

Title: Peer Observation of Teaching in a Pandemic:
Implications for Educational Development

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Learning Outcomes

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

- Identify challenges and benefits associated with PoT in online contexts.
- Explore how to build trust and collegiality in online PoT.
- Identify factors which may contribute to successful online PoT.
- Discuss the role of the Educational Developer in scaffolding and supporting the development of trust, rapport and community essential to successful online PoT.

Outline

Peer Observation of Teaching (PoT) can provide a structured professional dialogue opportunity by which observers and observees share and develop perspectives on teaching (Gosling, 2002). These professional conversations can generate opportunities for both parties to gain perspectives on practices that may have been taken for granted.

The COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated Higher Education institutions to rapidly shift to teaching in a digital environment (Nordmann et al., 2020). With a focus on online teaching and learning set to continue for the foreseeable future, it is timely to consider questions yet to be addressed with respect to the role that PoT might play in online contexts. For example, what does PoT mean in an online context? Should PoT in online environments be concerned with synchronous teaching only or should asynchronous approaches now be considered? What are observers giving feedback on in online PoT? How do participants feel about giving feedback on online teaching when they do not consider themselves to be experts in online teaching? How can academic developers best support the development of the trust, rapport and community essential to successful PoT in online environments?

During the workshop we will discuss how we can learn from and build on, experiences of PoT in online contexts and how this can be sustained post COVID-19. We will share and reflect on the findings of a focus group which sought insights into experiences of and perceptions of PoT in online environments. Participants will be facilitated to explore the factors for success that enable online conversations on teaching and learning, and will consider how educational developers can support professional dialogue about teaching and reflection on practice in an online context.

Activities and Approximate Timings

- Overview of the workshop and introductions (2 mins)
- Presenters provide an overview of the findings from the focus group on online PoT (10 mins)
- Discussion – Participants will collectively reflect on the key findings from the research and consider the implications for successful implementation of PoT in an online context (20 mins). This discussion will utilise prompts adapted from the original research:
 - Can online POT offer an authentic learning experience? How can this be achieved?
 - Can a technology mediated approach for PoT provide evidence for reflective dialogue on teaching practices?
 - How, as educational developers, can we support the building of trust and collegiality in the context of online POT? How important is this?
 - What other factors might make for a successful online PoT?
- Conclusion and group creation of main learning points for educational developers in supporting an online PoT process. (8 mins)

References and sources

Gosling, D. (2002). *Models of peer observation of teaching*. LTSN Generic Centre

Nordmann E, Horlin C, Hutchison J, Murray J-A, Robson L, Seery MK, et al. (2020). *Ten simple rules for supporting a temporary online pivot in higher education*. PLoS Comput Biol, vol 16, no 10. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pcbi.1008242>