

Title: Peers enhancing practice – a flexible framework to ‘PEP’ up academic practice?

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Abstract:

Session Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- explore the opportunities for involving the student voice in a peer review or ‘Peers Enhancing Practice’ [PEP] framework aimed at enhancing the student experience and the extent to which this is already happening in their own institutions
- consider the benefits associated with involving the students in ‘PEP’ activities and the extent to which any challenges and tensions might be addressed

Session Outline

Key issues to be addressed are:

A number of different models of peer ‘observation’ have been identified in the literature (eg Byrne, Brown and Challen 2010, Crutchley, Nield and Jordan 2005, Gosling and Mason O’Connor 2009), each suited to different purposes. In common with many other HE institutions, the University of Portsmouth has moved away from a traditional model that was evaluative in nature and limited to observable classroom activities to a ‘Peer Review and Development Framework’ that is more collaborative, with an emphasis on critically reflective dialogues between peers (both in pairs and groups such as course teams) and aimed at enhancing all aspects of the student learning experience. An emerging feature of this collaborative approach is the use that colleagues are making of the student voice both by using student feedback, including mid-semester and NSS comments, as a starting point for a critically reflective dialogue, and by enabling students to participate in the dialogue itself. Colleagues have also seen the potential for feeding back details of peer review activities to students eg via Staff Student Consultative Committee meetings. Given the strong emphasis on enhancing the student experience, University staff have recommended that the name of the Framework be changed to Peers Enhancing Practice (PEP) to better reflect its purpose.

Session participants will be given the opportunity to explore:

- a) the opportunities for involving students in ‘PEP’ activities in their own institutions
- b) whether such involvement will help individual members of staff, course teams and/or departments to respond to student expectations (eg students seeking ‘more for less’)

- c) the challenges of implementing such a framework eg the tension between addressing individual staff members' development needs as opposed to institutional/department/course team more strategic needs

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

0 – 25 mins Presentation introducing the Peers Enhancing Practice (PEP) Framework at the University of Portsmouth

26 –35 mins Small group discussions to identify opportunities and constraints at own institutions that would encourage staff involve students in PEP activities

36 – 45 mins Whole group round up and discussion about challenges of such a framework for all our institutions

References

Byrne J, Brown H and Challen D (2010) 'Peer development as an alternative to peer observation: a tool to enhance professional development' *International Journal for Academic Development* **15** (3) 215 - 228

Crutchley D, Nield K and Jordan F (2005) 'Moving on from peer observation of teaching: a collaborative development utilizing the principle of peer support' *Educational Developments* **6**(1) 1-5

Gosling D (2002) *Models of peer observation of teaching* [online] York: Learning and Teaching Support Network Generic Centre Available from www.heacademy/resources.asp <peer observation of teaching> [Accessed 20 December 2010]

Gosling D and O'Connor K (2009) *SEDA Paper 124 Beyond the Peer Observation of Teaching*