and challenging endeavour (Harris et al. 2008b); and more so when the disparities of time and distance are factored in, together with the dual aspects of focussing on developmental or quality-assurance reviews. How can institutions teaching across online and distance modes balance the increasing need to report against quality measures, and simultaneously support lecturers in collegial review?

Online and Distance Peer Review Case Studies

This section introduces the case-study institution before exploring the developmental peer review process with distance lecturers and the developmental and managerial review processes with online lecturers.

Background

Think: Colleges (Think) is a private, Australian higher education provider. Think's three faculties comprise eight Colleges within three areas of applied education that

Fig. 8.1 Think: Education group faculties

together have over 130 years of combined history and are respected as leaders in their specialist fields (Fig. 8.1). The Colleges deliver vocational education and training (VET) and higher education (HE) courses in multiple delivery formats including face-to-face or blended, distance and online modalities operating on a Moodle platform.

As a Registered Training Organisation, Think operates within the National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes (NPHEAP 2007). Three of these six protocols bear a direct relationship to the establishment of peer review process as they support scholarship in relation to learning and teaching:

- keeping abreast of the literature and new research, including by interaction with peers, and using that knowledge to inform learning and teaching;
- engaging in relevant professional practice where appropriate to the discipline; and
- being informed about the literature of learning and teaching in relevant disciplines and being committed to ongoing development of teaching practice.

The emphasis within Think is on encouraging a more open teaching culture, where discussion and sharing of ideas about teaching practice are commonplace. Think's aim for adopting such observations is to optimise the student learning experience. It contends that through incorporating peer observation as a scholarly activity, improved personal and faculty scholarship can occur. Think has adopted the Boyer notion of scholarship, which is arguably one of the most widely used frameworks for considering academic work. Boyer's (1990) model has four-dimensions of: "discovery—doing research; integration—making connections across disciplines; application—using research results and recommendations; and teaching—educating and stimulating future scholars and practitioners" (Barnard et al. 2011, p. 436).

Underpinning Think's education philosophy is a set of strong Principles of Learning and Teaching. Both observation programs are driven by these principles. Similar to many tertiary institutions, at the time of writing Think is establishing policy and procedures for peer review of lecturers where proposed policies are adopted upon completion of relevant committee quality assurance processes. The first case study focuses on 'Peer sharing amongst the Distance Learning lecturers' and the second on 'Peer review amongst Online lecturers'. This section considers *developmental* peer review cases.

'Peer Sharing' Amongst Distance Learning (DL) Lecturers

The Commercial Arts Training College (CATC) Design School offers an inspiring mix of industry-recognised courses in graphic design, interior design, multimedia and photoimaging to predominantly mature-aged distance students. The distance education pedagogy model most clearly identified with this College is that of the cognitive-behaviourist model (Holmberg 1989), where content is created in comprehensive, self-contained learning packages requiring teacher-learner interaction for marking and evaluation. The program provides additional social-constructivist elements such as one-to-many and many-to-many communications predominately through discussion forums. In the CATC distance program, intakes occur on a monthly cycle and as such, DL lecturers regularly grade large numbers of assignments each month. All lecturers are experienced designers, yet some are new to the teaching experience. A consideration uppermost in the mind of the creator of the peer observation process was to support the range of experienced and new academics to optimise the student learning experience. The purpose of the DL initiative was to: exchange observations between the DL educators in their teaching resources, feedback and support given the students, in order to better understand each other's concepts and standards and enable staff to work together on benchmarking teaching to provide students with improved quality delivery.

As Harris et al. (2008a, p. 19) note, academics "may regard peer review of teaching with suspicion or anxiety when first introduced to the idea of undertaking it, particularly if it is aimed at enhancing the quality of teaching." To allay any concerns, the Peer sharing program commenced informally between the Graphic Design Distance lecturers; an approach which mirrors Bell's (2005) and is based on the mutually supportive relationships of peers. After presenting an overview of the program at a staff forum, even the terminology was adjusted from 'observation' to 'sharing'. Thus the peer *sharing* review enabled the DL team to work together on benchmarking the teaching experience.

Process

Details of the Peer Sharing project (how the process worked, how the units were to be observed, how the paperwork was to be completed and how the debrief would take place at the conclusion of the peer sharing), was explained by the Program Manager. The process involved initial consultations between the Program Manager and interested lecturers in order to establish mutually-agreed parameters for reciprocal sharing. This openness of setting the topics for observation was a unique one where changes could be agreed on and variations made to the suggested template. Three stages were identified in the DL sharing—see Fig. 8.2 below. Stage one involved the participants agreeing on the scope, completing the review sheets provided and sharing samples of assignment grading and student feedback. Stage two involved staff communicating their reflections and notes together with suggestions for

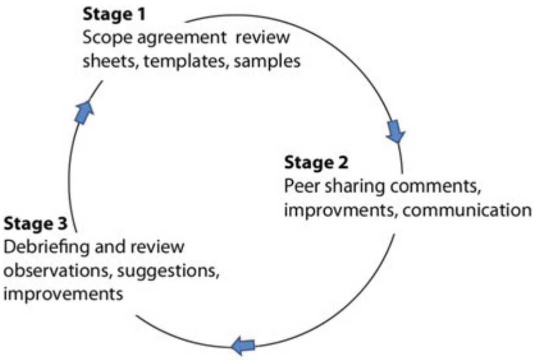

Fig. 8.2 Three stages of DL peer sharing

improvement. The final third debriefing stage was a three-way conversation that allowed staff to suggest what future improvements and ideas they would implement as a result of the whole process. Upon completion of the final round of the process, the Program Manager moved peer sharing from the private realm into a public forum, by reporting generalised ideas and encouraging broad discussions.

Key Outcomes of the Distance Learning Case Study

The DL lecturing team is highly committed to making improvements in their teaching—a factor that contributed to the success of the collaboration processes.

A common language and permission to share Through the three-stage process and constructive exchanges of participants, lecturers were given a common language with which to discuss their feedback—plus, they were given permission to share their personal learning in a non-threatening way.

Changes to teaching practice As has been noted in the literature, the affective aspects of "sharing one's teaching work with peers are rarely explicitly discussed" (Bell et al. 2010). Often this reluctance is partly due to the solo and isolated experience of teaching. A second key outcome was that novice DL lecturers felt more supported and more confident in teaching; reporting, for example, trying more adventurous ways of providing audio feedback on student work. Lecturers also reported increased confidence levels knowing they were 'doing a good job'.

Peer Review Amongst Online Lecturers

Flexible and Online Learning at Think commenced in April 2008 with the first intake of students in February 2009 in the Bachelor of Business. The online education pedagogy model most clearly identified with the Think Colleges, is that of the social-constructivist pedagogy (Anderson and Dron 2011). Content is developed for the 12-week study periods and provided in a learner-centred environment with lecturers guiding student learning utilising authentic opportunities, adding individual and group asynchronous and synchronous communications, and giving formative and summative feedback on assessments, whilst at no time do students attend face-to-face classes. All lecturers have extremely strong disciplinary and work-based experience yet, for some, teaching in the online environment can pose challenges (Redmond 2011).

To support these academics a professional development program, titled *THINK-FLEXIBLE: enhancing online learning* was created. Offered three times a year, the 12-week program covers good online learning and teaching principles, effective engagement, retention and feedback in the online environment. This program requires online lecturers to investigate their own online teaching and student learning contexts, demonstrate adoption of critically reflective practices and observe fellow participants as they teach online. Lecturers in the program intakes teach in one of the four Higher Education Colleges, are generally female (60 %) and new to teaching online (45 %). Peer observation is a core element of THINKFLEXIBLE (TF). Shaped by research by Hall and Conboy (2009), this component draws together discussions about teaching, blogging and peer observation to develop teachers' professional identities and build innovative practices. For innovative lecturers forging new online paths with their online students, being able to "establish connections through which to gain a window into the practice of fellow innovators" is important (Bennett and Santy 2009, p. 405).

Process

As previously noted an essential condition for peer review is collegial trust and respect for all involved parties (Harris et al. 2008a). This element is broached at the face-to-face TF seminar conducted at the commencement of the 12-week program. Although most lecturers did not know each other before this seminar, they were able to form teams of three or four peers, mixing observers across the three Think faculties. The trust established even in this short time frame was strong. In their peer teams, all lecturers are expected to observe each other teaching in one nominated unit. On four occasions during the study period, they are required to provide informal feedback (before being asked to formally summarise at the conclusion of the program). The peer review is carefully scoped to consider three key elements of the online teaching and learning context, namely:

1. Preparation of the online learning environment
2. Communication with online students
3. Teaching effectiveness and application of online learning strategies

Privacy of student communications was maintained as lecturers were provided only with Guest access as per the policy and guidelines.

Key Outcomes of the Online Learning Case Study

Lecturers reported increasing their levels of confidence, deepening their reflection on their own teaching practices through observing others, and were willing to volunteer to mentor new online colleagues in subsequent programs.

Gaining reflective insights Lecturers reflected on their own learning that had resulted from the opportunity to view another's online teaching.

> Both of my peers had a good "tone" and style of discussion with students. They were friendly and approachable. Student engagement was great on one site but minimal in another due to the nature of that course. I think they both achieved their teaching objectives as their assignments and discussions were targeted to course objectives and goals. I found it extremely valuable to observe their teaching and it has helped me with my own.

Building confidence Lecturers indicated they are more confident in their own teaching, reaffirming the notion that "in electronic environments the reciprocity of peer review is particularly valuable, providing much appreciated 'mutual support' for online teachers" (Bennett and Santy 2009, p. 404).

> I have learnt a lot through observing x. I think her teaching style is encouraging and engaging and she has created a friendly learning atmosphere where students feel safe to comment and express their ideas. x has a high level of participation with her students, which is a credit to the environment she has created. (first year subject)
> I was particularly impressed by the layout of each week and how explicit the topic, goals and activities were made. If I was a student in your class I would have a very clear idea of what was required of me and why it was required. (second year subject)
> I noticed with Dr X that he does not respond to each post but weaves discussion through his commentary. Sometimes his tone is quite provocative and challenging students to get them to think in a different way. Overall this was helpful and provided me with more confidence to try new ways of communicating with my own students. (third year subject)

Mentoring The confidence to continue to support peers in an ongoing fashion was the third key outcome. Lecturers indicated their willingness to continue in a mentoring role for the future participants. This point was reinforced in the evaluation of the program where having a critical friend to support teaching reflections was noted. Critical friends and mentors have similarly been noted in research (see, for example, Shortland 2010) as supportive activities that lead to enhanced teaching practices, yet little research has been conducted into the concept of and effectiveness in critical online friends.

Challenges to Both Developmental Programs

Building trust? Given the nature of these modes of teaching, building trust between participants was acknowledged as essential for their success. Although the online lecturers started to build a relationship at their first face-to-face seminar there was no further face-to-face contact between the peer groups after this one-off meeting. Nevertheless, to date, this limited contact has been enough to build the necessary trust to provide constructive collegial feedback. By comparison, DL lecturers reaffirmed that their trust levels were stronger as a result of their peer sharing experience.

Time? Time pressures impacted on the online lecturers' ability to provide feedback; for when the observations were scheduled, lecturers were also caught up in the throes of a hectic teaching semester. Although some online lecturers were challenged by the time taken to adjust to the newness of the teaching portal, the majority successfully completed the peer observations in a timely manner. By comparison, in the DL peer sharing process, time was not an issue as the DL lecturers were better able to negotiate around their daily time commitments.

Impartiality? Possibly due to the disparate time and space zones they operated within and the limited face-to-face interactions with their peers, online lecturers were more readily able to be impartial in their feedback. In contrast to the situation of online lecturers, the DL lecturers inhabited the same physical space. The DL teaching team knew each other well, mainly from their daily contact, which led to increased collegial trust and respect. But the DL educators were faced with a different problem; as they saw their colleagues on a daily basis they needed to maintain a level of impartiality in their peer sharing. To obviate any potential issues, the DL management team ensured that a Peer tutor would work with each set of peers to facilitate the initial and final interactions.

Institutional Quality Assurance Review

Online lecturers are involved in a collaborative review by their manager as part of an institutional quality assurance process. This is an extension of a model introduced to Think through the Macquarie University Foundations in Learning and Teaching program, the THINKFLEXIBLE Program, and adapted from research by Boud and Prosser in 2002. Under this initiative Colleges in conjunction with the Head of Online Services, conduct a minimum of one observation with each contracted online lecturer in each academic year. The aim of this observation is to improve the student learning experience by reviewing the learning and assessment experience in the areas of content, delivery, assessment, online classroom management, the learning management system and complementary technology usage in order to inform the formative and summative aspects such as:

> fulfilment of the Think mission of being the "standard in applied education"; providing evidence and recognition of excellent teaching practice; confirmation and offer of a renewed teaching contract; identification of appropriate personal and institutional professional development needs and opportunities; identification of learning portal development needs and, changes to content, delivery and assessment strategies through program reviews.

Online lecturers in the pre-observation process provide administrative information about their classes through completing a Qualtrics survey and are encouraged to upload additional pre-class teaching and learning activities prior to the review. An advantage of this pre-observation process is that it enables online lecturers the time and space to express their aims and intentions for their online teaching. The manager then completes a five-hour online review, observing their teaching site and looking at four areas of learner engagement, learner-context and authentic learning, providing challenges for learners and practices for learners. This latter area is particularly interesting as online lecturers need to support online students who have low portal activity levels and who require additional academic or tutor support.

Think approached the introduction of this managerial review process in a scaffolded way, building interest and engagement within individual Colleges and using the success of the developmental peer review process from the THINKFLEXIBLE program as a starting point. Building trust for this process was acknowledged as essential, as was the need for visible transparent processes. The Head of Online Services in conjunction with key senior College and Shared Services personnel, communicated with online lecturers explaining the purpose of the review in an open, two-way consultation that succeeded in engaging the online lecturers. This encompassed the 'staged' review introduction process as Harris et al., note has potential for increased future lecturer engagement (Harris et al. 2008b). Still in its introductory phase, this managerial observation process has not yet been evaluated. From anecdotal feedback received to date, however, it is anticipated that the outcomes have assisted lecturers to identify new teaching strengths and areas for improvement, provided a baseline for further professional development programs and assisted to develop College teaching benchmarks (Mansvelt et al. 2009).

Online lecturers at Think therefore participate in two review initiatives; one is developmental within their professional development program that provides rich, collegial team feedback that enables them to develop as an online teacher and also scaffolds the concept of undertaking reviews. The second is a managerial perspective of review that similarly provides individual rich feedback on their teaching but also enables Colleges to make decisions to ensure improved student learning experiences and the continuation of their high standards of teaching.

Lessons Learnt that Draw on Institutional Perspectives

This paper has explored observations of peer review and sharing for improving academic teaching practices, within online and distance learning environments from both developmental and managerial perspectives. Both processes however, depend on the establishment of mutual trust and respect. These case studies demonstrate that varying review opportunities can co-exist and, that by taking a scaffolded approach to their introduction within transparent policy frameworks, increased conversations about teaching and learning both at individual and collective levels can occur. Reports of increased awareness of scholarly conversations serve as a *trigger* that can remove 'silos' of solo teaching. Evidence for this in the Think DL environment has been noted during staff meetings and also at Executive meetings where sharing of different teaching approaches is regularly discussed. Similarly, evidence of the removal of silos in the online environment has occurred through the sharing of ideas and resources both online (in lecturer-initiated Moodle sites) and in teleconferences.

The introduction of managerial reviews, through carefully scaffolding and embedding them in the existing culture, policies and practices of peer reviews at Think is working. Whilst acknowledging the newness of these initiatives, evaluation of the programs has not yet been undertaken. Further exploration of online and distance peer observation is necessary, as such initiatives are still in their infancy and additional aspects remain to be investigated (Bennett and Barp 2008).

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Chapter 9
Peer Review in a Foundations in Learning and Teaching Program

Marina Harvey and Ian Solomonides

Introduction

Academics in Australia (Kandlbinder and Peseta 2011) and internationally (Hunt and Chalmers 2012) are often supported by some form of professional development program to prepare them for university teaching. These teacher preparation programs range in duration, structure, modality and content. Aims of such programs include supporting teacher development of deeper conceptions of teaching, a greater student centred focus and scholarship of teaching (Ginns et al. 2008). Achieving these aims is often enabled through reflective practice, which has been identified as a 'key' and 'central' concept (Kandlbinder and Peseta 2011) taught in what is often referred to as 'foundations in learning and teaching' programs throughout Australia (also referred to as teacher preparation programs).

University teachers may be required to engage in peer review (Byrne et al. 2010) for their professional development and a number of teacher preparation programs now incorporate peer review (Bell 2001). In many of these cases, the conceptual framework for the programs tightly interweaves the peer review activity with reflective practice (e.g., Bell 2001, 2012).

In this chapter, a rationale for the pivotal role of reflective capacity in developing the academy through the mandated practice of peer review in a university teacher preparation program is presented through the case study of Macquarie University, a large, metropolitan Australian university. The role of reflection in teaching preparation programs is outlined, leading to a discussion on the nexus between peer review and reflection. An argument for a holistic, whole-of-organisational approach to changing learning and teaching culture follows, illustrated by the case study material.

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Role of Reflection for University Teacher Preparation Programs

There exists an established history of the role of reflection to support teacher development in some university disciplines, for example, within teacher education programs (Grushka et al. 2005), the health professions (Mann et al. 2009) and more recently management (Segal 2007). Generically, reflection may be considered one of the principles of academic work (Light et al. 2009). Consequently, a common purpose of academic development programs, such as teacher preparation programs, is that of developing the reflective practitioner, academics who should be able to reflect: as scholars, on their students and on their organisational and disciplinary contexts (Kreber 2011).

Yet there is limited empirical evidence on how reflection supports teacher learning (Danielowich 2012) or on how it supports improved teaching practices (Cornford 2002). A review of university teacher preparations programs, focusing on the reflective processes employed therein, was unable to report any direct outcomes (Kahn et al. 2008). Instead, professional educators are relying on their "felt knowing" (Walkerden 2009) that reflective practitioners can somehow enhance the quality of learning and teaching in our higher education institutions. The "practice-based evidence" (Harvey et al. 2010, p. 140) suggests that teachers are increasingly encouraging reflective practice with their students.

Literature is emerging on the role of reflective practice as professional development for university teaching preparation programs. An Estonian study (Karm 2010) investigated "how different reflection tasks employed during pedagogical training can support academics in interpreting their teaching as well as in becoming aware of their personal theories and their identity as lecturers" (p. 205). The author drew on seminal works to argue the value of reflective practice "in its potential for creating connections" (p. 204). Reflection and its practice, within teacher preparation foundations programs, can support teachers: in achieving praxis by connecting the theory in the program with their teaching practice (Loughran 2002); learning from their experience (McAlpine and Weston 2000) and developing their metacognitive capability around actioning theory (McAlpine et al. 1999). The Karm (2010) study found that guided reflective processes, particularly where variety is used, support "improvement of university teachers' reflection skills and habits" (p. 212), and that, different reflective processes developed different reflective perspectives and a "variety of reflective activities also enabled the creation of links between different foci of reflection" (p. 212).

Ideally, reflection in teacher preparation or foundations programs needs to go beyond identifying assumptions and beliefs to engage in instrumental, communicative and emancipatory processes that "will either lead to validation or rejection of our assumptions" (Kreber 2004, p. 44). Currently, few teachers engage in deeper process or premise reflection, focusing instead on content reflection (Kreber 2004). There is a need to move towards a critical synthesis and reflection of explicit and tacit knowledge (Schön 1983) to enable the development of metacognitive ability and/or appropriate conceptions of teaching and learning (Eley 2006). Teacher preparation programs can provide for the professional development of academics with an aim towards achieving Schön's (1987) "knowing-in-practice", whereby a reflective practitioner has the capability to move beyond the routine, and can respond and adapt to unusual or novel situations. The reflective practitioner who becomes the reflective professional is able to manage the "change and uncertainty" of the academic environment (Light et al. 2009, p. 15). One strategy for realising the reflective professional is that of peer review.

Nexus of Reflection and Peer Review

The underlying and overt tenet of many approaches to peer review is that it is a practice that encourages and develops multi-level reflective capability: of the individuals and groups participating, collaboratively through peer review partnerships, and more broadly of the reflective capacity of the wider institution in which the peer review activity is occurring. Peer review can develop reflective practice in academics (Hammersley-Fletcher and Orsmond 2005) and conversely, critical reflection (differentiated from a lower level surface reflection [Larrivee 2008]), is a prerequisite (Peel 2005) for learning from peer review.

In the absence of reflection, peer review can be "... a passive approach, which, for a number of reasons, would not seem conducive to genuine professional growth and development" (Cosh 1998, p. 172). There is a lack of real evidence that "people develop and improve through the judgement or comments of others (and that) the development of self-awareness is equally, if not more, crucial" (p. 172). Hence, the *process* of reflection is key to quality peer review (Hammersley-Fletcher and Orsmond 2004).

Peer review provides a nexus between professional development, through teacher preparation programs, and developing reflective academics (Kreber 2004). Once established, it can provide for continuous (Biggs and Tang 2011), and therefore sustainable, professional development. Individuals engaging in peer review as professional development can reflect on their own practice (Byrne et al. 2010). When the process of reflection uses critical and higher order thinking skills and develops new cognitive and metacognitive strategies and knowledge (Desautel 2009) then there is the potential to achieve transformative learning, as illustrated in the following case:

> It was less the use of POT that led to change in my practice and sense of self, but my confidence in challenging the purposes, uses and value frameworks of POT. I thus went from an instrumental use of POT as a tool for critiquing performance in the classroom to question the societal and institutional uses of POT. *It was the critical reflective thinking about POT that deeply changed me and my practice*, rather than the processes of change that came about through the use of POT. My sense of awakening stemmed from my questioning of my assumptions about how and why POT 'should' work. Effectively, I was questioning my espoused theories about POT and its normative status. The transformatory dimension of my learning derived then from having the confidence to challenge my own/and society's practice. This is what makes the challenges of the peer observation of teaching or the observation of learning in the classroom meaningful and exciting. This has been my transformatory understanding. (Peel 2005, p. 496, *emphasis added*).

Collaboration, which is pivotal to peer review, enables and emphasises the integral role of dialogic (Bell 2001), shared reflection (Byrne et al. 2010; Martin and Double 1998), which supports a greater success in developing reflective practice (Glazer et al. 2004). The reflective feedback obtained through these collaborations can assume a professional development role (Shortland 2010). And, when for example, the process is located within a wider teaching team and focuses on an area of practice of mutual interest to that team the benefits may be magnified (Byrne et al. 2010). Thus, institutionally, peer review, within a teacher preparation program, can be used to develop consensus on "how we learn and teach here" (Hammersley-Fletcher and Orsmond 2005, p. 223) with ensuing discourse and debate developing high quality learning environments.

Across our changing organisations that call for reflective practitioners, there is an equally strong call for "evidence-based practice" (Kreber 2011, p. 46). A strength of peer review, as one example of a foci for reflection, is that it can have the added benefit of producing the "evidence of processes" (p. 55).

The nexus between reflection and peer review as professional development suggests a range of positive outcomes for participants, their collaborators and for their institutions. Learning from this, it would be strategic to systematise the practice of peer review as professional development across an institution through a whole-of-organisation approach.

Establishing Peer Review in an Institution

Macquarie University provides the contextual case study for this chapter. It is a large, single-campus, metropolitan Australian university with 37,921 students and 1,288 full-time academic staff as at 2011 (Macquarie University 2012). A centralised Learning and Teaching Centre (LTC) provides support for enhancing the quality of learning and teaching across the campus amongst other things. Other writers in this volume have identified how important in particular, issues of place, attitude, collegiality and affect are to communication and its role in peer review. However, implementing or promoting peer review in a university is not an easy task, perhaps precisely because of, rather than in spite of, the elements listed earlier. Nevertheless, in 2006/7 the LTC initiated a small project, which resulted in a number of outcomes around shared understanding of practice, collegial exploration of quality enhancement issues and, as the focus of this chapter, the establishment of peer review and supporting materials in the teacher preparation program.

A Whole-of-Organisational Approach

Soon after his arrival at the University, and having promoted peer review as part of a policy process at a previous institution, one of the authors (Solomonides) began informal discussions with practitioners and leaders interested in peer review and observation. Consequently, in early 2007, an inaugural meeting of the Peer Observation of Teaching Special Interest Group (known as the POT SIG) took place with membership made up of ten or so colleagues from around the University, representing a diverse range of subject disciplines. As reported in Harris et al. (2008, pp. 81–86), the group began by discussing ideas about peer review and getting a feel for how colleagues conceptualise peer review (which ranged from punitive to formative). The chair presented this nascent group with a written strategy and supporting documents such as templates, etc. for peer review that were duly critiqued before agreeing on a generic set of materials that might be suitable for use in the University context. What emerged was a set of written guidelines on how to run a peer review initiative in a small group or department, the corresponding pro-forma that might be used and a commitment by the chair to run workshops for any groups thinking about developing a local approach to peer review. As described in more detail below, these were the beginnings of a whole-of-organisation approach to establishing peer review and the associated materials have informed the *Process of Peer Review Handbook* published by Macquarie University (2011).

The local development of peer review evoked the work of Gosling (2002) and of Cosh (1998). The former had identified three models of peer review and, in particular, the relative power relationships between the observer and the observee depending on the model utilised; whilst the latter had described the 'uncertainty' of peer observation where some colleagues "saw the exercise as threatening or critical, and assumed that the observer was making some form of assessment or judgement on the performance of the teacher" (p. 23). Both writers referred to the potential passivity of the observee rather than a process of active self-development based on reflection. Moreover, Cosh (1998) had also alluded to peer review as a mutually supportive process and in particular the idea that: "The aim is, or should be, to work together to improve team and individual performance and confidence, to present a united front, and to give mutual support in the face of external judgement and assessment." (p. 24). Inspired by this view of peer review within a team framework and by Gosling's (2002) peer review model (i.e., teachers observing each other on an equality/mutuality basis) the early work at Macquarie encouraged participants to think about incorporating peer review, if possible, from the aspirations of a team of people (discipline, department, research group etc.) who were or were able to view themselves as genuine peers regardless of office or relative seniority. Added to this was a series of protocols and advice around how to establish what could or should be observed (taking the lead on this from the observee for example), hints and tips on how to give and receive feedback (a task some academics find surprisingly difficult and on which guidance is needed, [Hammersley-Fletcher and Orsmond 2005]), and a series of 'health warnings' about how to maintain the impetus and focus of peer review.

Thus the University had developed an emerging approach to peer review that had, as its core, two key tenets: firstly, a focus on peers rather than on a hierarchical seniority status of accredited reviewers (cf. University of Wollongong 2009); our approach puts the peer back into the review. The second tenet of this approach emphasises the reciprocity of the process. Research supports the value of reciprocity, with participants in a teacher preparation program citing the value of observing a colleague as equal to or of greater benefit than that of being observed and receiving feedback (Hendry and Oliver 2012). Having participants swap roles of observer and observee further develops participants' sense of agency (Hendry and Oliver 2012, p. 6).

Following the success of the Peer Observation of Teaching Special Interest Group, the next goal in achieving a whole-of-organisational approach, was to further widen the university's engagement with peer review. The university's teaching preparation program provided an ideal conduit, both philosophically and pragmatically, for achieving this goal.

Peer Review in the Foundations Teacher Preparation Program

The *Foundations in Learning and Teaching* (FILT) teacher preparation program, commenced at Macquarie University in 2004 with increasing numbers of participants year-on-year. Like many teacher preparation programs it is offered, but not confined, to academic staff that are new to teaching. The FILT program aims to provide participants with the knowledge and skills to enable them to operate as effective teachers. Many novice teachers are attracted to the program, indeed it is expected that staff new to Macquarie will complete the program within 2 years of appointment. It also attracts experienced teachers and colleagues from across the University. Perhaps what unites these practitioners is a limited exposure to the theories of learning and teaching in higher education and associated praxis and the program is designed to offer a balance of theory and practical exposition. Following its first program review in 2007 convened by the authors, it was decided that a coherent theoretical framework should be introduced as a central organising paradigm for the program and that peer review processes be embedded throughout the program.

The Presage, Process, Product (3P) model (Biggs 1993) was chosen as the organising paradigm, emphasising constructive and student-centred learning with a focus on the student, the teacher, aligned curriculum design, assessment and evaluation. The 3P model is utilised to illustrate the systemic nature of learning and teaching and to enable participants to locate within it the significant variables impacting on the quality of learning outcomes that are in dynamic relationship with each other. Applying the 3P model and systems theory to higher education enables more of a relational view between the various sub-systems of inquiry (viz: students, teachers, institution and so on). During the course of the program colleagues are exposed to and reflect on a series of expositions, discussions, readings and other materials related to the experience of learning, teaching and assessment as espoused both in the literature and within the local context. The 3P model enables participants to reflect on the evidence emerging from these activities and how they impact on practice through offering them a map of the teaching and learning territory and their (and their students') role within it. As Biggs (1993) surmises whilst reflecting on a comment by Schön (1987), "... one's framework needs to be able to map the state of the swamp, and not just the anatomy of its alligators" (p. 74).

The decision to mandate peer review processes, by embedding them throughout the FILT teacher preparation program followed the success of the POT SIG. This strategy, aligned with a whole-of-organisational approach and was enacted to achieve the goal of wider engagement with peer review. Supportive resources and pro forma designed for the POT SIG were subsequently adopted by the FILT program, reaffirming the University's emphasis on the role of peers and reciprocity and thereby ensuring consistency and alignment of the one approach as it was expanded across the whole of the organisation. The program thus provided an ideal conduit, both philosophically and pragmatically, for achieving this goal.

Situating the peer review process within a face-to-face centralised teacher preparation program provided participants with a new multi-disciplinary network for collaborative reflection and peer review. This network enables a forum for awareness and collaborations as suggested by Byrne et al. (2010)

> More powerful, however, would be an approach that shares experiences of professional learning within the wider community. Occasional workshops or seminars might provide a forum for groups to disseminate to and engage in constructive dialogue with others, and might also offer one route by which colleagues less known to each other can identify common interests that may lead to future collaboration. (p. 227)

To achieve a successful integration of reflective peer review within teacher preparation programs there is a need for guidance (Morris and Stew 2007), as well as scaffolding and support for working towards deep reflection. The program is therefore designed and structured to scaffold the participants with both reflective practice and with peer review.

There are multiple opportunities for FILT participants to reflect on the program material and to contemplate its relevance to them. Reflective practice is scaffolded throughout the FILT program. Program participants are not only introduced to theory but also to authentic exercises that either illustrate the theory in practice, or enable a reflection on how the theory might explain a particular phenomenon. It is easy to conceptually conflate reflection on learning and teaching with "thinking" (Hammersley-Fletcher and Orsmond 2005, p. 221). Therefore effective peer review programs require definition and discussion of reflection. Participants are introduced to the work of Brookfield (1995) to illustrate the four reflective lenses that may be used for reflective practice– one's self, one's peers, the students, and the literature. Reflective practice is structured into each module of the program starting with short basic tasks such as the one-minute paper (Angelo and Cross 1993) and progressing through to deeper reflective tasks such as the final meta-reflection on what has been learned, through peer review, about learning and teaching in higher education.

Likewise, the peer review processes participants engage in throughout the program have been designed to scaffold capacity over time. The initial peer review activity within the program is a dyadic experiential exercise whereby participants peer review examples of each other's subject outlines (syllabus and curriculum materials). Working through this semi-structured exercise participants develop a growing efficacy and sense of agency around peer review. Later in the program the theoretical foundations of the peer review process are presented, so that participants can begin to construct new meaning by enabling praxis (Kemmis and Smith 2008) and making new connections between their experiences throughout the FILT program and the theory. In terms of peer review this includes the examination of elements within the constructive alignment framework (Biggs and Tang 2011) drawn from instructor examples and other artefacts such as, inter alia: assessment items and tasks, learning activities, verbatim quotes of students and staff, University policy, and more. Additional support for peer review comes in the form of the supportive resources specifically developed for peer review for learning and teaching in higher education, drawing upon the best international evidenced based research. These resources include succinct theoretically informed user notes, together with a series of templates which offer a choice of approaches for peer review ranging from open to semi-structured to structured models.

To complete the program the participants are allowed 6 months to participate in a reciprocal peer review of teaching, with the autonomy to choose from a range of peer review models. Due to the constituency of the program cohorts, this more often than not results in a cross-disciplinary process. Peer review as presented in the program stresses the need to meet prior to the activity to plan the review, especially the focus for the peer review, as "... individual teachers' learning is better supported when (a) their own dilemmas of practice are somewhat clear before they participate in such a space and (b) they come to see peer dialogue as a way to reexamine their teaching choices, expand and diversify their thinking, and engage in critically supportive work" (Danielowich 2012, p. 116).

Through the process and activities described, peer review and reflection or, as an extension, peer development (Byrne et al. 2010) is embedded throughout the teacher preparation program as well as being the culminating exercise expected of the participants, where they specifically focus on "how such reflections might feed into wider developmental strategies" (Hammersley-Fletcher and Orsmond 2005, p. 221). Participants are required to synthesise their learning from their peer review experience as part of a succinct reflective writing task. This meta-reflection is an example of an authentic assessment task. Authenticity is ensured as the peer review, and its associated reflective practice, are situated within the workplace context of participants and address real-life challenges and issues of learning and teaching in the participant's university environment. In other words the integration of peer review activities is an example of work-based learning, reflective practice a strength of which is that it supports effective learning in and through work (Clarke and Llewllynn 2012).

Implications

There are a range of implications for peer review that may present as challenges to implementation and many of these were considered for mitigation in developing the Macquarie approach. Peer review, undertaken in the spirit of Gosling's (2002) collaborative peer review and Cosh's (1998) active and reflective models, are not in themselves ideal. Gosling and O'Connor later (2009) noted how individual teachers will make different judgements about the same teaching behaviours (p. 8). Presumably this is in part due to issues such as a lack of shared understanding of what good teaching is and can be; individual conceptions of the teaching and learning process that impact on personal efficacy beliefs; disciplinary and experience differences, biases, and so on. To manage this issue there might be an argument for reviewers—that is those doing the observing—to be 'expert' or at least well informed of best teaching practices. This in itself becomes an issue when one considers how these experts might be chosen and how the role of expert is associated with evaluation and judgement. Embedding peer review process within and across a teacher preparation program provides one strategy for beginning to address these concerns. Participants develop, or enhance their expertise around higher education learning and teaching. As a cohort, they are developing a shared understanding about good teaching which better places them as true peers, as expert peers, when engaging in peer review processes.

Cosh (1998) observes that the system, or process, of peer review itself has a series of hurdles that need to be surmounted if there is to be uptake of peer review in a sustained manner, such as: a need for some formalisation, without which the process fades under pressure of workload and is not taken up into the culture; the need for feedback without which there is no individual or group benefit; lack of coordination would lead to few insights being shared or disseminated and entropy of the process; unless the process is tacitly and openly supported within the community it is difficult to establish collegiality or worse, the system is sabotaged; review will tend to focus on performance unless the scope is broadened; and finally, unless there is a clear purpose and value the process is merely perfunctory. Mandating peer review processes through a coordinated and formalised teacher preparation program ensures sustained practice. In addition, the community support in the form of "institutional will" (Clark 2003, p. 112) provided by the Provost of Macquarie University through the resourcing of the program supports sustainability. The program's "inclusive participation" (Kelly 2003) wherein all staff, tenured and sessional are welcome, from any positional level of the organisation, and from all disciplinary fields is another factor that enhances reach and sustainability.

Even if the challenges to successful peer review have been successfully addressed, as Byrne et al. (2010) note, "peer observation has been dealt with quite unimaginatively" (p. 216) in that the scope has been limited to the performative part of teaching, usually in a standard setting such as a classroom or lecture theatre and generally between one person and another for one cycle, raising questions as to how impactful the process is across the range of teaching settings and artefacts, and on quality improvements. To address this lack of imagination, in addition to the tradition dyadic observational models, the FILT teacher preparation program actively models and encourages multiple forms of peer review. It starts with peer review of curriculum; supports review of learning and teaching resources or artefacts, such as student notes, texts, videos and online teaching environments, and encourages multiple perspectives, voices and/or reviewers to be included in review processes. This range of options for approaching peer review aligns with the 3P systems approach of the teacher preparation program which recognises the diversity of peer reviewers including, for example, their learning and teaching knowledge, experience, motivations and disciplines. Providing a choice allows the peer reviewers a sense of autonomy to select the best possible option for their needs.

Reflections

The benefits of peer review, as a reflective process, within and across a teacher preparation program are multiple. In addition to those advantages cited in the research (Hendry and Oliver 2012) including learning how to use new teaching strategies, validation of established practice, and learning from feedback, we have noted additional key benefits for both participants and the organisation.

Embedding peer review processes in a teacher preparation program achieves an enculturation of ongoing and sustainable reflective practice. Achieving sustainable reflective practice may be explained by the "well-grounded" (Kelly 2003) and scaffolded programming of the peer review processes throughout the program. One restraint to practice that has been identified is that of time pressure (Byrne et al. 2010). By scheduling peer review processes as a mandated requirement throughout the program we are legitimising and validating the important role of peer review for professional learning and development by making time to enable its realisation. The learning environment of the teacher preparation program also provides a safe space for participants to experiment with peer review, thereby building their sense of efficacy around this new practice.

The multi disciplinary cohorts of participants result in another key benefits when embedding peer review processes in a foundations program. As participants engage in the peer review processes we observe both disciplinary and inter-disciplinary network development, a factor often also cited by the participants as a strength of the program. These new networks are being sustained and align with a growth in the scholarly learning and teaching capacity at multiple levels of the university, evidenced by teaching, research and project outcomes.

Peer review within a foundations program potentially functions as a quality enhancement mechanism as it has a "strategic" (Hendry and Oliver 2012) role to play in working towards improving learning and teaching. Whilst it impacts at the individual capacity level, it is apparent that these individuals have also then championed or otherwise catalysed activity to enhance learning and teaching within their departments, which in turn, have shared and exchanged good practice inter and intra departmentally. This accords with the assertion that to establish institutional sustainability, the practice of reflection needs to be emphasised at the individual and group level.

In addition to the benefits offered by peer review to the academic professional, two key learnings are derived from our research and teaching. Acknowledging the integral role of reflection to peer review, we stress that the process of reflective practice is the key to enhancing peer review for professional learning and development. Scaffolding peer reviewers to engage in deep, or critical, reflection can achieve transformative learning. Reciprocally, the peer review process can also support the development of reflective capacity in the peer reviewers.

Secondly, mandating peer review through a teacher preparation program ensures that participants are true peers. They start their peer review processes with a shared understanding and conceptualisation of learning and teaching in higher education and specifically within their university context. Seniority or tenure are not defining issues for collaborating in peer review in a teacher preparation program. The defining criterion is being a peer, a critically reflective peer.

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Chapter 10
Implementing Departmental Peer Observation of Teaching in Universities

Maureen Bell and Paul Cooper

Introduction

University teachers represent a range of cultures, countries and language backgrounds. They have varying experiences, educational philosophies and teaching approaches yet many have never sat in a colleague's lecture and considered the ways in which teaching and learning are taking place. By blending academic collegiality and teaching development peer observation of teaching offers a unique and essential exposure to teaching ideas and conversations, so it makes sense to introduce peer observation programs at the departmental level.

Peer observation of teaching is now being used to provide evidence for teaching evaluation in a performance-based climate, putting new pressures on the previously accepted developmental purposes and processes of peer observation. University policies related to appraisal and development seek improved Key Performance Indicators yet these are not always perceived as leading to improved teaching within the university sector. Heads of departments have an important role in maintaining staff development programs that grow out of the needs of the department and the individual needs of academics; programs that genuinely support improvements to teaching.

This chapter discusses the background and issues related to peer observation of teaching and explores the opportunities inherent in departmental programs. A tested framework is offered for heads of university departments who wish to strengthen the academic team through implementing their own peer observation of teaching program.

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Peer Observation of Teaching and its Place in Peer Review

Peer observation of teaching is one of several strategies available for peer review of teaching, a broader area of practice generally understood to involve academic colleagues in giving and receiving feedback on their teaching practice and on its effectiveness in promoting student learning (Harris et al. 2008; Crisp et al. 2009). Peer review of teaching therefore covers the full range of teaching activities amenable to review from face to face teaching in the lecture and tutorial, clinic, field, and studio; to the review of subject and course design, assessment practices, materials and resources. The term peer observation of teaching has generally been used to describe an activity in which colleagues within and across departments mutually observe each other in the act of teaching, discuss what is observed, share and seek input on teaching ideas, reflect on theory and ideas, and seek to improve their teaching practice. What has been distinctive about peer observation of teaching is its focus on the observable and its developmental and reciprocal ethos.

Peer observation of teaching is increasingly reported as a feature of higher education practice (Bennett and Barp 2008) and has been reported as an effective strategy for the professional development of university teachers (Blackwell and McLean 1996; Bell 2001; Hammersley-Fletcher and Orsmond 2004; Shortland 2004; McMahon et al. 2007; Barnard et al. 2011). Effective departmental programs are also reported for sessional/casual staff (Bell and Mladenovic 2008; Swinglehurst et al. 2008) and school programs (Bell and Cooper 2012; Sullivan et al. 2012).

In part the effectiveness of peer observation of teaching lies in its foundations in the action research model (Lewin 1946; Kemmis and McTaggart 1988); reflective practice (Brookfield 1995); and the experiential learning cycle (Kolb and Fry 1975; Kolb 1984) (see Fig. 10.1). Each of these models recognise that if we are to learn from an experience we need to reflect on it, develop ideas, try them out and reflect on these again, through an on-going process of continuous development.

This approach supports reflection on the ways in which a teacher's planned aims, proposed learning outcomes, and planned activities are consistent with the realities of the observed teaching session. It has been suggested that peer observation of teaching is problematic since academics may not agree as to what constitutes 'good teaching' and may reinforce bad practice (Gosling and O'Connor 2009). Peer observation can overcome these criticisms because through reflective practice what is observed may be explored in light of the participants' educational philosophies. Discussion of observations can take place with reference to extant educational theory rather than one person's perception of what constitutes good teaching. Thus it becomes possible for an early career academic to work with an experienced departmental colleague within the disciplinary context without either partner imposing a particular view.

As well as supporting teaching development, peer observation can reinforce the collegial culture within departments (Johnson and Johnson 1991; Osterman and Kottkamp 1993; Martin and Double 1998; Bell 2001; Bell and Cooper 2012). The Bell and Cooper study reports on the partnering of early career staff with senior staff, which helped build junior/senior staff relationships. Senior staff appreciated the

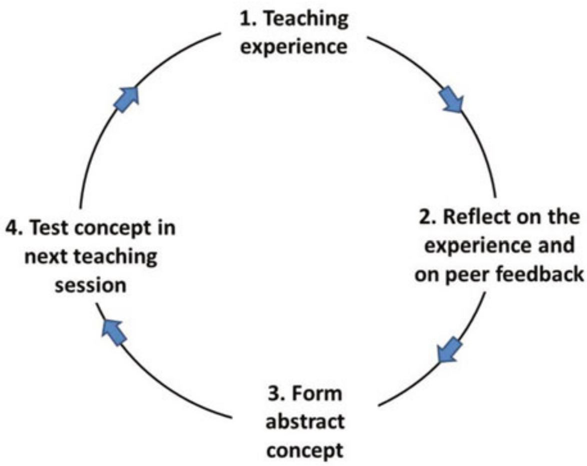

Fig. 10.1 A single cycle of Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle as applied to peer observation of teaching experience

opportunity to share their experiences and tap into the enthusiasm of junior colleagues while early career staff gained confidence within the scholarly community. One early career academic reported:

> I found the other side of [senior colleagues] so I feel much closer to them and also I have a chance to express my points, which apparently they as senior teachers can appreciate, so I feel better and I feel I can talk (Bell and Cooper 2012, p. 8).

In the past it has been the intention of reciprocity and a non-judgemental ethos that defined a colleague as a 'peer' for the purposes of peer observation of teaching. This reciprocity and the relationship of equals is demonstrated by each person's preparedness to both observe and be observed thus reducing or eliminating any power/status difference in the relationship. This is the style of relationship expressed in the idea of a 'critical friend' (Simons 1987; Handal 1999), a person who will both give and receive honest and non-judgemental feedback for mutual support and development. Departmental colleagues are well placed to take on this role of 'peer'.

Knight and Trowler (2010) argue that improving teaching involves developing work relations at department level. Creating an environment in which lecturers feel that they have control over their teaching, where their teaching is valued and where they have room to take chances, has been found to assist in the move towards a student-focused approach which leads towards deep learning and significant conceptual change. While it has been argued that a collegial approach may produce a climate of conformity, harmonious human relations within departments can actually reduce conformity and make dissent easier (Fischer 2009). The Bell and Cooper case study supports Fischer's argument in that program participants not only accepted, but also valued, the differences they observed and became comfortable with offering what might have been perceived as critical comments to senior staff. The climate that was developed, instead of building conformity, enhanced the confidence of early career academics to offer feedback to their seniors, for example:

> We had a range of people in our group from [Professor] at the top down to people who have got much less experience, and to get [Professor]'s ideas was absolutely brilliant, but also the people at the bottom are coming in and saying, Did you know this was happening? (Bell and Cooper 2012, pp. 8–9).

Of course peer observation of teaching, as with any form of professional development, has its limitations and Gosling and O'Connor (2009) provide a useful discussion on these and on the validity and value of peer observation of teaching. Some reservations and concerns have been noted in the literature, for example feelings of suspicion or anxiety (Harris et al. 2008); programs imposed from above, used for compliance purposes, or linked to appraisal (Hammersley-Fletcher and Orsmond 2004; Shortland 2004). Some commentators and practitioners (Gosling and O'Connor 2009; Byrne et al. 2010; Gosling 2011) discuss the need for a broader platform for professional development not bound by the constraints of that which can be observed. No one would disagree that a teacher's observable activity is only one aspect of the teaching role. Nevertheless what the teacher and students are doing in the face-to-face environment is still fundamental to the student experience of learning. What teachers and students are actually doing within the learning space provides a rich mine of information and through peer observation teachers are able to bridge the gap between what they intend to do, what think they do, and what is actually happening in reality. Gathering and acting upon peer feedback on observed teaching remains an extraordinary and important professional opportunity within the spectrum of strategies for peer review.

Implementing Peer Observation of Teaching Within Departments

The way in which peer observation is implemented within departments touches on some sensitive professional issues and therefore needs serious consideration (Harris et al. 2008). A peer observation partnership approach (Bell 2012) within a department can provide a high level of tested process, planning, ownership, reciprocity, privacy, informality and reflective practice. Thus limitations can be challenged and criticisms addressed. Peer observation partnerships are, of course, tailored by the partners to their own needs and are thus able to support teachers in their own professional development pathways within departmental programs.

The prerequisites for an effective departmental peer observation program include clear and agreed intentions and a structured and organised approach that involves training (Blackwell and McLean 1996). Harris et al. (2008) report that concerns can be allayed if the organisational unit adopts clear guidelines and demonstrates a broad understanding that the process is a collective and reciprocal undertaking that recognises the shared responsibility for enhancing teaching. Effective communication can be achieved through information seminars and written materials. "Including staff in the decision making process about how peer review of teaching will be conducted should significantly assist the 'buy-in' of staff to the program and, consequently, affect the degree to which they participate effectively and productively" (Harris et al.

2008 p. 21). Gosling (2002) suggests that by encouraging collective responsibility for teaching within a department the locus of responsibility for improving teaching is no longer regarded as solely the individual teacher's responsibility and the isolation of lecturers can be diminished. "Historically there has been a lack of 'safe' places where discussion about teaching can take place. Peer observation of teaching can play a large role in creating an environment in which such discussions can occur" (p. 3).

Bell and Cooper (2012) present a case study into a peer observation partnership program in a school of engineering at an Australian university during the year 2009 and offer a framework for use in faculties and departments. This framework forms the basis of the guidance offered later in this chapter for departmental peer observation of teaching programs.

International/Cultural Dimensions of Peer Observation

Academics working in Australian higher education now represent a wide range of cultures, countries and language backgrounds and bring with them differing experiences, educational philosophies and teaching approaches. Because peer observation has developed within western higher education it is appropriate to consider the possibility that peer observation of teaching might be a culturally specific activity that could exert a homogenising influence on academic work and strengthen the cultural hegemony of Anglo-American teaching approaches.

Reports of peer observation of teaching research and practice in the higher education literature emanate, in the main, from high income, English-speaking countries. Recently however some reports of peer observation of teaching in Asia appear on the web. Classroom observation by a peer for the purpose of educational research is documented at the Royal University of Bhutan (Bell, Gyamtso et al. 2011; Gyamtso and Maxwell 2012); at the University of Wollongong in Dubai (UOW Dubai **?**); and in Malaysia (Fernandez-Chung 2009). In teacher training and staff development, the Indonesia Australia Language Foundation promotes peer observation of teaching (Indonesia Australia Language Foundation 2006) and peer observation of teaching is reported in secondary schools in Malaysia (Dzakiria 2007).

In 2008 The British Council (2008) instituted an online voting procedure on teacher observation. 546 teachers across 35 countries responded with 41 % agreeing they "don't mind being observed" and a further 18 % agreeing they "enjoy being observed". A further 27 % "don't like being observed" and 14 % either had not been observed or asked, "what is teacher observation?" A large proportion of comments were positive about teacher observation, for example:

> Observation is a kind of spell which increases my energy as it is one of the motivational resources for me to learn more and more. As I get the feedback after my observation it gives me ideas of what to do next (Z.I., Pakistan).

The positive response to peer observation by two Chinese academics recently arrived in Australia is reported in the study of an engineering department program. They commented that the program helped orient them to teaching in Australia, for example:

> I was in China before, and also know how to be an effective teacher, but this is a different country, you go to class pretty differently, so this is why I'm keen to look at my colleagues use a different style (Bell and Cooper 2012, p. 7).

Peer observation of teaching as a developmental process is seen to be emerging in a variety of countries and traditions. It provides an opportunity for academics from diverse cultures to share their teaching practices and traditions within the multi-cultural academic world. Thus departmental peer observation of teaching both reflects and supports the changing professional environment in universities internationally.

Peer Observation, Institutional Policy and Quality Assurance

Byrne et al. (2010) report that many higher education institutions worldwide require all academic staff to undergo peer observation of teaching each year, although Harris et al. (2008) report that this is not the case in Australia.The emergence of the use of summative peer review, including peer observation, for the purposes of appraisal has led to calls for the alignment of university policy with summative peer review of teaching. "Embedding peer review of teaching in university policy and guidelines elevates the status of the activity, giving it credibility and meaning" (Harris et al. 2008, p. 21). Further:

> ... it is important that the institution establishes clear guidelines governing the use of the results of peer review. This includes how peer review reports are used and who has access to them, but extends to such areas as the way human resources committees consider peer review of teaching evidence as part of promotion and probation cases ... Ultimately, embedding peer review of teaching in broader university policy and processes adds significantly to the likelihood of its gradual acceptance as part of an organisation's teaching environment (Harris et al. 2008, p. 23).

Crisp et al. (2009) argue that institutional support is needed for a summative peer review program and that the peer review program must be compatible with the institution's goals and mission statements. Peer review "should link with the rewards offered by the institution, have wide support from administrative, academic and professional staff, be funded and staffed adequately and integrated with existing administrative protocols around promotion" (Crisp et al. 2009, p. 36).

It does seem possible to have both formative and summative peer review respected and trusted within a University policy and strategy framework. For example, a program at the University of Wollongong was developed after much consultation and discussion from a long-standing peer observation partnership model for the purpose of providing a 'mix of evidence' for promotion by teaching (University of Wollongong 2009). Observers and 'observees' are provided with compulsory training in peer observation. Two separate one-off observations are carried out by two trained and accredited observers who, by virtue of their status as academic staff, are considered to be 'equals' or 'peers' of those being observed. Following the observations the observer provides a written report which is discussed at a verbal feedback session. The observer's report is provided to the committee responsible for promotion/tenure decisions and the observee comments on the report within their application for promotion. In contrast to the pre-existing formative model, the summative program exhibits low levels of privacy (the observer's report is submitted to a committee), reciprocity (the observer is not observed), and high levels of formality.

Where summative peer observation is used for appraisal of an individual academic's teaching within a quality assurance framework; when the process purports to rate a staff member against colleagues; where 'accredited' reviewers are seen to be evaluating teaching competence; where the observer provides a report to a committee on teaching performance using an institutional checklist, and where the observer/observee relationship is not reversed; the peer observation of teaching model comes close to a 'teaching inspection' model. It has therefore become critical to differentiate between summative and reciprocal/developmental/formative peer observation of teaching.

While the need for policy and guidelines for summative peer observation may be clear, the opposite may be the case with formative peer observation. Some commentators on the changing nature of academic work in the higher education context argue that academics are becoming increasingly suspicious that the scholarly climate of Australian universities is being subordinated to institutional mission and marketing (Marginson and Considine 2000; Schapper and Mayson 2005). There is a danger that peer observation as a summative instrument linked to quality assurance and supported by high profile institutional policy will become the norm with a resultant loss of trust in peer observation as a reciprocal, developmental and private activity quite separate from appraisal. Heads of department play an important role in ensuring that top-down policy frameworks do not negatively impact on the collegial, scholarly environment. Where a university implements peer observation for summative purposes there needs to be a clear distinction between summative/institutional peer observation policy and practice and formative/departmental programs and this needs to be communicated within the department. What follows is a framework for use by heads of department who are considering the implementation of a formative departmental peer observation of teaching program that will enhance the collegial climate and support quality teaching.

A Framework for Implementing Departmental Peer Observation of Teaching

The framework presented here (Fig. 10.2) was developed from a peer observation of teaching program in an engineering school, previously reported as a case study (Bell and Cooper 2012). The framework draws on Brookfield's four lenses on teaching practice (Brookfield 1995) situating peer observation as a strategy for peer review within the broader spectrum of feedback on teaching.

Four critical elements underpin the framework:

1. participatory educational leadership by the head of department
2. a staged, voluntary, opt-in/opt-out program

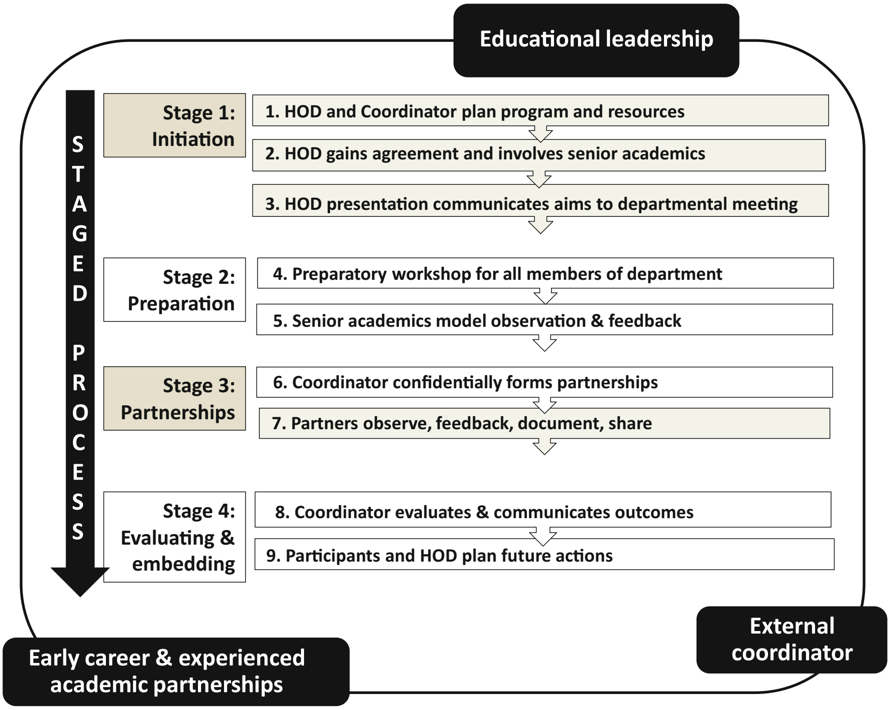

Fig. 10.2 Framework for school/department-based peer observation of teaching

3. linking early career and experienced academic staff in partnerships
4. an external to faculty (or trusted, unbiased faculty member) as a coordinator.

Participatory Leadership by the Head of Department

A balance of pressure and support is required of the leader if the educational change process is to be effective (Fullan 1991). Trustworthiness and personal integrity; acting as a role model; and fostering a positive/collegial atmosphere are significant aspects of leadership at departmental level in universities (Bryman 2007). The importance of role modelling by academic leaders is confirmed by several authors (Martin et al. 2003; Ramsden 2003; Scott et al. 2008). According to Harris et al. (2008) "leaders of organisational units who are implementing peer review of teaching programs should consider their own involvement in the program. The status of the peer review process will be significantly enhanced if the leader of the unit also participates" (p. 21). Effective educational leaders create a sense of community among staff, model the culture they want to develop and take on the role of learner (Fullan and Scott 2009). Aspects of leadership are explained by the head of school in the earlier Bell and Cooper study, for example:

> I always knew that you had to lead by example. So that's why we had the initial trial observations . . . Just be in somebody else's lecture instead of launching into peer observation . . . the culture has been that one would never expect to see a colleague in your lecture or tutorial and so it's a big barrier . . . So we got everybody to step over the threshold of observing somebody and I just wanted to try and get people to feel that it wasn't such a big deal (Bell and Cooper 2012, p. 10).

In the same study an early career academic and recent arrival in Australia comments:

> We were reassured that this will be a very friendly atmosphere and it showed us that we should be very candid to each other so I won't be too much punished even if I did worse . . . and the other is the pushing force from (Head) . . . encouraging us like all time, so we think this is not really something like email–we read it and forget about it (Bell and Cooper 2012, p. 10).

The head of department plays a vital role in "joining the staff as an equal partner in the learning process, building a perception about teaching as a public activity and modelling the attitudes, values and activities of the program" (Bell and Cooper 2012, p. 10).

A Staged, Voluntary, Opt-In/Opt-Out Program

Participation in a peer observation partnership as a voluntary activity within the program allows participants to opt-out according to their own level of comfort. The idea is to maximise participation and break down barriers by making the early awareness-raising stages compulsory. Those who then choose to opt out do so in full knowledge of how the program works, have had the opportunity to surface concerns, and know what is expected of them. Staff may opt back in again at a later stage within their own time frames. Discipline leaders provide trial observation sessions after the preparatory workshop (stage 2) to demonstrate the ways in which peer observation can take place. This offers an informal, commitment-free, opportunity to experience a peer observation session and importantly to demonstrate the commitment and support of senior staff to the peer observation of teaching program. Those who then opt out of the partnership stage (stage 3) would therefore have the basis for joining a partnership in a future semester.

Linking Early Career and Experienced Academic Staff in Partnerships

Members of staff will have particular colleagues they feel confident to work with. Groups may be formed on this basis with the Coordinator taking confidential requests. Linking early career and senior staff within partnership has great advantages. In the Bell and Cooper (2012) study one staff member noted a new sense of freedom to discuss things with senior academics as equals:

> I'm an early career lecturer and I was giving feedback to the senior lecturers. It puts you on a more level field. Not that you probably shouldn't be anyway because we're all lecturers down the corridor (Bell and Cooper 2012, p. 8).

In the same study a young academic found the opportunity to work in partnership with senior academics dispelled some fears:

> So normally I wouldn't have a chance to talk to them about the lecture skills. This provides me opportunity to discuss with them and also, from their feedback I find they are quite nice persons, you know, not as I initially thought (Bell and Cooper 2012, p. 8).

Attention to careful partnership formation is a key to success.

A Coordinator External to Faculty

The advantage of having a coordinator external to faculty is that the person is perceived as a disinterested party which can ameliorate fears of inspection and appraisal. If no coordinator is available a trusted and respected senior faculty member could take on this role. The coordinator can provide administrative support, organising the groups, reminding them of deadlines, explaining the program, and so on. The coordinator's role within the partnership groups will vary according to each group's request ranging from no involvement to facilitating partnership discussions and suggesting new ideas and resources. The coordinator might also help where a difficult situation might arise, and support early career academics in their career development plans.

The stages

Stage 1 Initiation

The initiation stage involves program planning: deciding on resource materials and other requirements, discussing opportunities and identifying and overcoming any possible threats. Keys to this stage are: gaining discipline leaders' agreement to participate in the program and offer trial observation sessions and a presentation to all staff explaining and demystifying peer observation.

Stage 2 Preparation

A hands-on, preparatory workshop is vital. This should focus on practical activities in verbal and written feedback with the underpinning concept of 'critical friends'. The preparatory workshop needs to explain each step in the process and provide practice in observation and feedback. An effective structure includes a 10 min 'teaching session' role play followed by participants writing, discussing and refining forms of written feedback including free-form notes, classroom interaction maps, and a variety of checklists. A detailed workshop outline and copyfree templates may be sourced from Bell (2012). Effective and ineffective styles of giving and receiving feedback are role-played. The personal and problematic nature of giving and receiving feedback and the importance of mutual respect are discussed. A useful reference point is the link between the teaching plan and what was observed. In this way a discussion on the ways to achieve desired outcomes rather than what comprises 'good teaching' can be explored. Educational leaders then model trial observation sessions.

Heads of department may find the HERDSA guide Peer Observation Partnerships in Higher Education useful (Bell 2012). Webb and McEnerney (1995) also offer guidance in training for departmental programs while Martin and Double (1998) provide a discussion of careful program design.

Stage 3 Partnership

The coordinator forms the partnership groups according to confidential choices, combining early career and experienced academics in the groups. The partners work through the process of observation, feedback, sharing ideas and reflections. The coordinator supports the partnerships in keeping to their respective schedules and may be further involved in the partnerships, for example in facilitating feedback sessions, as requested by the partners.

Stage 4 Evaluation and Embedding

The program is evaluated and outcomes are communicated to participants and stakeholders. Participants document their reflections and may decide to use these for their own career development purposes and plans for further professional development. Decisions are made at individual, partnership and departmental level as to continuation.

Conclusion

Over the last few years we have seen summative peer observation of teaching and associated university policies develop from what was originally a formative activity. The pressure from institutional quality assurance requirements to use peer observation for summative purposes carries with it the risk of losing the substantial benefits of formative, partnership-style peer observation. These benefits go beyond improved teaching practice to include enhanced departmental collegiality and integration of early career staff from various cultures into the scholarly community of the department.

Partnership-style peer observation of teaching is by nature developmental; experiential and reflective; a reciprocal relationship carried out within scholarly communities; personal and confidential to those involved in the relationship; and focused on the observable activities of the teacher and students. The framework for implementation that is presented here offers an opportunity for heads of department to avoid and overcome any potential problems and concerns; and to build a culture of educational dialogue and support within their scholarly community.

The starting point is that a department head brings about a process and an environment where academics feel a new enthusiasm and motivation for their teaching, by simply opening their doors and sitting down in each other's classes. The journey from there can lead to a wide range of benefits for the staff themselves and their students.

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Chapter 11
Peer Review of Teaching at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Amy Goodburn

Overview

U.S. postsecondary institutions increasingly are called upon to be accountable for student learning. Recent critiques of U.S. institutions (Arum and Roksa 2011; Hacker and Dreifus 2010; Selingo 2013) have led to many questions about the quality and value of postsecondary education: What are students learning? Is what they are learning in college classrooms useful? Can the "added value" of a college degree be documented? Are universities worth the investment? These are but a few of the questions circulating in public discourse around U.S. higher education today.

Common responses to these accountability demands often emphasize top-down, standardized assessments of student performance and engagement. Three examples include the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA), and The Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP). For instance, the NSSE captures:

> "good practices" in undergraduate education. . . that are associated with desired outcomes of college. NSSE doesn't assess student learning directly, but survey results point to areas where colleges and universities are performing well and aspects of the undergraduate experience that could be improved" (http://nsse.iub.edu/html/about.cfm Accessed 23/5/13).

The CLA purports to provide institutions a "final value-added report" by comparing student performance of first-year students to senior students at the same institution. And the CAAP proposes to "assist colleges and universities in planning for and implementing learning outcomes assessment to address program quality and institutional accountability expectations" (http://www.act.org/caap/resources.html Accessed 8/4/13). At the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, all three of these national instruments have been used to assess student learning and engagement.

Of course, these assessments have their limits. One problem is that measuring what students are *doing* does not necessarily provide useful data on what they are

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learning. For instance, the NSSE asks students how many times they have written papers or reports of 20 pages or more. From this question, an institution can discern whether students are engaged in writing of such length. However, the NSSE does not provide data about how or whether this writing might be impacting student learning. Was the writing coordinated with meaningful learning goals? Did it help students extend or deepen their learning of the course content? What was the quality of writing produced? While surveys of student perception are valuable, they do not present a fully realized portrait of student performance. More disturbing is that these assessments seem predicated on the notion that faculty are not *already* meaningfully involved with assessing student learning. Indeed, discussions often depict faculty as *obstacles to*, rather than agents of, meaningful assessment (Holberg and Taylor 2007; Slevin 2001). Yet eliminating faculty from the assessment process limits opportunities to develop the culture for improved student learning and performance that institutions seek.

To address these concerns, initiatives in the mid 1990's such as the Carnegie Scholars for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning, The Visible Knowledge Project, and the American Association of Higher Education advocated models of peer review that supported faculty inquiry and engagement into teaching. While each initiative varied slightly in scope, all were underpinned by literature that advocated for viewing faculty work, especially teaching, as scholarship that can be assessed and used by others within the higher education community (Boyer 1990; Glassick et al. 1997; Huber 2004; Huber and Hutchings 2005). This chapter outlines how the University of Nebraska-Lincoln drew from these conversations to develop a campus-wide faculty development program focused upon the principles of peer review. Since 1994, UNL's Peer Review of Teaching Project has engaged almost 300 faculty members across eight academic colleges in guided classroom inquiry through a faculty development program. Originally begun as a grant-funded initiative by Dan Bernstein in connection with the national American Association of Higher Education (AAHE) Peer Review of Teaching Project, from 1994 to 2004 UNL's peer review program was supported from external research grants (FIPSE, Pew Charitable Trust) along with matching assistance from the university. Since 2004, the project has been completely funded through UNL's office of the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.

This chapter describes the evolution of peer review at UNL, highlighting both successes and obstacles for building a faculty community around classroom inquiry and the assessment of student learning. As Bender (2005) and Theall (2006) suggest, campus teaching development initiatives need to promote educational reform on three different levels: (i) assisting faculty in evaluating, improving, and deepening their students' learning; (ii) building campus communities that support and refine inquiry into student learning; and, (iii) challenging institutional attitudes and policies about teaching. While UNL's program leadership and structure has evolved over the past 19 years, it remains a successful model for peer review that promotes individual faculty development and addresses institutional needs to document teaching and learning in response to accountability pressures.

Context: The University of Nebraska-Lincoln

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln is a public, land grant, Ph.D. granting high-intensive research institution that enrolls about 24,000 students and employs around 1,300 faculty. UNL's tripartite mission of teaching, research, and outreach was outlined in *The Blue Sky Report* in 2003: "Each of the functions of a great public land grant research university–teaching, research and scholarship, and outreach–is organized around a shared commitment to inquiry and the communication of the knowledge resulting from that inquiry." This commitment to inquiry is an organizing principle for UNL's Peer Review of Teaching Project, a campus professional development program that helps faculty make visible the serious intellectual work of their teaching (Bernstein et al. 2006).

As other contributors in this volume have outlined, peer review can take many different forms, involving both "in time" observations of a faculty member within a classroom and close reading of textual representations of one's teaching (syllabi, teaching statements, course handouts, etc.) or some combination in between. At UNL, the peer review of teaching project is an academic, year-long, structured faculty development program in which participants identify a target course that they are teaching during the spring semester and for which they would like to engage in sustained inquiry and reflection. By the end of the year, it is hoped that faculty will have engaged in meeting the following outcomes:

- Developing a common vocabulary for assessing the intellectual work of teaching;
- Identifying common teaching and curricular issues across academic disciplines;
- Reflecting upon, developing, and writing a course portfolio about one of their courses;
- Becoming skilled as a reviewer of a course portfolio (and other teaching materials);
- Discussing the challenges in teaching and addressing the needs of diverse student learners; and,
- Being nurtured to become a leader in creating and advocating campus teaching policies.

The peer review program focuses on formative teaching development, providing opportunities for faculty to carefully reflect upon their teaching and, in some cases, to sponsor a new understanding for how the intellectual work entailed in teaching can be made visible. It is important to note that the program is not viewed as a remedial program to "fix" problem teachers; rather, it is a scholarly activity to learn better approaches for documenting the intellectual effort one puts into designing and teaching a course. This approach invites faculty to develop a sense of ownership and engagement around their teaching. Underlying UNL's peer review program is Michael Reder's (2007) conception of teaching "as a collaborative practice (something done within a larger community that is open to discussion) and a critical practice (something shared with an eye toward discovery, integration, refinement, and improvement)" (p. 11). Thus UNL's model of peer review offers a *bottom-up* exploration of student learning in which individual faculty perform an in-depth reflection on their individual classroom practices and the resulting impact on student learning in collaboration with a community of peers.

To facilitate this collaboration, peer review faculty participate throughout the year in a series of large and small group meetings and three half-day retreats in which they read literature about teaching, student learning, and assessment. A key requirement of the program is that faculty write a series of memos (see sample prompts in Appendix) structured around three key areas: (i) syllabi and course structures; (ii) teaching techniques and strategies; and, (iii) analysis of learning represented in student work from the target course. At the end of the year, faculty members integrate these memos with final reflection statements to create an electronic **course portfolio** that they share with colleagues and archive on UNL's project website (www.courseportfolio.org) to make available the intellectual work of their teaching for use and review by others.

Course Portfolios

A course portfolio is a reflective investigation of how course structures, teaching techniques, and assessment strategies enhance or detract from student learning. Course portfolios are a valuable medium for capturing the scholarly work of one's teaching by combining inquiry into the intellectual work of a course with a careful investigation of the quality of student learning. Unlike a teaching portfolio, which typically represents a teacher's goals and philosophies across a range of courses and over time, a course portfolio provides a window into what occurred during a particular course, highlighting what worked and what did not, showcasing the student learning that resulted, and outlining modifications and goals for future iterations of the course. Course portfolios are a vehicle for enabling faculty to document the careful, difficult, and intentional scholarly work of planning and teaching a course.

The concept of a portfolio for documenting student performance is not new. Certain disciplines, such as advertising, architecture, composition, and studio art, have been active in having students and teachers create reflective archives of their classroom work. Within the scholarship of teaching movement, William Cerbin (1996) proposed one of the first course portfolio models for representing the intentional inquiry into student learning. His prototype has been influential for many teachers who have documented their work in publications such as *The Course Portfolio* (Hutchings 1998) and *Opening Lines* (Hutchings 2000). UNL's model of a course portfolio is similar and consists of the following essential parts (Table 11.1 outlines the types of questions that faculty write about to develop their course portfolios):

- A reflective discussion of the content and goals of the course
- A description of the plans to accomplish key objectives in student learning
- Evidence, assessment, and reflection on student achievement toward these goals
- A reflective narrative on the relation among the above three elements

Since a course portfolio can be read, evaluated, and used by others, it offers a mechanism for valuing teaching as scholarship. UNL's model for peer review thus entails

Table 11.1 Questions for developing a benchmark course portfolio

A benchmark portfolio represents a snapshot of students' learning within a particular course and enables faculty to generate questions that they would like to investigate about their teaching. The prompts that follow represent the types of questions that faculty participants consider as they develop their benchmark portfolios
Interaction 1: Reflections on the syllabus
The first interaction asks faculty to discuss the course syllabus and reflect on the course goals and the intellectual rationale for these goals. Typical questions include: What is your course about? What is the content area covered? Who are your students (e.g., first, fourth year, graduate majors or non-majors)? What do you want students to know? What do you want them to be able to do?
Interaction 2: Capturing the particulars of instructional practice
In the second interaction faculty reflect on their teaching methods, course assignments, and course materials. Some questions include "What teaching methods are you using during your contact time with students and how do these methods facilitate students' achievement of course objectives? How do you measure student learning via these methods?" and "In what ways do you expect your choices for methods, materials, and assignments to assist your students in meeting the goals of your course?"
Interaction 3: Documenting and analyzing student learning
In the third interaction, faculty members reflect on student learning by analyzing samples of student work. Typical questions include: "Is there evidence of students meeting the specific learning goals you selected and where do you see such understanding?" "What criteria do you use to assess student understanding?" and "Does performance represented by student work indicate students have developed an understanding for your field of study that will be retained or that students can apply to new contexts?"

collaborative inquiry and feedback from faculty participants and project leaders. The review goes beyond simply observing what occurs during a particular course session. As faculty reflect upon why they structure their courses in the ways that they do and their rationale for particular course strategies and techniques via the course portfolio, their peers can develop a broader understanding of the intellectual work undergirding their colleagues' choices. And in asking faculty to collect and analyze evidence of student learning from their target courses, they move beyond anecdotal or informal measures of inquiry to structured examinations of teaching and of student learning that then cycle back into their teaching and future offerings of a course. As Dan Bernstein and Randy Bass (2005) describe, "the process encourages development of a community of teachers inquiring into the success of their students. These communities function like informal groups of scholars who discuss the early stages of their research and creative efforts; participants receive intellectual commentary and social support" (p. 39). This attention to developing a community around teaching is often noted by UNL faculty as a key benefit to program participation. For instance, a faculty member from Art and Art History summarized her experience as follows:

> By participating in Peer Review I am part of a community of teachers and scholars who are committed to teaching excellence and who generously share their experiences and their expertise. Peer Review makes teaching a rigorously intellectual and yet intensely practical and immensely satisfying activity. It helps me counter isolation and prevent burn-out and it gives me the tools and courage I need to take a critical look at my teaching and my students' learning. (Ingraham, PRTP impact survey, 2009)

An English professor also described her experience in terms of participation in a teaching community: "The PRTP reminded me in really productive way that I am part of a cross-campus community of teachers who are dedicated to student learning. My peers in PRTP reminded me of how high the bar can productively be for our students as they move across campus. It sent me back to my classroom re-engaged in a way I hadn't expected" (D. Minter, PRTP impact survey, 2009). By asking faculty to reflect upon and analyze their teaching practices in a systematic and structured manner, the peer review program provides a mechanism for starting interdisciplinary and interdepartmental campus conversations about program goals, course prerequisites, and linkages between courses.

Beyond the benefit of participating in a vibrant community of teachers, the peer review program's focus on developing course portfolios serves both formative and summative purposes for individual faculty and the institution as a whole (see Table 11.2 for a range of these uses).

Formative uses include simply learning more about what they value as teachers by writing reflectively about their goals and their students' learning. For junior faculty, such inquiry offers a structured means to develop as a teacher, helping them to decide what does and does not work in their classrooms. For instance, a faculty member from Communications described the value of his participation in this way:

> I am now much more systematic in the design of course objectives and activities. More importantly, I feel more confident in my assessment techniques and therefore I am able to more accurately assess student outcomes and make appropriate changes. One of the best results of being involved in this program is that it gets me excited and engaged in my courses, which obviously spills over into the classroom. (J. Soliz, PRTP impact survey, 2009).

In a similar vein, a faculty member in Special Education and Communication Disorders described her experience in this way:

> Through my participation, I was amazed and embarrassed to discover that I had course objectives I never taught, I had course objectives I taught but never assessed, I had course objectives I assessed and never taught, and I had material I taught and assessed but never listed as a course objective. By reorganizing the goals of my course, developing rubrics for evaluating student work, and assessing my classroom activities, I now have a focused approach for linking my teaching to my students' learning. (C. Marvin, PRTP impact survey, 2004).

In the process of writing about their students' learning within the course portfolio, faculty often make discoveries about their teaching that cycle back into course design and curricular revision. For more senior faculty, peer review often reenergizes their teaching by helping them answer those persistent questions they have about student learning. And for some retiring faculty, course portfolios have been a means of capturing the intellectual work entailed in years or even decades of course development and leaving the course portfolio as a legacy to their colleagues. Other formative purposes include helping to facilitate the design of a new course or creating a course template for other teachers to draw upon in their own teaching. For instance, in the English Department a group of graduate teaching assistants developed four portfolios around a series of first-year writing courses. Apart from sharing their work with one another, these portfolios were required reading for the new GTAs as part of their

Table 11.2 Formative and summative uses of course portfolios

Formative
Identifying individual areas for teacher development
Identifying areas for curricular revision within a course
Documenting faculty development efforts
Structuring processes for curricular revision
Serving as course repositories and models to be used by future instructors
Assisting programmatic course revision (prerequisite courses, capstones, etc.)
Summative
Supporting teaching award applications
Summarizing teaching for annual merit review evaluations
Aiding in department program reviews
Supporting job applications
Providing or assessing learning outcomes for department or program accreditation
Highlighting teaching as part of a promotion and tenure file

training so that they could get a better understanding of course expectations, examples of student assignments, and the types of writing typically produced in these first-year courses.

Faculty have also used their course portfolios for summative purposes such as evidence of teaching effectiveness for teaching awards and professorships, promotion and tenure files, and accreditation and program reviews. Indeed, some faculty have submitted their course portfolios to be externally reviewed as part of their promotion and tenure applications. Table 11.3 outlines a list of categories that reviewers are asked to comment upon when they conduct these external evaluations.

Project leaders are often asked how UNL's Peer Review program connects to the larger Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) movement. While faculty inquiry is the foundation for both, SoTL emphasizes a deeper engagement with the literature and broader emphasis on exploring issues that can offer insight to faculty at other schools. Through a second-year advanced program, the PRTP supports interested faculty in developing more formal inquiries into their teaching and exploring opportunities for sharing their work in public ways (Savory et al. 2007). Advanced program participants have developed book chapters, journal articles, conference presentations, workshops, and poster sessions. While some UNL faculty find SoTL work central to their professional lives, most are content to use classroom inquiry as a basis for being more reflective and structured in their growth as teachers and to impact the teaching atmosphere at their school. In this regard, UNL's peer review program is explicitly designed to support scholarly teaching rather than the scholarship of teaching.

Program Evolution

Since 1994, key features of UNL's peer review program have remained constant: a faculty-led program that invites voluntary faculty participation, a commitment to faculty ownership over the courses they investigate and the questions they want to

Table 11.3 Categories for external reviewer commentary

Course intellectual content
Appropriateness of course material both for the curriculum and the institution
Intellectual coherence of course content
Articulation of intellectual goals for learners and congruence of those goals with course content and mission
Value/relevance of ideas, knowledge and skills covered by the course
Quality of teaching practices
Organization and planning of contact time; congruence between planned and actual use of contact time
Opportunities to actively engage students in the material
Opportunities (in or out of class) for students to practice the skills embedded in the course goals
Particularly creative or effective uses of contact time that seem likely to improve student understanding
Activities scheduled outside of contact time that contribute to student achievement (this may include extracurricular activities, group projects, electronic discussions, or any other planned course related assignments or activities)
Course structures or procedures that contribute especially to the likely achievement of understanding by learners
Quality of student understanding
Appropriateness of student performance, in light of course goals, course level and institution
Performance levels that reflect challenging levels of conceptual understanding and critical evaluation of the material appropriate to the level of the course and of the students
Appropriateness of forms of evaluation and assessment, given the stated goals of the course
Creativity in providing students with ways to demonstrate their understanding of and ability to use the ideas and content of the course
Alignment between the weighting of course assignments in grade calculation with the relative importance of the course goals
Demonstration of an appropriate percentage of students that they are achieving competence in the stated course goals, or identification of reasons why they might not be reaching these levels of competence
Evidence of reflective consideration and development
Revisions or modifications to the course that could improve performance
Substantive reflection by the faculty member on the achievement of the goals for the course
Identification of any meaningful relations between teaching practice and student performance
Evidence of changed teaching practice over successive course offerings in reaction to prior student understanding
Evidence of insightful analysis of teaching practice that resulted from consideration of student performance

answer about their teaching; and a focus on sustained reflection and analysis through the development of a course portfolio. While the commitment to building a teaching community underlies the vision of UNL's program, the structure has evolved over time to meet the changing needs of UNL faculty and the challenges and pressures they face in their teaching.

In the program's inception, faculty participated in department teams of three or four. This approach sponsored intense discussions for these teams, often focusing their inquiry around department majors or sequences of courses. For example, a faculty team from Political Science documented student learning in some of the core courses in the major, including lower-division courses that met the university's general educational goals. The resulting conversations allowed them to learn about each other's student performance, learn how their students' work compared, and to explore raising their academic expectations for these courses. Similarly, a team from the English Department used their course portfolios to assess curricular connections across a new English major concentration. A team from the multi-disciplinary Visual Literacy program used their portfolios to analyze connections in their sequenced 8-week course rotations, leading to revised course projects and a greater sequencing of assignment outcomes.

While successful, this department team approach also posed challenges, especially for faculty who wanted to participate but who couldn't persuade their department colleagues to join. To be responsive to these faculty members, the project evolved, first allowing faculty partners instead of teams and then eventually opening the project to any faculty member who wanted to apply. Similar to how Cotton (2006) at the University of Plymouth found a need for staff from diverse disciplines to forge a link for teaching and learning, a positive by-product of this change was increased faculty collaboration *across* departments and programs. Faculty often found connections across their teaching that could never have been anticipated. For instance, a group of faculty who teach large lecture courses in psychology, accounting, and management, studied how to develop multiple-choice exams that required application of theory and knowledge rather than rote memorization. A team of four distance education instructors (each teaching an online course) focused their participation on exploring the technology, their approaches for teaching, and their means for measuring student learning in a distance education environment. A faculty member from Industrial Engineering described the value of these cross-departmental collaborations in this way:

> . . .I was surprised to realize that the focused discussions with other project participants have had the biggest impact on me. Whether one is teaching a large lecture in engineering, economics, or psychology, there are similar teaching and student learning issues in terms of classroom management, presentation of materials, and student assessment. Due to the nature of the project, we were able to share our issues, offer suggestions, and explore best practices among academic disciplines that would rarely interact. (S. Hallbeck PRTP impact survey, 2007)

These cross-college collaborations have helped faculty to gain broader understandings of what students face in UNL's overall university curriculum, providing a mechanism for building interdisciplinary and interdepartmental campus communities that support and refine scholarly inquiry into improved student learning across programs and curricular areas.

UNL's peer review program also has evolved due to external pressures. In 2002, UNL's Teaching and Learning Center was eliminated in a round of budget cuts. Instead of a centralized model for faculty development around teaching, academic colleges were asked to provide college-based programs. The Peer Review program remained the only campus-wide program dedicated to teaching development. While grateful that the program is still institutionally supported, its status as the lone initiative has led project leaders to consider more deeply how the program can support institutional goals while remaining committed to providing faculty ownership in investigating areas in teaching and learning which they most care about and to develop their own goals for the course portfolios they create. UNL's peer review program is predicated on the assumption that teacher inquiry is most powerful when faculty define their own purposes for undertaking it. At the same time, any institutional teaching development program must be flexible in terms of supporting campus teaching and learning initiatives.

One example of balancing faculty autonomy with institutional prioritizes can be seen in how the peer review program supported the development of new general education courses. In 2009 UNL implemented a comprehensive reform of its general education program titled Achievement-Centered Education (ACE). This program requires students to take ten learning outcomes-based courses and for departments to collect and analyze student work on these outcomes for institutional assessment. The peer review program's influence on this reform effort is quite visible—various ACE structures for documenting teaching and learning are based upon peer review guidelines and many of the faculty members who served on the committees to develop the ACE outcomes are former PRTP participants. Thus, it's not surprising that the peer review coordinators were asked to develop a "track" for faculty teams who were creating the new ACE courses and support conversations about how best to assess them. While the program successfully incorporated this track for 1 year for eight faculty members, the project leaders are conscious that much of the program's success stems from its insistence on voluntary faculty participation and ownership; thus, administrative requests to support institutional initiatives must be considered in light of how they honor the key features and principles underpinning the peer review program.

In addition to these "explicit" requests by senior administrators, the peer review program has helped to address programmatic and assessment needs that departments face on our campus in more "bottom-up" ways. Many institutions conduct periodic examinations, or "program reviews" of their academic units, departments, or programs. Similarly, many programs seek external accreditation and renewal. Each review involves an enormous amount of time as units gather evidence and organize it for local and outside reviewers. As Bender (2005) states, regional accreditation agencies are increasingly insisting that every institution seeking accreditation demonstrate its effectiveness by gathering, analyzing, and disseminating evidence of student learning outcomes (p. 49). At UNL, several departments have used peer review course portfolios to aid these assessment moments. A systematic presentation of the materials found in course portfolios provides a ready source of information about student learning for a unit. And the reporting for the teaching component of the review is also simplified since faculty and leaders of the unit have already identified where student learning is strongest in the program and where it might be increased through enhanced efforts. In fact, when UNL underwent its ten-year accreditation review in 2006 by the North Central/Higher Learning Commission, the university created a virtual resource room where many of the faculty course portfolios were highlighted as evidence of how particular courses support student learning.

Indeed, as over 300 UNL faculty have participated in the peer review program, their course portfolios have become more integrated into institutional structures and, in turn, have impacted campus structures that reward teaching. For example, UNL's College of Arts and Sciences revised its bylaws to include course portfolios as an optional element in documenting teaching performance for annual faculty evaluations. Previously the only requirement referenced was student course evaluations. The inclusion of course portfolios was made in response to requests from A&S faculty to have their peer review work included and valued as evidence for their annual reviews.

Another example of institutional change is the fact that UNL faculty seeking promotion from associate to full professor on the basis of teaching have had their course portfolios externally reviewed by peers at other institutions as a measure of their teaching effectiveness. At a research institution such as UNL, typically only one's research portfolio is submitted to external reviewers. The course portfolios are also helping to support the career documentation of a relatively new type of faculty line. In 2008, the university formalized a new type of academic position–professors of practice–that are renewable, non-tenure-track lines that primarily emphasize instructional activities. For promotion, professors of practice need to demonstrate national leadership, recognition, and impact of their teaching. The peer review program has helped these faculty document their teaching and students' learning to support their promotion files. Lastly, when UNL created a named professorship in teaching to recognize sustained and extraordinary levels of teaching excellence, the nomination process required the submission of course portfolios and external review letters about the applicant's teaching.

Thus, while UNL's peer review program emphasizes individual faculty development, over the years it has created a critical mass of faculty with experience in course portfolio development who can now advocate for structures and processes that value and support this work. Former program faculty populate campus committees and administrative leadership positions and now routinely advocate for higher quality documentation for institutional structures such as campus teaching award applications and promotion and tenure files.

Conclusion

Over the past 20 years, university faculty members have been called upon to document and make public their teaching in light of concerns about accountability for improving student learning. The challenge facing institutions interested in assessing student performance lies in questioning accountability logics that value aggregate numbers over deeply nuanced accounts of student learning. Course portfolios are one mechanism for providing such accounts, enabling faculty to document the careful, difficult, and intentional scholarly work of planning and teaching a course and to share this work for others' use and review. Via the use of course portfolios, the UNL peer review of teaching program has fostered individual and institutional change.

While the program emphasizes individual faculty development, over the years it has created a critical mass of faculty with experience in course portfolio development who can now advocate for structures and processes that value and support this work. As one journalism professor describes:

> The process of building this benchmark portfolio has been transformative for me as a teacher... I found that peer review teaches (one) to be willing to speak honestly about teaching practices, assessment tools and ways to analyze student learning in pragmatic ways.... I can see now how such analysis, both quantitative and qualitative, can sharpen my pedagogical focus and help me fulfill my college mission and course objectives. (S. Winter, Course Portfolio, 2011).

Most importantly, UNL's peer review project has provided a means for faculty to deeply and authentically assess the impact of their teaching on their students. In light of current critiques about the value of higher education, course portfolios provide a compelling response that faculty are engaged in and committed to their students' learning. A communication studies professor's summary of the impact of the peer review program on her teaching reflects this commitment to students most powerfully:

> I've learned how to approach each course as a unique set objectives crucially tied to learning outcomes. And this has really sharpened my pedagogical lens, it's really helped me focus on the process of documenting scholarly excellence in teaching and committed me to that project even more, and it's also showed me how the quality of my teaching—my dedication to course design—is linked directly to the quality of my student's lives (J. Kellas, video, 2009).

Appendix

Interaction 1 Reflecting on the Syllabus—Course Overview and Portfolio Planning

This memo should provide a peer in your field of study a window on the goals, choices, and rationale that underlie the structure and planning of your course.

A. Course Overview, Goals, and Rationale **(1) What is your course?**

What is your course about? What is the content area covered? Who are your students (*e.g.,* first, second, third, fourth year, graduate majors or non-majors)? What sorts of backgrounds do students bring to your course? How does your course fit into your departmental curriculum? Does it fit into curricula in other departments? How do your goals fit with the goals of other courses in your department? Does your course lay the foundation for courses that follow it or build on what students have already learned in other courses? How is the course content connected to the goals of your major or your general education guidelines?

(2) What are your goals for the course? What do you want students to know? What do you want them to be able to do? What do you want them to understand? What do you want them to retain from your course? What perspectives or attitudes do you want them to have? What is important for them to learn about your field? What should they learn about themselves as students or as contributors to our society? How are these goals structured into your course? Why is it necessary for your students to achieve these goals? What do you know about your students that makes these goals appropriate for their education?

B. Portfolio Goals **(1) Do you have any key goals you want to accomplish by creating a course portfolio?**

What aspects of student learning and of your teaching do you want to document and address through creating this portfolio? How do you foresee using your course portfolio (*e.g.,* document your teaching, refine a course, disseminate to other colleagues, promotion and tenure)?

(2) Why did you choose this particular course? What is it about this particular course that led you to choose it for the portfolio project? Are there particular aspects of the course that you think are particularly noteworthy and that should be captured in the portfolio? Are there particular problems you face in this course that you would like to address in your portfolio?

(3) What sort of course portfolio would you like to create? Is your portfolio providing a broad overview of the entire course? Is it focusing on a particular aspect of the course (*e.g.,* exams, assignments, projects)? Is your portfolio part of a larger departmental "package" (*e.g.,* curriculum development and analysis)?

Interaction 2 Capturing the Particulars of Instructional Practices

This memo is designed to guide your thinking about the "particulars" that demonstrate and document student learning in your course. It should outline the specific teaching methods, course materials, and course assignments you use to achieve course objectives (as described in Interaction 1), and how particular aspects of the course (*e.g.,* class activities, assignments, and other techniques) show evidence of and allow you to monitor and help direct student learning related to your course objectives. You may choose to append any relevant materials, such as handouts, study questions, course notes, or copies of your exams. If items are attached, please include reflection on/discussion on what those items are and how they relate to your course goals and/or student learning.

(1) What *teaching methods* (*e.g.*, lecture, group work, etc.) are you using during your contact time with students? How do you use each of these methods during class time and over the course of the semester? How does each of these teaching methods facilitate students' achievement of course objectives? How do you measure student learning via these methods?

(2) What *course activities* outside of class (*e.g.*, projects, computer simulations, web exercises, practica, or group work) are you using? Why have you structured your activities in the way that you have? What, in particular, do you hope your students will learn from each activity? What are your expectations? How do you assess student performance at these activities?

(3) What *course materials* (*e.g.*, textbooks, course notes) are you using? Why are these materials useful to students' achievement of the course objectives? How should students use each of the course materials?

(4) What is the rationale for the methods you have chosen? In what ways do you expect your choices for methods, materials, and assignments to assist your students in meeting the goals of your course? What influence has your discipline or field had on your choices? Why do you expect that the methods will be effective in promoting the learning you hope to achieve with these instructional practices?

(5) Course choices and the broader curriculum How do your choices of methods, materials, and activities build upon what students have learned in previous courses? How do your choices prepare your students for the broader university and/or department curriculum? How do your choices assist students in their future courses and/or endeavors beyond graduation?

Interaction 3 Documenting and Analyzing Student Learning and Understanding

In the first two interactions, we asked you to think about your teaching as it is designed and proposed (through the syllabus) and conducted (through structured procedures and methods). For this memo we ask you to *document* evidence of your students' learning/understanding/ performance and *reflect upon* it with respect to achieving your overall teaching goals/objectives for the course.

Please select up to *three* focused activities (*e.g.,* homework assignments, examinations, projects) from your course that you would like to analyze with respect to student learning. Then discuss how well your students have met the activity's objectives based on the *evidence from the student work you've collected*. Because the activity of teaching varies widely across disciplines and contexts, there are many different ways you can document your students' learning. For instance, you could analyze student performance on a course assignment by identifying samples of student work that clearly represent high pass, medium pass, and low pass levels of performance. Or you could analyze student performance on an exam by focusing on select questions that you feel represent "higher order" learning in your course. Or you could select a few students and track their performance on several assignments over the course of the semester. However you choose to document your students' learning, you should include *samples of student work in conjunction with reflection* about how it does or does not meet your objectives for student learning.

A. The Nature of Student Understanding

1. Is there evidence (as represented in their work samples) of students meeting the specific learning goals you selected? Where do you see such understanding (e.g., you could cite particular passages from a student paper or a short answer from a quiz that provides evidence of such understanding)? What criteria do you use to assess such understanding?
2. How does the understanding represented by the work samples you present differ among students? How do these differences relate to the criteria you use in evaluating this work? How do these criteria relate to the intellectual goals you have set for the class?
3. Does performance represented by student work indicate students have developed an understanding for your field of study that will be retained and/or that students can apply to new contexts? In what ways?
4. What does your analysis of your students' work tell you about how students are learning ideas that are central to the course and to your teaching goals? Can you identify misconceptions they might have about these ideas? How might you identify and address these errors and/or misinterpretations?

B. Distribution of Student Performance

1. Given the evidence of student learning/performance documented above, what is the range or distribution for this learning within the class as a whole?
2. How many students out of the total class population achieved a high, middle, or low range of student learning? How might you account for this range or distribution? Are you satisfied with this range or distribution? Why or why not?
3. Does this range connect to your overall assumptions about the nature of student learning within this course? How might you represent this distribution of understanding to future readers of your course portfolio (*i.e.*, via a graph or a pie chart)?

C. Student Performance and the Broader Curriculum

1. Overall, how well did student work meet your intellectual goals for the course? Did the distribution of student achievement meet your expectations? Why or why not?
2. Does the evidence of student performance you've documented above indicate that students are prepared for other courses or have achieved the aims of the broader curriculum? In what ways?
3. What does your students' work tell you about the prior preparation they have received in your area of study?
4. What changes could be made to help more students achieve in the higher categories of learning? Are there particular features of the course that you would redesign? What specific changes do you plan to make in the way you teach or organize the course the next time it is offered? How do you think those changes would improve student understanding?

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Part III
Conclusion

Chapter 12
Was Moses Peer Observed? The Ten Commandments of Peer Observation of Teaching

David Spencer

Introduction

Any peer review of Moses would undoubtedly show a man of conviction and a man of action. After all, according to the book of Exodus, as a baby he is found in a woven basket floating on the Nile after the Pharaoh ordered all Hebrew boys be killed. He is adopted by the Egyptian Royal family and after killing an Egyptian slave master flees across the Red Sea where he speaks to the burning bush (God) and after parting the Red Sea, leads the Israelites out of Egypt to Mount Sinai where God hands him the Ten Commandments. If the aim of his life was to be a role model, leader and teacher (his Hebrew name was *Moshe Rabbenu* which literally means 'Moses our Teacher/Rabbi') then any peer observation and review would probably rank him highly. However, those judgments are probably best left for the reflections of learned theologians. University teachers in Australian universities have less dramatic lives than the leader of the Israelites although when it comes to having their teaching observed and reviewed by a peer some would have you believe that what they experience mirrors the tumultuous life of Moses.

Peer observation and review of teaching can be defined as a consensual observation of teaching by a colleague with the intention of providing feedback as a critical friend (Lomas and Nicholls 2005). In one sense this blends the terms "observation" with "review" in a way that allows it to be interpreted as being observation that inevitably leads to review. This is not necessarily the case in all peer observation programmes and was not the model used on the two occasions I have introduced it into a small and large academic unit in two Australian universities. Distinguishing these two concepts will be discussed below but for the moment the reader is encouraged to accept that this process means at the very least, the observation of one or more teaching practices by a peer that provides an opportunity for reflection on those teaching practices that may or may not lead to a formal review. I will tend to use the term "peer observation" throughout this chapter to denote a process of professional development

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through reflective teaching thereby distinguishing it from an observation that leads to formal review.

Much of the recent practice of and literature on peer observation emanates from the United Kingdom (UK) where it is now common place among universities given the establishment in 1999 of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) which relies on peer observation as part of its subject review system of quality assurance. In Australia, at the time of writing this chapter, no such regulatory requirement yet exists. Notwithstanding specific institutional aims, peer observation of teaching provides opportunities to improve teaching practices and student learning outcomes through a reflective process that seeks to continually improve those practices and outcomes. Further, it facilitates the creation of communities of practice that focus on teaching, learning and curriculum development. Finally, it provides opportunities for quality enhancement and assurance for internal and external compliance regimes. This chapter will discuss the challenge of engaging staff in peer observation and will set out the ten commandments of introducing it into academic units in universities.

Lack of Staff Engagement with Peer Observation and Review of Teaching

Many staff enthusiastically participate in peer observation and see it is an opportunity to have a trusted peer provide feedback on their teaching practices that for the most part, directly impact on student learning outcomes. However, some university teachers are not willing to engage in it. There a number of reasons why this lack of willingness occurs and most start from the proposition that teaching as a cognitive ability is not innate (Shortland 2004). Most university teachers teach the way they were taught when they were students (McKeachie 1997; Dunkin 1995) and in this respect teachers need to be taught to teach (Gibbs 1995).

Some of the reasons that university teachers may lack the will to engage in peer observation include that it: challenges academic freedom; creates false perceptions of the representativeness, accuracy and ability to generalise what is reviewed; raises concerns about the objectivity of those who review; and, questions values relating to the institution's rewards where incentives are perceived as far greater for research than teaching (Keig and Waggoner 1995).

The above reasons may carry more weight in an evaluative compared to a developmental model of peer observation. In a developmental model, feedback by a peer should not be viewed as a challenge to academic freedom rather an invited point of reflection for both observer and observed. Depending on the selection of the peer, peer observation should satisfy requirements as to representativeness, accuracy, specificity and objectivity. With correct institutional approaches to peer observation, concerns regarding the values of rewards and incentives should be allayed.

Lack of engagement can also be attributed to viewing peer observation as a time-consuming management initiative (Evans and Nation 2000) that is an intrusion into an intimate part of a university teacher's work (Martin et al. 1997). This in turn leads some to believe that peer observation threatens academic autonomy. Notwithstanding many universities' preferences for a developmental model which negatives such arguments, the utility of evaluative models can be to establish quality enhancement and assurance processes that should not be viewed as threatening academic autonomy rather a minimum requirement of the role of a university teacher that should be considered to be well within their workloads and consistent with university goals.

At a more superficial level is the notion that peer observation makes some university teachers uncomfortable, slightly nervous and apprehensive. One study demonstrated that the presence of an observer made the observed more nervous and influenced how the class interacted with each other and the teacher (Martin and Double 1998). However, another study of university teachers at the University of North Carolina found that both observer and observed participants found the process was not very stressful and surmised that clear communication and expectations were the key to ameliorate the effects of stress and assisted participants to see the benefits of peer observation (Kohut et al. 2007). It is conceivable that peer observation could generate anxiety in participants, particularly for those that are observed however, it is submitted that peer observation properly conducted in a supportive developmental environment that features clear goals can alleviate much of that anxiety.

Other criticisms of peer observation that lead to a lack of engagement by university teachers are that the process is: overly introspective; an exercise in mutual backslapping; and, something to be ticked off and lacking any meaningful function (Byrne et al. 2010). Peer observation is a reflective process that requires the observed to consider feedback from peers – so it is fundamentally an introspective exercise. The choice of peer and the parameters of the observation and review will ensure that it does not regress into mutual backslapping. Clear objectives and outcomes need to be set in order to achieve this. The primary function of peer observation is to provide feedback to university teachers so they may reflect on their teaching practices and make changes based on that reflection for continuous improvement. If it is to have a meaningful function, participants must be at one with its primary objective. Further, the university must value the process and use it to professionally develop staff so as to achieve better learning outcomes for students.

Much of the criticisms levelled against peer observation can be overcome through the sensitive management of it that is well structured and developmental in its approach and seeks to allay fears of the process and promote its benefits to staff and students. Further, it is more likely to be accepted by university teachers if: it is conducted in a non-judgmental atmosphere; it is conducted on a regular annual or biennial cycle; departments take the leadership in the design and implementation of formative peer observation; departments provide opportunities for training in the skills needed to conduct formative peer observation of teaching; and, there is institutional recognition with rewards and incentives structured to demonstrate that participation is valued (Lomas and Nicholls 2005).

The Ten Commandments of Introducing Peer Observation of Teaching to Universities

Before announcing the Ten Commandments of peer observation of teaching, it is important to answer a question frequently raised in peer observation programmes that asks, "Who is considered a peer?"

> The answer to this question will depend on the kind of peer review activity and the purpose for which it is undertaken. For example, for an academic department seeking to enhance teaching quality through 'in-house' measures, a peer would be another teaching member of the department—in this case breadth of teaching experience or seniority may or may not be taken into account when selecting peers. For a university using peer review of teaching to assess promotion applications to senior academic positions, however, reviewers may be restricted to a certain level of experience and seniority. For some programs, 'peers' from clinical or industry backgrounds may also be included as reviewers, in others a different perspective on teaching may be provided by choosing peers from a different faculty or discipline. The colleagues appropriate to act as peer reviewers thus depend on the kind of program being used and for what purpose. (Harris et al. 2008, p. 11)

In a peer observation programme designed to enhance teaching quality, participants should be free to choose their peer observers and depending on the nature of the substance of the observation, should be able to choose a fellow academic within or outside their specialist teaching area or discipline field. They should also be free to choose their peer observers at any academic level although there is a view that peers of unequal status can undermine the process and to avoid this, peers should display mutuality and respect for each other and treat each other as true equals whatever their status in the academic unit (Gosling 2002).

Another issue frequently raised in peer observation programmes is whether peers should be from within or outside the discipline area or academic unit running the programme. The issue is best addressed by having a clear understanding of the purpose and outcomes of peer observation of teaching. In cases where it is being used to observe and review the substantive content of a subject or course, then having a peer who understands and perhaps has some expertise in the discipline area will clearly be of benefit. In cases where, for example, student engagement with teaching is being observed it may not be necessary to have a discipline expert as the peer observer and reviewer. One study conducted in the UK in the disciplines of law and science found that even in cases where subject and teaching styles were alien to the peer observer and it would be unlikely that the peer could make an informed decision, the process caused no harm and was not detrimental in the long run (Hammersley-Fletcher and Orsmond 2004).

Commandment 1: You Shall Consider the Organisational Culture Before Implementing Peer Observation of Teaching

Understanding and accounting for the cultural nuances of the university or academic unit embarking on a process of implementing peer observation of teaching is critical to its success. Even centrally mandated peer observation needs to address that different academic tribes will start from different points in the acceptance of and ability to implement it (Lomas and Kinchin 2006). An example of such diverse tribes exists in universities with education faculties who are usually more advanced than other discipline areas in the use of peer observation, review and assessment both from a staff and student perspective.

Prior to implementing peer observation academic institutions or units need to consider their systems, structures and procedures within the context of their organisational cultures and sub-cultures and in particular examine the dominant behaviours, beliefs, values and basic assumptions of those cultures. How teaching and learning within the academic institution or unit is viewed by university teachers and the performance requirements of the organisation will often determine the type of programme to be implemented. An institution's own quality enhancement and assurance, professional development and recruitment processes may well determine the culture of teaching and learning and enable peer observation to be received more easily than other institutions that may regard teaching and learning as less important. For example, an academic institution or unit may have a mission to be an excellent teaching organisation based on certain internal and external measures and provide and support staff with numerous professional development opportunities to enhance their teaching practices. In such a case there probably exits the sort of culture within the organisation to easily implement peer observation of teaching. Contrast this with an academic institution or unit that does not provide professional development or any quality assurance of teaching and the role of implementing peer observation becomes more of a challenge and should be viewed as being an exercise in professionally developing staff and moving the culture of the organisation to recognise the importance of quality teaching and learning.

For peer observation to be a catalyst for improving teaching practices it needs to be embedded in a supportive culture. However, for it to be embedded in a university culture in a supportive way, the notion of teaching being a private activity needs to be challenged (Lomas and Kinchin 2006). The notion that, like research, teaching is a private activity runs counter to its very practice. Teaching is a public activity conducted in front of an audience and death by lecture is a painful and public demise—when it comes to teaching, there is little that is private about being a university teacher. Research conducted in Australia proved that peer observation works best in a collegial and collaborative environment and that under such conditions it has the capacity to change teaching from a private to public activity (Harris et al. 2008). Once university teachers accept the public nature of teaching they can successfully move to the cultural acceptance of peer observation as a way of improving teaching practices.

Much has been written on changing the culture of an organisation and change management techniques. This paper does not seek to set out a blueprint for change management through the introduction of peer observation rather it seeks to discuss the conditions for the successful implementation of it. In order to move an organisational culture to one that embraces peer observation high levels of leadership, commitment and perseverance are required in combination with a fine balance of pressure and support (Lomas and Nicholls 2005).

Commandment 2: You Shall Distinguish Between “Observation” and “Review”

Peer observation is an example of reflective teaching practices and may also serve a quality assurance purpose within an internal or external regulatory regime. Differentiating between observation and review is critical when contemplating the introduction of such programmes. Gosling (2002) has identified three models of peer observation, namely: evaluative; developmental; and, peer review. The former is clearly an evaluative model by name and substance that has as its purpose, among other things: identification of underperforming staff; confirmation of probation; appraisal for promotion; quality assurance; and, assessment. Outcomes from the evaluative model include but are not limited to a report or review that contains the judgement of the peer observer. This judgement is on the basis of a determinative rating that is a: pass or fail; score; quality assessment; and, worthy or unworthy. The status of the evidence is authoritative and leads to an assessment of the observed.

Gosling’s peer review model is what I refer to as a developmental model and has as its purpose, among other things, the engagement in discussion about teaching practices and self and mutual reflection. Outcomes from the peer review model include analysis and discussion of the wider experience of teaching practices and this occurs via non-judgemental constructive feedback. The status of the evidence produced through the observation is a shared peer perception of the observed staff member’s teaching practices.

In between is Gosling’s developmental model whose purpose is, among other things, to demonstrate and assess competency and improvement in teaching practices. Outcomes from this model are a report or action plan or perhaps a pass or fail in a post-graduate teaching qualification and these occur via a review of how to improve or a pass or fail assessment of the teaching practices. The status of the evidence is an expert diagnosis of the observed staff member’s teaching practices.

The type of model pursuant to Gosling’s dichotomy of peer observation depends on the academic unit’s desired outcomes. An observation model (based on Gosling’s developmental and peer review models) may achieve developmental outcomes that foster continuous improvement in teaching and a gradual change of culture in the unit’s attitude towards teaching and learning. A review model (based on Gosling’s evaluation model) may satisfy internal or external authorities that will deliver compliance and possibly accreditation against set criteria.

In order to achieve continuous improvement of teaching practices, I favour a model that straddles both the developmental and peer review models but distinguishes between the substantive components of observation and review. I have only invoked a review style model twice where an external reviewer evaluated the performance of two academic members of staff for the purposes of promotion. I favour the observation/developmental model because in most circumstances such a model is best placed to assist university teachers to reflect on their teaching practices and through reflection continuously improve those practices. While a review/evaluative model has its place for casting judgements for promotion and performance appraisal and compliance, its perceived threatening nature through such use makes it a less desirable model particularly when organisational change to the culture of teaching and learning is sought.

Evaluative/review models are seen as being threatening and disempowering for participants whereas peer observation is more useful and acceptable by participants when it is used formatively rather than summatively (MacKinnon 2001). Further, similar views prevail for voluntary versus mandatory programmes with the latter style producing grudging compliance at best (Blackwell 1996). There is also the issue of the value of peers sitting in judgement on each other with one piece of research showing a lack of evidence of improvement in teaching practices through the judgements and comments of others (Cosh 1998).

Whichever model is selected, academic institutions or units seeking to implement peer observation should ensure they distinguish between the models and, based on the first Commandment should seek views on which model best fits the organisational culture. Understanding the difference between observation and review and fitting the model to the milieu will ensure successful implementation of peer observation of teaching.

Commandment 3: You Shall be Developmental in Your Approach to Peer Observation of Teaching

Developmental models of peer observation of teaching are effective for the professional development of university teachers (Bell 2001) whereas evaluative models are not conducive to genuine professional growth and self-development (Cosh 1998). The second Commandment set out the importance of distinguishing between developmental and evaluative models of peer observation however, no matter which model is selected by an academic institution or unit it should provide opportunities for professional developmental. Even under the UK's QAA system it was found that an evaluative/review model was still developmental by benefitting the reviewer (Lomas and Nicholls, 2005). The meaningfulness of peer observation of teaching is increased when the entire academic unit can see an obvious school-wide developmental outcome (Hammersley-Fletcher and Orsmond 2004).

The developmental nature of peer observation means giving university teachers the opportunity to develop their teaching practices and improve student learning outcomes through a process that allows them to reflect on their teaching practices and make changes based on those reflections. However, participants need to be trained in providing feedback and how to engage in reflective teaching practices (Yon et al. 2002) and such training should be part of their professional development as university teachers. It has already been noted that university teachers are not trained as teachers and similarly they are not trained in giving feedback to peers and how to manage the power dynamic of peer observation (MacKinnon 2001).

Therefore, every programme requires training in: process; giving and receiving feedback; and, how to reflect and utilise those reflections for continuous improvement. In this respect peer observation is a formative rather than summative process that links to the professional development of participants by identifying teaching practices that require in-depth consideration.

An important element of peer observation being a developmental process is to build trust and respect between the participants particularly those that will be observing each other. Building such team dynamics allows participants to fully engage in the process and not be preoccupied with the fears that often accompany such programmes. Colleagues that trust and respect each other can help improve each other's teaching and through peer observation can become critical friends and effectively mentor their way through the process and achieve better teaching and learning outcomes.

Commandment 4: You Shall Clearly Define Tangible Outcomes from Peer Observation of Teaching

It is important that peer observation of teaching programmes provide the participants with a tangible outcome. Like many people, university teachers do not like to have their time wasted and if they are going to invest time into a professional development activity they need to see the tangible outcome that awaits them at the conclusion of the process. Such outcomes may include a report on the observation or a document that evidences participation. Others may prefer guidance on establishing evidence of the outcomes of peer observation to assist in performance development and management processes or promotion. Some may wish to see the results form the basis of a more collegial approach to teaching and learning within their academic unit or the formation of a community of practice for better teaching practices. Whatever the outcome is, it needs to be tangible, measurable and useful.

Based on the observation the observers should write up the report and send it to the observed. Documenting the observation is important in order to validate the process (Jarzabkowski and Bone 1998) as well as providing an aide memoire for future action by the observed and to perhaps use as evidence for professional development and promotion. It is important that all participants acknowledge that the participants have ownership of the observation report and that it should not be used without the observed and observer's permission. Often observed ask their observers at the beginning of the process for permission to use the report for performance development and management, promotion and recruitment purposes.

The report should include the observation criteria, whether an observation was possible on the day and open space to construct feedback. Written feedback on observations should include: comments on the observation process and problems or issues about the process; examples of good practice observed; staff development issues arising out of the observations and your discussion of them; and, other issues arising out of your discussion (Shortland 2004). Ultimately the structure of the report is up to the academic unit running the peer observation programme and the participants themselves. What is important is that there is a written record of the observation that will provide tangible opportunities for reflection by the observed.

Participants should be encouraged to write a concise action plan based on a short period of reflection. It is important to reflect on the observation but to also have the observation fresh in the mind of the observed. The action plan is a private document unless the observed wishes to share it and should allow the observed to make reflective comments about the observation. The observed should feel free to agree or disagree with elements of the observation but the action plan should not deteriorate into an attack or defence of the report rather, it should make informed comments about the observation based on the reflections of the observed.

Most importantly, the action plan should chart a way forward for the observed. It should set out what changes, if any, the observed will make as a result of the observation and set a timeline for further action flowing from the observation. For example, the observed may choose to make changes to the delivery mode or assessment in a subject the next time it is offered then have it peer observed again to check on the effectiveness of the changes. This type of "closing the loop" exercise provides the observed with effective peer observation as well as providing convincing evidence for effective professional development and promotion.

Another important element of this Commandment is to ensure that peer observation has a foundational basis. Peer observation enhances student learning through reflective teaching practices however, it is only an opportunity to reflect and discuss—its substantive value lies in what university teachers do with the results of observations. Acting on the results and using them to lay the foundation for further action is an essential element of peer observation. Therefore, formulating an action plan from the observation is essential. Making changes pursuant to that action plan is the next critical step. Finally, testing the changes through another peer observation and/or student feedback surveys closes the loop and allows it to be the foundational element of continuous improvement of teaching practices.

Tangible foundational outcomes can only be achieved if the data that is gleaned from peer observation is perceived to be valid and reliable by all the participants and should exist in some systematic way (Kohut et al. 2007). The creation of valid and reliable data is a reflection on the validity of the whole process of peer observation of teaching and includes the: structure of the programme; implementation of the programme; expertise of the peer observers and construction of the teams; criteria for observation being matched to the expertise of the peer observers; and, the agreed outcomes being tangible and used as a foundation for continuous improvement of teaching practices.

Commandment 5: You Shall Keep the Process Simple, Flexible and Accessible

University teachers are largely employed because they are discipline experts and have some aptitude for research, teaching, administration or management and community engagement. Other than in faculties of education, they are most likely not to have a great amount of understanding of the theory and practice of Higher Education outside of their own experiences. Therefore, introducing peer observation of teaching may be a new experience that presents an opportunity to learn about the process, the giving and receiving of feedback and reflective teaching practices. Under these circumstances, peer observation programmes should be: simple for university teachers to engage in; flexible to account for their busy and diverse teaching and research abilities and schedules; and, accessible given the lack of time they have to become acquainted with a large body of theory and practice that underpins peer observation.

The simplicity of any programme means that university teachers should not have to conduct large-scale research in order to participate. On the contrary, there should be little or no research required and the materials provided to participants should be simple to read and understand and set out simple process steps and the pedagogical basis of peer observation. It is not unreasonable to ask university teachers to make a small investment in their own professional development however the right balance needs to be struck between educating participants in the pedagogy and process of peer observation to enable them to derive a benefit from it and the need for them to become experts on it.

University teachers are well known for their hatred of paperwork and completing forms is universally loathed and could act as deterrent to participate in peer observation. To counter this there needs to be a simple pro forma observation report and a list of observation criteria ranging from classroom performance to observation of curriculum design that these days may include online learning resources, available to participants. The pro forma report should list the chosen criteria for the observation and provide open space for comments on those criteria.

Flexibility requires an acknowledgement that there are varying perceptions of teaching quality and collaborative reflection (Martin and Double 1998) as well as challenges in timetabling observations given the participants' teaching and research schedules. University teachers have varying perceptions of their own and their peers' ability to teach well. Peer observation should team university teachers together of varying ability to enable all participants to benefit from the process. In this respect the training and construction of observation teams needs to include an understanding of the experience and ability of each participant. For example, placing a university teacher who is known as an innovator and has won several teaching awards with an academic who is an early career teacher will require flexible approaches to the team dynamic that will involve a collegial approach to the observation. In terms of process, flexible observation schedules will need to be promulgated in order to match all participants up with observers.

There is a perception that peer observation requires too much preparation and time to properly execute (Kohut et al. 2007). To counter this, the programme must be accessible and cannot take too long to successfully complete and benefit from. The programmes I have introduced all took place over a standard single semester with the bulk of time between the introductory and debrief sessions being allocated to the observations and allowing participants to fit in with each other's schedules. Participants were advised that preparation and completion of the programme would take no more than 10 hours. Easy access to and completion of peer observation should be one of its selling features.

Commandment 6: Honour Collegial, Constructive and Continuous Feedback

An important element of peer observation is that feedback is conducted in a collegial and constructive way and is continuous throughout the teaching cycle. Such feedback should be viewed positively and as a negotiation between peers (Hammersley-Fletcher and Orsmond 2004). Research shows that peer observation builds a collegial culture within academic units (Bell and Cooper 2011) but requires a supportive collegial framework within which to effectively operate (McKeachie 1997).

To achieve a collegial approach the academic managers of the institution or unit must be supportive of its implementation. Buy-in to peer observation can usually be achieved by a top-down approach that uses evidence-based arguments to advocate its adoption. The collegial environment of peer observation can also be promoted through a well-articulated programme that allows participants to choose their own team members with an agreed framework for observation criteria and feedback. Follow up to such a programme could include the establishment of a community of practice that provides continuing collegial support for those interested in reflective teaching practices.

As previously stated, university teachers need to be trained in the giving and receiving of feedback however the process and atmosphere of the feedback mechanisms of peer observation should be structured in such a way as to create a non-threatening environment where the outcomes of the observations are used to best effect by participants. As a minimum, feedback should: be given in a constructive manner; aim to heighten the observed's awareness of strengths and of areas which could be enhanced; and, have specific statements supported with evidence from the teaching context in order to increase the validity of the report (Jarzabkowski and Bone 1998).

Feedback should start with a face-to-face post-observation meeting and continue through to the drafting of the observation report. Such a meeting should start with the observed leading the conversation and the parameters of the feedback being dictated by affirming the strengths of the observed's teaching practices and identification of areas for improvement. Feedback should never be crafted in a way that is critical, comparative or competitive.

It is acknowledged that where peer observation is used as part of a professional development process that it should be implemented as a continuous process for improvement (Shortland 2004). One of the most useful elements of peer observation is the ability to seek further observation of changes made after reflections made in an initial observation. In particular, a second peer observation used in conjunction with student feedback surveys can provide compelling evidence of the effectiveness of changes made since an initial observation or highlight the need for further changes. The continuous nature of peer observation may depend on the organisation's culture and the place it has in the academic unit however, informal peer observation can be facilitated by two or more university teachers at their own instigation and can provide longitudinal evidence of reflective teaching practices.

Commandment 7: You Shall Protect the Participants' Ownership of the Process

By its very nature, having a peer observe you creates a power differential between the observed and the observer. One way of reducing the power differential is to ensure that the observed feels in charge of the process and owns the outcome (Shortland 2004). A way to achieve this is to set the ground rules for participation in a way that ensures that each observed person decides: who the peer observer(s) will be; the criteria for observation; and, ownership of the report and any other outcomes flowing from the observation. Achieving this may depend on whether the programme is voluntary or mandatory.

The creation of the observation teams needs to be by agreement. Most university teachers are happy to work with other teachers within and outside of their discipline areas depending on the criteria for observation. Those that participate in voluntary peer observation programmes usually are at one with its general principles and take a collegial view of teaching. Absolute power over the criteria to be assessed is critical to the ownership of the process by each participant. The observed is the one participating in and gaining the benefits therefore they should have the power over the criteria to be observed.

Finally, the outcomes including any documentation produced by virtue of the observations are owned by the observed. Concerns about the ownership, use or confidentiality of the outcomes from observations should be settled early with clear guidelines being set for all participants. One important guideline should be that no information can be used by the observer without the observed's permission. Further, the observed should have the observer's permission before using any information from the verbal or written observation reports. Not only does control over the outcomes create a more equal power dynamic between participants but it affirms the view that, "... the key to the experience of peer appraisal was the fact that we were in charge of monitoring the quality of our work" (Jarzabkowski and Bone 1998, p. 179).

Commandment 8: You Shall Reward Participation in Peer Observation of Teaching

Rewarding participation in peer observation of teaching is a controversial area. Some take the view that it should not be linked to rewards because this may distort its developmental purpose (Blackwell 1996). Further, if peer observation is part of the quality assurance of teaching then it is part of every university teacher's responsibility and workload and not something that needs to be rewarded. However, others take the view that rewards act as an incentive for engagement (Kohut et al. 2007; Harris et al. 2008).

Rewards come in varying guises. Tangible rewards could include, for example: financial incentives to the individual or academic unit; professional development benefits and compliance; contributions to workload management schemes; evidence to justify promotion; and, teaching awards. Intangible rewards could include, for example: the learning experience that flows from peer observation; higher status among peers; and, the affirmation of good teaching practices.

Balancing the tangible and intangible rewards with the institutional culture may yield guidance on this issue. Those academic institutions or units with a history of rewarding participation in professional development and quality assurance may feel it necessary to reward participation in peer observation whereas those that do not have a history of rewarding this sort of behaviour will take a negative view of rewarding participation. If making tangible rewards promotes a desired culture change within the organisation then they should be used, albeit judiciously to avoid dependence. However, the benefits of intangible rewards should not be understated. Research shows that affirmation of teaching practices through peer observation is a significant benefit to university teachers (Blackwell 1996; Bell and Cooper 2011). Not only does such affirmation confirm good teaching practices but it gives university teachers added confidence to continue those practices and to try new ideas.

Another important intangible reward of peer observation is the reconciliation of what has been described as 'espoused theories of teaching' and 'theories-in-practice' (Schön 1987). For many academics peer observation is the first opportunity to receive feedback on their teaching (Bell 2001) and is a valuable opportunity to receive feedback and reconcile the difference between what they perceive to be the correct theory of teaching and their own teaching practice. Often university teachers will read journal articles or books about the theory and practice of Higher Education and form views on how that reading translates to the classroom. Understanding the difference between what is thought to be a good teaching practice and how that manifests in the class room is an important reflective exercise that can be facilitated through peer observation of teaching.

Commandment 9: You Shall not Forget the Students

Despite the fact that reflective teaching practices are largely about improving student learning outcomes, peer observation tends to be focussed on the teaching performance of academics. However, students should not be forgotten in the process. Where peer observation involves an in-class observations students should be briefed on why there is an extra one or two university teachers in the classroom. Students should be advised of the process and the fact that the observation is about observing the teacher not students and has nothing to do with their assessment in the subject. Further, it is important to ensure students are informed that observations lead to better teaching and learning outcomes for staff and students. It is a good idea to give examples of where observations have led to changes in the substance or delivery of subjects that have benefitted students through better learning outcomes. Finally, observers should be sensitive to their own presence in the room and not seek to impinge on student learning.

For in-class observations, other than large lecture settings, there is no doubt that being observed changes the dynamic between students and teacher. It is likely that the teacher will prepare a little more thoroughly and may even over-prepare in readiness for one or more peers to be present during the class. It is likely that the teacher will be more anxious about how students perform in the class and their displayed levels of engagement. It is possible that students could be quieter than usual and less inclined to interact with the teacher given the presence of strangers in the room (Martin and Double 1998). All of this is only natural but the more the observed and observers can do to make students feel at ease, the better. While it is true that students are not being observed in some types of in-class observations students are being observed but mainly, for example, as to their level of engagement with the teacher and the teaching and learning activities.

While peer observation used in conjunction with student surveys can provide persuasive evidence of reflective teaching practices, participants should also consider greater student involvement in peer observation to determine whether students have noticed an improvement in teaching and learning outcomes since the initial observation. For example, student focus groups consisting of students in a pre-observation class and students in a post-observation class could provide valuable feedback for teachers who have experimented with curriculum design and delivery. Most importantly, teachers should not forget that the aim of reflective teaching practices is to enhance student learning and students themselves have an active role to play in the successful outcomes of such practices.

Commandment 10: You Shall Practice What you Preach—Evaluate, Reflect and Continuously Improve Peer Observation of Teaching

Like the very process of reflective teaching practices promoted by peer observation of teaching, the programme itself requires evaluation, reflection and continuous improvement. There are various ways to evaluate peer observation programmes with some evaluating the various stages and others conducting extensive evaluation at the conclusion of each programme. Further, some evaluate formally while others choose a more informal approach.

Formal evaluation models may require participants being evaluated by the coordinator of the programme, who was not a member of the academic unit participating in the programme, on the design, coordination and outcomes of the programme using questionnaires and face-to-face interviews. Multiple choice and open-ended questions can be used that cover areas such as: reasons for participation; overall impressions; outcomes; strengths; improvements; trial observations; preparatory workshop; programme coordination; and, future plans (Bell and Cooper 2011).

While the extent of the evaluation of peer observation will be determined by the coordinators and the academic institutions and units themselves, some sort of feedback should be given to the participants particularly where it results in high stakes decisions being made such as evaluation for performance development and promotion (Yon et al. 2002). Most importantly, evaluations must be open to the participants each time peer observation is conducted. It is desirable that evaluations are also presented to the leadership group of the academic institution or unit so as to justify their investment and to encourage involvement of others.

Conclusion

Peer observation of teaching can assist in the professional development of university teachers and produce better student learning outcomes through reflective teaching practices. Depending on the model employed, it can help universities and academic units within universities strive for continuous improvement, achieve quality assurance and provide compliance for internal and external regulatory regimes. While not a panacea, peer observation can widen the discussion around teaching practices and how to improve those practices. This can lead to noticeable changes in the culture of teaching within an academic unit.

Consideration of the current culture of the implementing organisation and any desired change in that culture is critical to its success. Determining the appropriate model of peer observation based on consideration of the culture of the implementing academic unit is also critical to ensuring staff engagement in the process. Peer observation lends itself to a more professional development model whereas peer review provides an evaluative model commonly used more for compliance. Both models should be developmental in nature and seek to achieve continuous improvement in teaching practices through reflection.

Peer observation should provide tangible outcomes and assist in providing evidence for the various uses sought by participants such as affirmation of teaching practices, innovation in curriculum design, promotion and professional development. The process of peer observation should be simple, flexible and accessible to encourage greater engagement from within the implementing body. It should ensure that a collegial approach is taken to its introduction and that feedback is always constructive and continuous to maximum utility. Participants must always feel comfortable that they own the process and any outcomes and artefacts produced as a result of peer observation.

The implementing university or academic unit will need to consider which tangible rewards, if any, are appropriate for participation and should protect and guarantee the intangible rewards that flow from participating in peer observation. The reason to embark upon peer observation should not be lost in the process and in this respect student involvement should be designed into the process even if only to gauge the effectiveness of peer observation as an agent for continuous improvement in teaching practices. Peer observation of teaching programmes must be evaluated and improved upon each time they run and improvements made transparent to each successive cohort of participants.

The challenge for peer observation is determining its place in the Higher Education landscape. Unlike the UK, Australia does not yet have a mandatory regime of peer observation of teaching to determine quality assurance within compliance regimes. This means that the many voluntary peer observation programmes conducted in Australian universities attract teachers that are already reflective and strive for continuous improvement. Targeting university teachers that need peer observation of teaching the most, is crucial to maximising its effectiveness across the sector. Until such time as peer observation becomes mandatory, the real challenge for the sector is to sell the virtues of peer observation of teaching to all university teachers. Like Moses bringing the Ten Commandments down from Mount Sinai we await the metaphorical prophet that will enable peer observation of teaching to be the chosen reflective tool for improving the quality of teaching practices and professionally developing university teachers.

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Chapter 13
International Perspectives on Peer Review as Quality Enhancement

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Introduction

Peer review, at least in the Western world, began in North America in the 1960s where it became embedded as a professional development activity (D'Andrea 2002). It took another two decades to spread to Australia and the UK (Shortland 2004). In this chapter we explore some of the issues around peer review as an important mechanism for quality enhancement, illustrating the arguments with material from different countries with a particular emphasis on the situation in Australia, South Africa and Sweden. We first examine the various mechanisms available for undertaking peer review. These go well beyond the traditional classroom observation paradigm and the mechanisms discussed here present institutions with a selection of approaches. No matter which mechanism (or combination of mechanisms) is used, reviews of one's work can be confronting for the reviewee, so it is essential that a relationship based on trust is established with the reviewer, as explored next. The suspicion, of course, is that reviews may be used for performance evaluation purposes rather

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than performance enhancement. The tension between evaluative versus collegial approaches to peer review are described in the subsequent section which is then followed by a section exploring a case study of strategies for closing the gap between these approaches and embedding peer-review systems within an institution. We then discuss the role of educational developers and suggestions for training the review participants. We end by arguing the need for a scholarship of peer review.

Two main drivers appear to have been at work in most countries to expand and embed the practice of peer review. First, there was the desire to professionalise and enhance teaching, partly in an attempt to raise its status in higher education to equal that of research. Various organisations, some publicly funded and others funded as charities, were founded to promote this agenda, such as the American Association of Higher Education, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Professional and Organizational Development in the USA; the Higher Education Academy and the Staff and Educational Development Association in the UK; and, in Australia, the Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia and, in relatively quick succession, the Carrick Institute, the Australian Learning and Teaching Council and the Office for Learning and Teaching. The International Consortium for Educational Developers provides an international umbrella network for 23 national organisations. Second, there was the closely related political pressure to assure the standard of teaching in higher education with various regulatory and accreditation bodies being established at state, provincial, regional and national levels, such as the Quality Assurance Agency in the UK, the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency in Australia and the Council on Higher Education in South Africa. In Europe a major driver of the Bologna process was to assure standards and quality of higher education qualifications.

These twin wider pressures to professionalise teaching and assure quality of teaching are reflected in the tension between the developmental and performance dimensions of peer review (Bell 2002; Peel 2005) and whether peer review is seen as a means to improve the student's learning experience through enhancing the teacher's learning or as a mechanism for 'high stakes' staff evaluation (i.e. impacting personnel decisions regarding tenure and promotion) (D'Andrea 2002). Gosling and Mason O'Connor (2009) support the former objective but advocate going beyond peer observation of teaching and propose a more collaborative model that they refer to as 'peer-supported review': "By abandoning the requirement to 'observe', the opportunity is created to discuss and reflect on any aspect of the wide range of issues relating to teaching and learning" (p. 5). The purpose of peer-supported review is to improve teaching and student learning and to stimulate innovation through dialogue and reflection (Gosling 2009).

While recognising the tensions between quality enhancement and quality assurance and philosophically wishing to embrace the former more than the latter, we are realistic enough to understand that there is a place for both and think that we ought to work towards closing the gap between them. The important issue raised in the literature and in resources is that a peer review system for formative and summative practices needs to be in place within a culture that values teaching. A one-off, high stakes, annual evaluation has little value as a strategy for developing quality teaching. Formative review with feedback should be part of the culture and experience of academics. Fortunately there are many different mechanisms to choose from for undertaking peer-review.

Peer-review Mechanisms

A substantial amount has been written on the range of mechanisms that can be used to review teaching depending on the purpose of the review (Boud 1999; Boud and Middleton 2003; Brent and Felder 2004; Brookfield 1995; Cariaga-Lo et al. 2010; Gosling 2005; Perlman and McCann 1998; Purvis et al. 2009; Rodriguez-Valls 2010; Trower 2010). A full review might be conducted in a high stakes situation, but in more informal relationships an academic might be interested in improving a particular aspect of her or his work, such as classroom interaction, assessment practices, study guides or other materials, online sites and the like. Mechanisms could then be classroom observation, materials review or review of sites or submission of a full-scale portfolio. In each case there might be a rubric developed by the university or in discussion between the academic and the reviewer.

Reflection and self-evaluation provide a foundation for exploring one's practices with peers or academic developers. If the mechanism is classroom observation, it could be self-evaluation or peer evaluation. In the former, an academic could use video to capture a class and apply criteria available from the teaching development centre to evaluate what is happening asynchronously. In the latter, there would be reflection, discussion, synchronous or asynchronous observation, feedback and then further reflection. The academic could go back to the self-evaluation, and reflect: 'I underestimated myself here, and I overestimated myself there. Here's a gap, which I didn't even see, so I think it's something I've got to take up quite seriously'. This practice would also then close the loop. Academics thus take responsibility at a personal level for improving the quality of their teaching.

Action research (implementing a plan for improved learning and teaching based on an analysis of current practices) is another personal strategy. Unlike academic research, action research requires little training; is targeted specifically at the researchers' own local situation and is aimed at immediate practical application rather than contributing to theoretical knowledge. Action research can be conducted by an individual into his or her own practices or conducted in collaboration with a number of co-researchers into an area of common interest (McNiff and Whitehead 2002; McTaggart 1989; O'Brien 2001). The latter mechanism is known as 'participatory action research' and was used in the study of four universities described later in this chapter.

A very important mechanism in more formal peer-review processes is the portfolio, a collection of evidence of teaching practices and reflections on these practices. The Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) sees the scholarship of teaching and learning as being open to peer-review, and a portfolio is accepted as evidence of such scholarship: "the goal of CASTL is to render teaching public, subject to critical evaluation, and usable by others in both the scholarly and the general community" (Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning n. d.). CASTL has a Gallery of Teaching and Learning as an online resource that includes portfolios from a variety of disciplines. The portfolios are published under creative commons licence and include text, video, planning, activities, reflections, and so on. The University of Nebraska at Lincoln (n. d.) hosts portfolios as documentary evidence of the "intellectual work" of teaching as part of its Peer Review of Teaching Project begun in 1994 and "provides faculty with a structured and practical model that combines inquiry into the intellectual work of a course, careful investigation of student understanding and performance, and faculty reflection on teaching effectiveness". The scholarship of peer review is discussed further in a later section of this chapter.

Classroom observation is a common mechanism for peer-review either informally or formally. As discussed in the following section, trust is a critically important factor in the case of classroom observation given the intimacy and immediacy of the mechanism. The trust relationship has to be well established and the culture of using such a method needs widespread acceptance. It is essential to include briefing and debriefing as part of the process. Most resources recommend an agreed upon rubric, possibly based on a tool provided by the university, that can be adapted.

Materials evaluation is another common method. Study guides or online sites can be reviewed using a rubric. This approach is particularly common in distance education. A lecturer might want some insights into her or his assessment practices and might produce the syllabus, textbook, questions and memorandum for review. As discussed in a later section, it is particularly useful to have an expert educational developer perform this type of review.

Mentoring is an important peer review tool (Cariaga-Lo et al. 2010; George 2011; McKenzie et al. 2008). Most often mentoring does not involve direct observation and the mentor/mentee relationship is an informal one in which the mentor has been hand-picked by the mentee. The mentor is usually a respected senior member of staff who provides guidance and moral support to the mentee (a new or junior academic) by giving them the benefit of their experience. However, a problem might be that new academics are inducted into a single way of thinking or even into bad practices (Weller 2009) so it is important to have a scholarly approach and multiple perspectives (Stoll et al. 2006).

Irrespective of the mechanism, good communication built on mutual trust is essential in peer review.

Developing Trust in Peer Review System and Avoiding Mismatches of Power Between Participants

Gosling (2002) proposed three models for the observation mechanism of peer review based on the purpose of the observation, which we can call the *evaluation model*; the *developmental model*; and the *peer observation* model. In the evaluation model, also known as the performance appraisal or 'high stakes' model, the reviewer is usually a senior faculty member who observes other staff and makes judgements which contribute to the observee's subsequent probation or promotion prospects. The senior observer may be appointed by a third party like the Head of Department and the observee may not have a say on the choice of the observer appointed for the review process. In the developmental model, the reviewer may be outside the discipline or the faculty, and could be an educational developer or an expert teaching practitioner whose findings lead to recommendations for improvement on the quality of teaching and inform future plans. With the peer observation model, academics observe each other, often in a reciprocal process where the review is based on a set of mutually agreed goals that benefit both participants (Gosling 2002; Cosh 2006).

Many authors (e.g., Gosling 2002; Hammersley-Fletcher and Orsmond 2004; Martin and Double 1998) have argued that the high stakes and developmental models are not essentially *peer* review models because of existing power relationships and that the peer observation model is the true peer review model. Indeed, as revealed by the study described in the following section, there is something of a tension between the two former, more *evaluative* approaches and latter more *collegial* approach but in each case success depends primarily on the quality of the *relationships*. Each of these models can improve the quality of teaching and student-learning outcomes provided they are founded on a 'helping relationship'. According to Rogers (1969) a helping relationship has the following tenets:

- Trust
- Being genuine and non-judgemental
- Empathy

A relationship of trust builds through multiple interactions and trust is the foundation of peer review activity (Drew and Ehrich 2011; George 2011; McKenzie et al. 2008; Perlman and McCann 1998; Trower 2010). Trust and respect develop when rapport is built between colleagues over time and cannot be contrived or rushed. This does not necessarily exclude senior members of staff, provided the observee can choose the observer. It is important to choose the reviewer carefully, a reviewer who has the time and willingness to conduct the observation and provide constructive feedback. A careful selection of reviewer can ensure that clear expectations, goal-setting and the pre- and post-observation discussions take place in a congenial atmosphere. Mismatches of power between participants can be mitigated if the participants discuss the requirements and the observation process beforehand, ensuring that the observer has an understanding of the teaching session that is to be reviewed. Receiving critical feedback from observers who are trusted is enhanced if all artefacts of the review process belong to the observee (Mento and Giampetro-Meyer 2010). The review process needs to be a collaborative effort where colleagues benefit from each other's input and this is an iterative process; according to Piggot-Irvine (2003) participants learning from the shared experience of peer review develop trusting, open relationship enabling both parties to share control so that problems can be confronted and resolved.

Helping relationships also require both the observer and observee to be genuine, that is, to be themselves, and non-judgemental in their approach to the review process. Being oneself in this process, it is essential to clarify roles and expectations on both sides to ensure that the observation process does not have a negative impact on students' learning experiences. Being clear on the roles and expectations will help alleviate anxieties and concerns about the observation process. The observer familiarises himself or herself with the course, learning outcomes and specific requests to ensure objectivity. Observation in itself does not improve teaching, but critical constructive feedback and critical reflection creates a positive learning climate. Being oneself and non-judgemental will also promote self-awareness and the teaching practice of participants.

Empathy is the final helping attribute that needs to be present in the peer review process. Putting oneself in the other person's shoes ensures that participants respect each other, build up each other's credibility by not intervening during the observation process and are involved in parallel experiences that help develop an understanding of personal approaches to curriculum delivery. Shared empathy also respects the confidentiality of the helping relationship where both participants show integrity and maintain the highest level of professional and ethical standards in practice.

Tensions Between Evaluative and Collegial Approaches to Peer Review of Teaching

> Yes it [peer review] has to be invited in a sense. You could think of a situation say where a head of department might want to go and sit in on junior staff members' lectures just to ensure that they're doing the right thing. [But] ... It should be the case though that someone has invited you in to look at the lecture... There is of course a role for quality assurance within a university and so there should be a way to ensure that members of staff are obeying the assessment policy... But primarily I'd like to see peer review as located and positioned as quality enhancement, which means it really does need to be peers, and it really does need to be invited (Interviewee 2–3, 2011).

The above extract is drawn from a study of peer review at Macquarie (Australia), La Trobe (Australia), Lund (Sweden) and Pretoria (South Africa) universities. This is the same study previously discussed in this volume by Napier et al. and Ambler et al. The quote highlights the tension between 'peer review' as evaluative versus developmental. In total 81 academics from 3 different countries completed a survey, and a further 30 staff participated in one-on-one interviews where they explored their experiences of peer review. Academics described different experiences that captured formal managerially imposed arrangements, to more informal exchanges about teaching initiated between colleagues. The experiences of the academics involved in this research provides evidence that different forms of peer review can co-exist if they are facilitated by quality relationships.

Informal relationships with colleagues were highly valued as a desirable way of thinking about peer review (Shortland 2004). These relationships were casual, unplanned workplace interactions involving academics in close, open and frequent dialogue about teaching. Connections between pairs and small groups of teachers that occurred by chance in tea rooms, offices and corridors were considered to be invaluable for picking up useful tips and advice about teaching. In these unexpected conversations new and more experienced staff found themselves discussing "*better ways of doing things . . . reflecting, arguing, debating all sorts of topics relating to teaching, ranging from student attributes, attitudes and motivation to the practical difficulties of marking, assessing, grading and workload"* (Interviewee 4–2, 2011). While the positive outcomes for learning about teaching in these informal peer-to-peer relationships were recognised the limitations of such practice was evident. The issue of knowing if the learning made a difference to teaching and the random nature of these interactions rendered it problematic for anyone wishing to ensure that peer review occurs. Boud et al. (2009, p. 332) comment "the value of everyday chat and its learning consequences is that it is organic and 'informal"' and the vital ingredient is "understanding the purpose and place" (p. 333) of this type of peer relationship and its contribution to learning.

Semi-formal relationships between academics such as those found in team teaching, between critical friends and peer mentors were described as supportive of peer review. One academic who was interviewed (Interviewee, 3–3, 2011) stated, ". . . o*ne of the most effective means of peer influence on teaching is through team-teaching, when members of a team, teaching a subject are able to model different techniques for each other or discuss how to combine their techniques in a common approach."* The positive aspects of team teaching were widely praised (Game and Metcalfe 2009) though caution was raised by academics who believed that forcing staff together to team teach could discourage any productive learning. Critical friends exchanging ideas and opinions with a colleague at regular intervals, sometimes every week, to discuss how to plan and conduct teaching or attending a lecture and providing helpful feedback was acknowledged to be a useful strategy for supporting teaching (Baskerville and Goldblatt 2009; Handal 1999). Along a similar line, peer mentors were colleagues to whom an academic could turn to for answers to different questions, "share issues" (Maher et al. 2006, p. 29) and offer "*little suggestions here and there"* (Interviewee, 1–2, 2011). In all these semi-formal relationships a requirement for a particular kind of collegiality was evident. Confidence and goodwill on all sides was a desirable quality and although negative comments were seen to undermine confidence about teaching, academics did not want "*bland positives*" (Interviewee, 18–1, 2011) and welcomed constructive and informed criticism of practice (Hammersley-Fletcher and Orsmond 2004).

Formally imposed, systematic practices to promote peer review were generally less welcome (Bennett and Barp 2008; Hammersley-Fletcher and Orsmond 2004) and not common within the experiences of the academics who participated in this research. For those who had experienced formal peer review it was usually a model where they were directed by a manager to participate in a peer review activity. These were varied and included being directed to attend a department retreat to talk about curriculum planning; being paired with a colleague to observe their teaching; and senior staff allocated to observe junior staff teach. There was a view that managerially enforced peer review could become a process of ticking boxes to meet an imposed requirement and this would undermine any potential benefits and opportunities for learning.

Tensions were not necessarily evident in evaluative or collegial approaches to peer review; it was more often related to the quality of the relationships created within these approaches. Academics were very clear about the type of relationship they expected in any informal or formal peer relationship related to learning and teaching. The study results are consistent with earlier findings that trust, care and support are seen as key qualities at the heart of successful peer review relationships (Fullerton 1993; Harris et al. 2008). Communicating effectively with peers was framed by some academics as the challenge of moving beyond the barrier of politeness to an exchange of constructive advice where conflict might occur but it could be managed productively (see also Shortland 2010). There was an emphasis on the importance of acknowledging the legitimacy of diverse teaching styles and philosophies. Academics stressed that these differences needed to be recognised in the process of peer review, and the value of diverse teaching styles acknowledged. Any suggestion of 'surveillance' or 'judgment' signalled the demise of attempts to review and develop any aspect of teaching and learning. Despite this, there is a need to reconcile evaluative versus collegial approaches where the former is mandated (for instance, by government). The next section describes a case study of one such attempt at this reconciliation.

Closing the Gap Between Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement: Strategies for Embedding Peer Review

In reforming higher education much attention throughout the Western World has been paid to establishing national systems of quality assurance, and in response, there is increasing evidence that higher education institutions have built up internal quality assurance systems to evaluate and monitor their own teaching and learning. However, quality assurance has been met with scepticism by many academics when they experience it as an instrument not related to their practice or interests, and the systems often face problems in legitimising their original purpose to enhance as well as to secure the quality of teaching and learning (Mårtensson et al. 2012). There is a risk that parallel or even competing systems for quality assurance and quality enhancement are developed at national and institutional levels. The following gives examples from Sweden and Lund University.

In Sweden a national system for quality assurance started in 2011 where the quality of all degrees at bachelor's and master's levels (i.e., first and second cycle in the European Bologna system) of higher education will be assessed, by the Swedish National Agency for Higher education, in relation to how well the students fulfil the intended learning outcomes for the degree. The system will be used for accreditation of university degrees and financing of higher education. A number of students' theses on both levels will be judged by external experts, and each programme will submit a self-evaluation report on the main outcomes of the degree. One problem with the national system is that achieved outcomes from student assessment in the curriculum are deeply buried in the specifics of the teaching process and cannot be as easily isolated and reported upon as the method assumes (Lindberg-Sand 2011).

Before the new national project Lund University Board ratified a policy for quality assurance of education for the period of 2009–2012, based on six main methods:

1. Validation, i.e. examination of the feasibility of adopting new study programmes and qualifications;
2. Evaluation of the quality of examination and of qualifications/learning outcomes;
3. Evaluation of courses – overall assessments of courses based on, inter alia, evaluation questionnaires completed by students;
4. Monitoring of alumni and of potential employers;
5. 'Barometer' surveys to investigate how students, including doctoral students, and employees experience education; and
6. Monitoring based on performance indicators.

In the policy it is also stated that quality enhancement work at the university aims to promote a quality culture in which the results of work on quality will be recognised and rewarded. Development of teachers' skills through training in higher education teaching methods will be integrated with work on the development of teaching. Documented achievements in the field of higher education teaching methods and research and development projects will be accorded greater importance in the assessment of teaching experience and will be publicised at the various teaching-development conferences organised by the University. Systems for rewarding particularly qualified teachers, such as teaching academies, will be established to support development and will be followed up through various targeted studies. In these ways the policy endeavours to find an appropriate balance between quality assurance and quality enhancement to ensure that resources are devoted not only to identifying shortcomings but also to putting them right.

The Lund University experience provides an example of balancing top-down and bottom-up processes. Clearly, for a more strategic approach to embedding academic teachers' training and peer review into the academic culture, university leaders' engagement is required. It may be necessary to shift from a focus on individuals, looking upon teachers' pedagogical development and qualifications more as a private project, to a focus on organisational development and on building academic cultures.

One strategy for embedding teacher training in the academic culture at Lund University is to support conceptual change regarding teachers' understanding of the relationship between teaching and student learning by systematic scholarly academic development. Moreover, all teacher training programmes and courses for academics at Lund University are offered within a scholarly framework (Boyer 1990; Healey 2000; Kreber 2002). The participants are conducting a smaller peer reviewed project relevant for them and their discipline, and write a report to the course group. They are also encouraged to present the report in other forums, such as departmental seminars and local teaching and learning conferences. In this way the work can contribute both towards helping teachers advance their own careers, and utilising and disseminating their work in a scholarly way through seminars, conferences and publications. This can also contribute to more open communication about teaching and learning among colleagues. These projects, 200 during two years, have been integrated into different institutional cultures (Larsson and Mårtensson 2012).

Another strategy has been to develop a coherent model of pedagogical competence, involving four essential aspects: pedagogical practice, observation, theory, and planning as a means for improved pedagogical practice. This model also includes three main criteria for assessment of pedagogical qualifications when academic teachers apply for employment, promotion or acceptance into a Teaching Academy; namely, focus on the students' learning, a clear development over time, and a research-oriented attitude (Olsson et al. 2010; Olsson and Roxå 2012). The model is used as a framework for teacher training courses and programmes, and the criteria are recognised in the learning outcomes for teacher training courses and programmes. In this way the same framework can be used for both enhancing and assessing pedagogical competence. However, it has not yet been implemented in all faculties.

A third example of a strategy is the university's support to establish 'Teaching Academies' in the faculties. For permanent employment as professors or senior or assistant lecturers at Lund University, colleagues are required to be pedagogically skilled and to have completed teacher-training equivalent to five weeks' full-time studies. To achieve promotion they must demonstrate proof of quantitative and qualitative progress within pedagogical as well as scientific/artistic skills. As a part of the promotion system, the university supports Teaching Academies, now established in four of the eight faculties (Lund University 2012). A Teaching Academy aims to develop the faculty's pedagogical standards and to afford a higher status to pedagogical development. University teachers are invited to have their excellence as teachers assessed with the aim of being accepted into the Teaching Academy. To be attractive and comparable with the promotion system, the Teaching Academies involve a salary increase for the teacher, and extra money for the department.

A fourth strategy used is to support studies on quality enhancement, as well as assurance, at the university. In an ongoing education quality enhancement project at Lund University (Lund University 2011) a study reflecting quality practices in five strong academic micro-cultures has been performed (Roxå and Mårtensson 2011). The purpose was to explore a limited number of strong educational contexts, micro cultures, and to explore how these contexts construct educational quality. The five milieus were all chosen for being good at both research and teaching. By deepening the understanding of these cultures, the study may contribute to further insights into how quality in academic teaching and education relates to the underlying assumptions of academic culture. These micro-cultures are found to be developed from the inside by a strong, quality-aware culture. They are characterised by respect from within their own organisation, and display a very high degree of internal trust between leaders and teachers, as well as trustful relations between teachers and students. On the other hand, formal managers on the level above the micro-culture often lack common values concerning quality in education. As a result of this, less successful environments may exist alongside successful environments in one and the same field. The project shows that the management is often unaware of which education environments in their faculties are successful.

In the rest of this chapter we turn our attention to some practical considerations in the implementation of peer review. We examine the role of experts such as professional educational developers and discuss the importance of training all participants of the review process. Finally, we propose a framework for the scholarship of peer review based on an inquiry model.

Role of Educational Developers and Other Institutional Players

An educational developer can play a variety of roles in contributing to peer review beyond those earlier mentioned:

- Providing support
- Acting as a peer for purposes of:
  - review of materials
  - classroom practice
  - use of technology, such as the learning management system
- Making resources available
- Planning professional development opportunities on how to conduct peer review or associated activities such as how to compile portfolios

A Dean remarked to a head of an academic development department at a South African university that he rather resented people coming in from the side and telling him what to do in his faculty. Educational developers in teaching and learning centres occupy a space 'on the side', which has the advantage of placing the developers as facilitators of learning and not 'trainers', but also has the disadvantage of their being perceived as on the periphery of the academic world. These developers are sitting beside lecturers, working with them, supporting them, leading them into ways that they would not otherwise have taken. From the side, the developer questions, challenges and moves people out of their comfort zones. Academics might ask a developer to review material or observe a class when they have concerns about their teaching, rather than a disciplinary peer, both because they trust the person, but also because they respect her or his educational knowledge. Gosling (2002, p. 5), as already stated, views this as development rather than peer review.

There are expectations that academic development departments, such as the Department for Education Innovation at the University of Pretoria (2010), will help to institutionalise good teaching for all, as opposed to working with individuals. The higher level professional development opportunities, such as induction or assessor training courses, fulfil this function at the University of Pretoria to some extent, as do the development of Faculty Plans on an annual basis and a focus on priority issues, such as high impact modules or teaching large classes. Collaborating in teams with academics to ensure quality or conducting joint action research or designing, administering and analysing student surveys are all activities that educational developers can perform.

Even when educational developers do not work directly on peer review with academics, a sampling of university websites in Australia (e.g., Macquarie University), New Zealand (e.g., Massey University), the Unites States (e.g., University of Texas at El Paso, the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey), the United Kingdom (e.g., Cambridge University) and Canada (e.g., University of British Columbia, University of Guelph) shows that they provide resources for peer review ranging from discussion on concepts to tools for classroom observation. The developers normally work for the equivalent of a teaching and learning centre.

A further role for the educational developer is to provide opportunities for continuing professional development so that academics can be more effective reviewers/reviewees. Depending on their specific skills, educational developers could provide training to participants in the review process and/or develop processes and tools. For example, educational developers might train academics on the construction of portfolios or develop a resource to help people reflect on their teaching. In the next section we discuss professional development in more detail.

Professional Development for the Reviewers and Reviewees

The quality of teaching and learning in higher education internationally is currently a key focus of governments; for example, higher education in Australia is currently undergoing substantial reform and funding increases through the Government's reform package, *Transforming Australia's Higher Education System*, developed in response to the Bradley Review (2008). Given the increasing importance of excellence in university learning and teaching, peer review of teaching is viewed as a means of improving teaching and learning quality. Lomas and Nicholls (2005, p. 138) argue that "this enhancement of teaching quality will only be achieved if schemes are implemented sensitively and address the significant concerns about peer review of teaching." One way to ensure the success of peer review is by assuring the quality of the process through professional development of both the reviewers and the reviewees. Training of both participants in the review process is important as it may restrict the choice of observers to those who have been trained and would restrict the use of peer review of each other if the observee has not also undergone the training.

Training can be within formal programmes (e.g., Post Graduate Certificate in Higher Education, as seen in some Australian universities and most UK universities), or other professional development activities offered by higher education institutions. Key themes that could be addressed by professional development programmes to ensure robust and valid peer review systems are:

a. Understanding peer review aims, processes and expected outcomes of any such schemes through literature and practice
   As discussed earlier in this chapter and throughout this volume, the purpose, processes and structure of peer review schemes are varied. Understanding these will assist in making the right choices for the observer, on what is to be observed, what tools should be used and where improvements in performances are needed.

For example, peer review as a quality assurance mechanism (as in evaluation model) is different from peer review as quality enhancement.

Part of the training should include understanding the peer review literature and process. This will facilitate the establishment of such schemes in the institutions thus disseminating and embedding best practice. It makes teaching a collaborative, scholarly endeavour that is open to critique and makes teaching practice in higher education visible.

b. Setting up the pre- review discussion and addressing issues of autonomy

Concerns and anxieties regarding trust and distribution of the power relationships arising from peer review for staff have already been mentioned. These concerns may affect not only the reviewee but also the reviewer; assessment of one's peers can be daunting. As discussed in an earlier section, clarification of roles and expectations on both sides can mitigate these concerns and participants will benefit from instructional guidance in this area.

c. Review skills

The skills to conduct peer review are important and will depend on the purpose of the review process. For example, in the evaluation model the emphasis is on the skills to observe and assess the reviewee's performance against a set of criteria. In the collegial model the observer not only needs to know how to provide constructive feedback on what worked or did not work but must also learn to consider how his or her own teaching could benefit from the observations. In some situations the students may help provide appropriate feedback and if so a process for this activity also needs to be learned.

d. Post-review feedback

Opportunities for enhancements and development may be lost through a lack of ability to give useful and meaningful feedback as a 'critical friend'. Supportive and constructive feedback is essential to improving teaching (Keig and Waggoner 1994). Fear of being critical can be overcome by learning how to be constructive in an open trusting relationship and within the academic culture, not as something that is negative but as something that exercises the intellect through observation, analysis and interrogation (Bingham and Ottewill 2001).

e. Portfolio construction

A portfolio is not just a collection of artefacts. As explained in an earlier section it reveals explicitly the teaching and learning beliefs of the lecturer, on which they can later reflect as well as use for scholarship purposes. Reviewers and reviewees alike will benefit from explicit training on the construction of effective portfolios.

f. Reflective practice

An important aspect of peer review is the ability to reflect critically (Brookfield 1995; Hammersley-Fletcher and Orsmond 2004; Purvis et al. 2009; Roberson n. d.; Rodriguez-Valls 2010; Stoll et al. 2006; University of Cambridge 2005; Harvey and Solomonides this volume). Developing observers' reflective skills will enable them to provide constructive feedback while the observee's critical reflective skills 'in action' and 'on action' (Schon 1987) will enable them to devise solutions and action plans for future enhancements.

g. Using findings to enhance or change practice, personal self or action plans

> Formative feedback from peer reviews is only effective if it causes a positive change in teaching practices. It is not always evident how to translate constructive feedback into action plans for improvements. Training and guidelines on this process will therefore be helpful to both participants.

The review of teaching can be an integral part of professional development leading to quality enhancement and professionalisation of teaching in higher education. Providing training for participants so that they understand the process, its intentions and how to utilise the findings will ensure that the process is effective.

In the next section we address the issue of the scholarship of peer review and argue for taking an inquiry-focused approach.

Towards a Scholarship of Peer Review

Ideas about scholarship in the university context are diverse and of interest to academics whose work is often touched by different conceptualisations of the term. Brew (2001, p. 39), in her review of 'scholarship', identifies a key tension between broader definitions of scholarship that speak to the "way in which academics work" (Neumann 1993; Westergaard 1991) and narrow definitions that describe scholarship through identifiable parts. Breaking up scholarship into constituent parts such as the model of discovery, integration, application and teaching proposed by Boyer (1990), or the framework of scholarship as pedagogy; publication and professional recognition; intellectual characteristics; and creative and artistic attributes, suggested by Sundre (1992) may be useful and have currency in the context of higher education today. However, for the purpose of this discussion we will argue that a more cohesive vision of scholarship is required for academic work in the future, one that is based on "how to inquire in ways which not only take forward our collective understanding of the world but provide exemplars" (Brew 2001, p. 186) for others. As explained below, peer review in the context of an 'academic community of practice' (Brew 2003) is intrinsic to this vision.

The trends in university education and the work of academics that warrant a refining and redefining of scholarship as inquiry are:

1. the evolving role of the academic as a teacher/researcher
2. continuing recognition of the value of social constructivist approaches to learning
3. the changing face of a university education that is more inclusive and based on a curriculum that goes beyond traditional content knowledge
4. an increased need to respond to external bodies for accountability
5. technological innovation that is integral to day-to-day life and learning.

The focus on inquiry in the work of academics is essential if they are to respond constructively to these trends. But inquiry is not new in the work of academics; it has a long and established tradition. Aristotle described discovery (heuriskein) as the end of inquiry and Dewey (1938) believed inquiry to be central to the enterprise of teaching and learning. More recently Westergaard (1991) used the concept of "critical inquiry" to define scholarship and Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2001) set the challenge of making inquiry a 'stance' in the work of both school teachers and university academics. We believe that a properly implemented peer review process can facilitate scholarship through critical inquiry.

Based on the work of Brew (2003, p. 12) we propose that a scholarship based on inquiry requires academics to participate in an academic community of practice; a place where:

> . . . students, academics, professionals and indeed anyone else who shares this site of practice, are responsible for the maintenance of the community of practice for inducting newcomers into it, for carrying on the tradition of the past and carrying the community forward to the future.

Academics can belong to multiple communities and in this way they can be joined together through a "dynamic array of interwoven relationships" (Olson 2000, p. 671). Knight (2002) suggests that underpinning the move towards communities of practice is a shift from the view that assumes institutions such as a university can systematically manage the work of academics by implementing particular principles and strategies. Theories of 'complexity' support a view that working in a university produces complicated and unpredictable circumstances (Knight 2002) which academics should be prepared to respond and interrogate.

This view of scholarship as inquiry-focused and created within communities integrates a conception of peer review as ". . . a variety of practices" (Courneya et al., 2008, p. 69) and activities that occupy a spectrum from evaluative to collegial (Carter 2008; Gosling 2002). When peer review practices are characterised by a process of inquiry students and teachers will be working together and asking questions, identifying and ". . . seeing problems as discrete but interconnected, and developing the strategies, techniques, tools, knowledge and experience needed to solve unforeseen problems" (Brew 2003, p. 14). Increasingly students are being viewed as essential and active collaborators working with academics in different types of peer learning activities. Healey (2012) identifies a range of peer relationships that involve academics and students often working together as, pedagogical consultants and mentors, co-designers of courses, and partners in research into and strategy development of teaching and learning. Peer review from this "inquiry guided" (Lee 2010, p. 151) perspective involves learning by investigating questions; working together in communities of learners; subject matter conceptualised as the "stuff of everyday practice" (Cochran-Smith 2003, p. 23); and constructing pedagogy that is locally appropriate, culturally sensitive and inclusive. Scholarship with a focus on inquiry has peer review as its raison d'ê tre and its absence would severely constrict the ability of academics to effectively navigate and respond to the current climate of higher education.

Conclusion

Peer review is clearly a complex process that plays out in different countries and institutions in different ways. In this chapter we have explored international perspectives on issues associated with peer review. We conclude by arguing that it is important to see peer review as part of a wider system of quality enhancement.

We find the model of 'pedagogical competence' developed at Lund University one possible framework for conceptualising the factors that enhance the development of the quality of teaching (Olsson et al. 2010; Olsson and Roxa 2012). They suggest that teachers' own observations of teaching and learning activities are the single most important factor to close the gap between teachers' knowledge about teaching and learning versus teaching practice, and to promote conceptual change.

Nevertheless, we recognise that different institutions are at different stages of understanding and developing teaching and learning initiatives (Gibbs 2013) and we would like to leave the reader with a sense of the possibility of how peer review as quality enhancement might work for them in their University and to see it as evolutionary. Teaching and learning are not the same everywhere, they are diverse and different from culture to culture and peer review for quality enhancement should reflect this diversity not 'bound' it. Adapting some of the ideas discussed in this chapter to fit local cultures may be a way forward. Such a diversity of perspectives should provide a sound basis for the continuing development of a scholarship of peer review.

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