Observer training – Part 2

‘Challenging conceptualisations of using observation to inform and improve practice’
Reflecting on Part 1

• What were some of the key themes/issues we covered in Part 1?
• What sticks in your mind from what we discussed in Part 1?
• What are you taking into today’s Part 2 session?
Key aims of Part 2

• To reflect on what we observe and notice and how this can be transferred to platforming the post-observation dialogue

• To scaffold observers’ approaches to facilitating the ‘professional dialogue’ during the ‘observation cycle’
Principles & protocols of HELS observations

• Observers are there to **observe** rather than make evaluative judgements

• Observers will compile a descriptive log/field notes of what they see during the observation along with associated questions and/or reflective comments to discuss during the professional dialogue stage

• Observations will be used as a **platform for professional dialogue about practice**

• **Teacher learning** and **collegial development** will underpin the HELS approach
Paired coaching practice

• Observee reflects on recent taught session
• Observee recounts session to observer
• Observer facilitates professional dialogue (using coaching Qs as prompts)
Practice-based Observing

You are now going to watch two short video clips of two different teaching scenarios and will be asked to make notes.
Stages of the ‘observation cycle’

Stage 1 - Observee self-reflection

Stage 2 – Pre-observation meeting (approx. 30mins)

Stage 3 - Observation (approx. 60 minutes)

Stage 4 - Post-observation individual reflection (approx. 30mins)

Stage 5 - Post-observation dialogue (approx. 30mins)

Stage 6 – Observee & observer post-observation reflective write ups
Observee feedback of the HELS model of observations

- platform for professional dialogue
- catalyst for thinking
- collaborative
- helpful
- observing rather than judging
- coaching
- opportunity to discuss practice
- relaxed
- constructive
- affirming
- powerful
- non-threatening
- collegial
- friendly
- positive
- non-judgmental
- increased confidence
More detailed observee reflections

Observer didn’t tell me what to do but gave me time to reflect

Constructive comments on gauging students’ understanding

Made me more conscious of my teaching & more confident

Different to the observation “game” played in schools

As a reflector, the observation did not add anything to my practice but affirmed what I already do is good practice

Felt part of the process rather than it being done to me
Key learning from pilot - Pt 1

• Broad agreement amongst observees that the process was supportive and developmental
• Observers felt their own practice benefitted from the professional dialogue and reflection
• Pre-observation dialogue vital to set expectations, reassure observee and gain insight on possible areas of focus during observation
• Finding time for the meetings can be challenging
Key learning from pilot- Pt 2

• Learning to be non-judgemental can be challenging
• It also takes time and practice to develop questioning and coaching skills
• Some observation notes were episodic as opposed to holistic
• Some reflections and action plans focussed solely on the observed session rather than on lecturer’s whole practice
Evaluating the impact of HELS approach to observations

• Important to evaluate staff experience & the impact of the faculty’s distinct approach
• How might we want to do this?
• Who will be involved?
• What will the resulting data be used for?
• Timescales?
What happens next?

- Paired/triad observations with fellow observers to trial approach & practise skills
- Discuss HELS model of observations in teams, departments or schools
- Agree observer-observee allocations + a schedule of observations
- Carry out a minimum of 2 observations in the academic year
- Documentation from observations submitted to Dropbox
- Reporting back (later in the year)
Improving learning and teaching through collaborative teaching observations

• 18-month project funded by HEFCE (Nov 2016-April 2018)
• Collaboration between staff and students
• Key focus = using observation as a form of critical inquiry in which students and lecturers co-interrogate and co-reflect on their own learning and teaching values and practices
• 5 undergraduate case studies across HELS faculty
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