

*The use of teaching observation in Higher
Education*

An exploration of the relationship between
teacher observation for quality assurance and
quality improvement in teaching in higher
education, in the light of further education
sector experience.

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CONTENTS

	Page
Acknowledgements	3
Introduction	4
Background	6
Section 1:	
Teaching quality and the use of teaching observation: a framework for analysis	10
Section 2	
Part A: The use of teaching observation in HE: three university case studies	14
Summary	20
Part B: The use of observation in FE: Three FE case studies	21
Part B Addendum: Quality assurance and quality improvement - the position of in-service trainees	28
Section 3	
Conclusions	30
Comparing and mapping approaches to teaching observation in HE and FE	31
The use of observation to improve teaching quality: lessons from FE	33
Teaching observation: evaluation and improvement	35
Issues for discussion and areas for further research	36
Areas for further research	44
References	45
Appendix 1: Models of Peer Observation of Teaching	48
Appendix 2 : Example - Documentation to support proposed new peer observation scheme designed with reference to the collaborative model (University case study)	49
Appendix 3: Example - Curriculum Area Review documentation: observer reports (College case study)	51
Appendix 4: Example - Job description and person	58

specification for Senior Teacher role (College case study)

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Introduction

Peer observation is a relatively new field, becoming a feature of university practice during the last decade. It is generally thought to involve peers observing each other's teaching to enhance teaching quality through reflective practice, thereby aiding professional development. (Shortland 2004, p 220)

Lecturers say they are experiencing an increasing number of "intimidatory" observations by their own colleagues as Ofsted retreats from class inspections. The use of line managers to observe lessons in further education has been called into question as the largest lecturers' union calls for a code of practice over how such work is carried out. (Lee 2007, p1)

Project aims and approach

The purpose of this project is to support teaching quality improvement in HE by examining the use of teaching observation and comparing some aspects of this with experiences in FE.

In particular, the project aims to increase understanding of the impact of quality assurance systems on teaching quality improvement processes and to inform good practice in teacher observation in HE. Given a significant investment of resources in teaching quality improvement, the project also aims to explore how institutions are evaluating the developmental impact of their observation policies and practices and to identify further questions for research.

Three universities participated in this study. Their members form an informal network of colleagues linked by a common interest in teacher development and a shared concern with improving the quality of teaching and learning in both HE and FE. The three participating further education colleges are franchise partners delivering one university's post compulsory initial teacher training programme.

Despite significant contrasts between the contexts of further and higher education and the use of teacher observation, some common issues emerge. Moreover, the contrasts throw useful light on the apparent tensions underlying the implementation and management of teaching observation policies.

In FE approaches are strongly driven by inspection and quality assurance (QA) regimes that prioritise grading and performance management. There are echoes of this approach in parts of the HE sector as well.

On the other hand, the developmental use of teaching observation which is routinely prioritised in respect of trainee teachers is also utilised, in widely varying ways by

organisations in both sectors to support the ongoing development of staff skills and teaching quality improvement (QI).

The project seeks to understand how these two policy objectives of QA and QI are articulated and implemented within HE, and how their impact is evaluated. An attempt is made to map the widely varying teaching observation policies and practices that are found within and between both sectors. The aim here is to expose this variability as well as to identify examples that could be useful to those seeking to develop their own teaching observation schemes.

The issues are explored through six case studies, three from each sector. The data was gathered using desk research and semi structured interviews with personnel directly involved in the use of teaching observation in each institution, together with stakeholders from the University and College Union (UCU) and the Higher Education Academy (HEA). A range of literature was reviewed and points arising from this are integrated within the text. Documents relating to each organisation's use of teaching observation were gathered either directly or from websites. Compared with universities, in this small sample at least, teaching observation policies and practices appear to be much more heavily documented in FE colleges.

This exploratory study is subject not only to limitations arising from the case study approach and the subjective nature of the methodology used (Yin 1994, Robson 2002); but also to limitations arising from its small scale and an imbalance in the amount and types of data gathered from each institution. The findings are therefore provisional. They do however; serve to raise a number of questions for further discussion and research.

The case studies highlight some key issues relating to the use of teaching observation in the context of both QA and QI schemes. They provide practical examples of how teaching observation is used in respect of new and experienced staff and contrasts in how it is experienced by practitioners in FE and in HE. The case studies also enable some key questions to be raised relating to how the process can be used more effectively to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Definitive conclusions cannot be drawn from this project. The aim rather, is to take discussion of these questions, issues and examples forward through a network of institutions, practitioners and stakeholders, developing a community of practice and a research agenda. In the short term, the aim is to provide a forum for practitioners in HE and FE to share experience, identify areas of good practice and put forward

proposals about how teaching observation can be evaluated and how the process can be used more effectively to improve the quality of teaching and learning. This last is an aim shared by practitioners across both sectors, regardless of the differences between them.

The structure of the report

The report is presented in three sections. The first, in which an analytical framework is set out, includes a framework for 'mapping' teaching observation schemes. Section 2 is in two parts. Part A contains three case studies from HEIs; part B contains three case studies from the FE sector. Within each part, issues relating to new and existing staff are considered separately. The case studies are summarised in section three where some key questions are identified along with areas for further research.

Background

Teaching observation in the context of government policies and the focus on teaching quality in higher education

The UK government's White Paper *The future of higher education* (DfES 2003) signalled the desire to engineer a change in the professional status and quality of teaching in UK universities - requiring HEIs to show how they are promoting and rewarding teaching excellence in order to maximise their funding opportunities.

The White Paper noted that:

"QAA subject reviews have been instrumental in defining standards for teaching and enabling poor provision to be identified and eliminated. The new model (institutional audit) firmly places the responsibilities on institutions themselves to have robust internal systems for assuring quality and standards". (DfES, 2003, para. 4.15)

In HE, the impact of the greatly increased activity and interest in the observation of teaching, particularly arising from QAA Subject Review, has had mixed consequences for its use as a tool for developing teaching. The 'light touch' methodology which succeeded QAA subject reviews in 2002 utilises a quality assurance framework containing a mixture of audit and review principles and practices.

Harvey (2002) commented on this combination of QA and QI processes in HE and the tensions between these two aims.

"External quality monitoring is primarily to ensure accountability and conformity. Improvement is an 'add-on' that is presumed to result from compliance with the method. However, improvement in student learning requires a real engagement with learning processes, with the fundamentals of learning. Playing around with documentation and peer reviews, be it via audits, assessments of teaching or benchmarking, is an inefficient way to encourage and support the development of student-oriented learning facilitation". (Harvey, 2002, p. 260)

At the institutional and departmental level, the case study universities indicate that the "light touch" requirements are minimal. Significantly, at subject level, under the heading of "Discipline Audit Trail", the revised process does not include teaching observation. (Laughton 2003)

In respect of the government's desire to improve the quality of teaching and learning, a number of initiatives have been put in place. These include the HEFCE Rewarding and Developing

Staff Initiative (Fund for Developing Teaching and Learning FDTL) and National Teaching Fellowship scheme; CETL bids (demonstrating links between Teaching and Learning and Human Resource strategies) and a developing role for the Higher Education Academy (HEA).

The HEA is now engaged in shepherding implementation of *The UK Professional Standards framework for teaching and supporting learning*, along with the Professional Recognition and Institutional Accreditation Schemes. The accreditation process is currently being developed in the light of the HEA's strategic review. (HEA 2006). It is linked to HEIs showing alignment with the professional standards.

The White paper stimulated the development of programmes in teaching, learning and academic practice in universities, making this mandatory for new members of academic staff. The number of HEIs with HEA accredited programmes has risen steadily. In 2006, over 220 accredited programmes were running in 120 UK HEIs; to date almost 130 HEIs are involved. (HEA 2006; HEA 2007nb website ref). The principles and process of accreditation has been accompanied by much internal debate within some institutions. This is reflected in the university case studies. Two of the three case study universities run programmes that have been accredited; the third is still considering this.

An evaluation of HEA accredited programmes in 32 institutions found that although "*there is substantial evidence that programmes can and do have a positive impact on teaching, and by inference student learning*". (Prosser et al 2006 p21); there was substantial variation between HEIs for example, regarding participant satisfaction and impact, along a number of key dimensions including whether universities were established pre or post 1992.

The Academy carried out an unpublished, informal survey of the use of teaching observation in programmes accredited between May 2004 (the inception of the Academy), and July 2005, and again, between September 2005 and August 2006. (HEA 2007). It was noted that the two surveys were not entirely consistent and that it was difficult to verify all of the data.

In both surveys the majority of HEIs [2005: 31 out of 33; 2006: 35 out of 39] reported some elements of observed teaching within their programmes; these elements ranged, in 2004-5 from 1 to 8 and in 2005-6 from 2 to 9 sessions. They also varied in nature, for example, whether participants were observing, being observed, or involved in reflective writing. A broad indication of the variety of arrangements can be seen in the table below.

No of HEIs		
2004-5	2005-6	Observed teaching
10	9	reported mixed teaching observations (observing, being observed - by peers, mentors, discipline specialists and programme staff)
3	No data	observed by school-based mentors and/or programme staff
1	3	peer review of teaching, undertaken in participant pairs
1	No data	participant observing participant sessions (reported that this aspect of the programme was under review).
No data	1	Supervised teaching placement

(source: HEA 2007)

It was particularly difficult to ascertain whether observations were assessed and whether or not participants had to pass a teaching observation for successful completion of the programme. Again, an indication of the range of assessment policies can be gathered from an interpretation of the descriptions offered, as presented below.

No of HEIs		
2004-5	2005-6	teaching observations described as:
6	8	assessed and/or have to be passed/'deemed acceptable' or 'satisfactory'
13	17	not assessed, informal, peer or developmental

(source: HEA 2007)

Teaching observation in the context of government policies and the focus on teaching quality in further education

A raft of reforms have been and are still, being implemented in the further education sector. (DfES 2002) Current policy drivers (among a number of others) include the implementation of the Leitch report (2006) and the moves towards greater self regulation. (OPSR 2003; DfES 2006a, 2006b; LSC 2004, 2006; Foster 2005,)

Quality assurance systems and quality improvement initiatives are being developed to encompass the wider lifelong learning sector more extensively. A recent example is the development of Centres for Excellence in Teacher Training (CETTs), comprising networks of providers spanning the lifelong learning sector which aim to disseminate good practice in teacher education and professional development more widely.

(Ofsted 2005; QIA 2006)

Indeed, a key aspect of these quality improvement initiatives concerns the development and 'professionalisation' of the lifelong learning workforce. One strand of this has involved thoroughgoing reform of the system of teacher education which includes a new system of inspection, new professional standards, registration and licence system for teachers, a new credit -based qualification framework and statutory CPD requirements. (DfES 2004; LLUK 2007a; LLUK 2006; LLUK 2007b; Ofsted 2005c; DIUS 2007b). Although initially focussed on FE, these changes will have a significant impact across other parts of the sector such as Adult Voluntary and Community Learning (AVCL) as well.

Many aspects of current government policies and these reforms relate to the use of teaching observation and a number of these are reflected in the college case studies (CCS), see section 2 part B below.

In respect of new and unqualified teachers, government policies have led to:

- Changes in the teacher education and qualification framework that mean a greater number of teaching observations are required while trainees are on programme. It is also increasingly expected that these should include observations and assessments by staff experienced in teaching the trainee's subject area or specialism as well as teacher educators.

In respect of existing teachers, government policies have led to:

- Changes in the external inspection system towards an increasing reliance on, and scrutiny of organisations' internal quality assurance and self assessment systems, pushing colleges to
 - a. observe teachers more frequently, and
 - b. use observations which support summative judgements for audit purposes rather than for formative purposes that support teacher development.

There is also some emerging evidence of teaching observation being used punitively in some FE colleges, as a response to pressures perceived as arising from the creation of a competitive 'market place', the application of Fosters' concept of contestability (Foster 2005) and the development of a 'demand-led' funding system. (DfES 2007) [See section 2 Part B below]

Section 1: Teaching quality and the use of teaching observation: a framework for analysis

"Peer review and observation is a process whereby a third party observes, and provides feedback on, teaching and learning support taking place in a university or college. Its purposes are to strengthen and enhance the quality of teaching and learning by providing feedback to the staff observed, to provide opportunities for staff to learn from each other and to assist with staff development". (NATFHE 2002, p1)

Improving the quality of teaching to promote increased learning effectiveness.

At least two main lines of questioning can be used to explore the links between the use of teaching observation and the improvement of teaching quality.

(i) The first concerns andrological questions about how those in teaching roles develop and change their practice; that is learn, relearn and apply relevant professional knowledge, skills

(ii) The second concerns institutional and political questions about the context and purposes surrounding the use of teaching observation in organisations.

There are a number of professional development models that address the first question; see for example, the DfES utilisation of Joyce and Showers (1980, 2002) in the design and implementation of the Teaching and Learning Change Programme (DfES 2002)

These spiral learning models emphasise the importance of teachers implementing new practices and utilising feedback from learners and observers. Indeed student assessments were found to be the most reliable and accessible indicators of teaching effectiveness, and "when used appropriately they were likely to lead to significant improvements in the quality of teaching." (Prebble et al 2004)

However, establishing a relationship between measures taken to improve teaching quality and an increase in learning effectiveness, for example through an impact on learning outcomes is much more difficult to do. An extensive survey of the literature carried out by Prebble et al (2004) for the tertiary sector found no research on the direct relationship between academic staff development programmes and student learning outcomes, although the reviewers had found clear

evidence that good teaching does have a positive impact on student learning outcomes.

Comparing different types of interventions to improve teaching, the reviewers found that intensive academic development programmes which emphasise conceptual change and student learning do appear to be more effective than those that are simply practical or skills-based. This is mainly because there is more chance of such programmes addressing the most powerful factor leading to improvement. This lies in changing teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning and thus, how they conceptualise and experience their own teaching.

The reviewers found that other interventions such as in situ training, consulting, peer assessment and mentoring could also be helpful; and collaborative approaches generally, were found to provide more effective settings for change. Clearly, the use of observation (as an observer as well as an observee), together with appropriate feedback is likely to be an important aspect of this process. Participants in HE programmes for new staff gave their highest ratings to the impact of these on helping them develop their skills as reflective practitioners. (Prosser 2006) And "*Peer observation is a time when you can reflect on ways of improving your teaching*". (Lomas and Nicholls 2005, p146)

The different types of intervention and their variable impact on teaching quality improvement are of course dependent on the political context and policies of institutions. Here, as indicated above, there are twin pressures to implement effective teaching quality assurance and quality improvement processes and teaching observation plays a key role in both.

Gosling (2005, pp 13-20) provides a useful typology of three models of Peer Review of Teaching, the *evaluation* or judgemental model, the *developmental* model and the *collaborative* model (see appendix 1). The models can be delineated by the dimensions of power (inequality), control and ownership and the degree to which these accrue to management and staff

A number of commentators have explored the relationship between the features characterising 'developmental' and 'judgemental' models in practice. Studies focus on the way these characteristics can work in opposition to each other producing tensions within observation schemes. And there is some evidence that observation for QA, evaluation and performance management purposes may undermine its use as a tool for professional learning and development (O'Leary 2006; Shortland 2004; Gosling 2002; 2005).

While Gosling (2005) concedes that it is difficult to avoid all the elements of the judgemental model within the developmental and collaborative models, he identifies three particular shortcomings that may undermine the latter's effectiveness:

- Evidence that when observation of teaching has a judgmental function it results in staff alienation, resistance and suspicion, and defensive strategies which inhibit open dialogue that can support teaching improvement.
- Judgements about teaching quality using a one-off observation are unreliable
- Questions about who has the right to make a judgement and on what basis (ie criteria/view of what constitutes 'effective teaching') are posed in an acute form.
- The negative experience of QAA Subject Review (for example relating to increasing bureaucratic and managerial surveillance) is difficult to overcome.

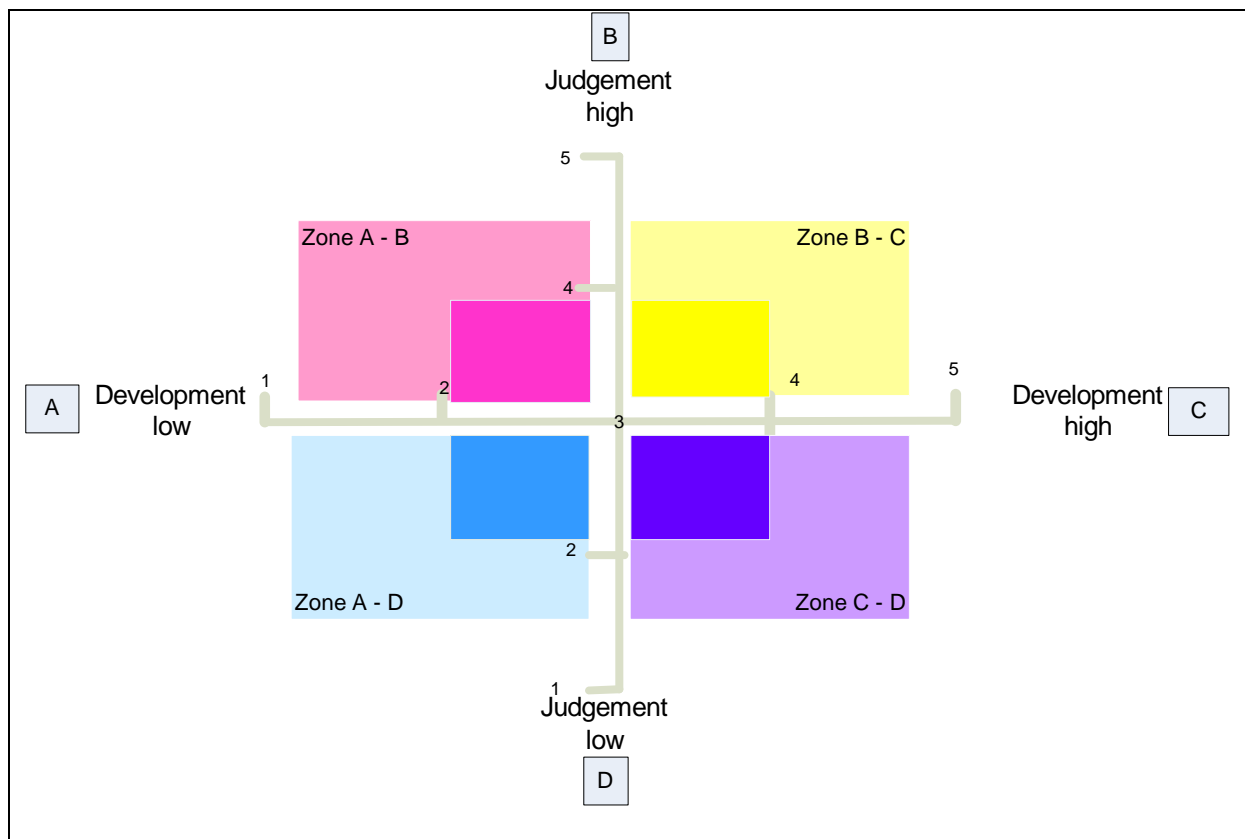
Framework for mapping teaching observation schemes.

In practice of course, most observation schemes are designed to include some aspect of at least two of the models outlined by Gosling (2004), the 'developmental' model and the 'judgemental' ('evaluation') model.

The range of features associated with the different models will vary within each scheme, as will the way these features are combined. The overall weighting or balance of features characterising each scheme can vary, making them more or less judgemental as averse to developmental. The case studies provide some illustrations of this.

Figure 1

Outline of mapping matrix with 'zones' to locate teaching observation schemes according to their balance of 'judgemental' and 'developmental' features. (based on Gosling 2002)



Teaching observation schemes can be roughly located within zones A -B, B-C, C-D, and D -A according to how far their various features match the characteristics of a 'judgemental' or 'developmental' model and the balance of these overall. The model is presented here to

- illustrate the relationship and between different features embodied in one scheme
- show how the balance of features can be assessed and
- show how different schemes can be compared.¹

However, it is clear that even if particular features or whole schemes are 'mapped' in this way, their positions are by no means fixed. The case studies, as well as examples in the literature show how, in response to a wide range of contextual pressures the way the schemes are originally formulated and are then in practice experienced, changes constantly over time.

Shortland's (2004), investigation of how issues of 'politics, power and pragmatics' revealed in a new university's 'typical

¹

Here the framework is illustrated and not applied. The shading indicates the possibility of differentiation within each of the zones. It would be possible to construct a 'scorecard' with criteria to map schemes into the matrix with more 'precision'; but also perhaps, questionable value and validity.

observation scheme' developed before and after the implementation of QAA subject reviews, provides an interesting example of such a shift. She shows how post QAA - while staff continued to comply with management requirements (eg form filling), they also took ownership and re fashioned the process in order to pursue their own personal and professional developmental objectives.

On the other hand, as the NATFHE (now UCU) foreword to its '*Guidelines to Higher Education branches: peer review and peer observation of teaching*' explained (or perhaps warned),

"Although some of the potential purposes for the observation of teaching are the same as those in HE, much of the thrust of the FE guidelines is towards the process of 'self-assessment' - the means whereby colleges assess themselves. They do not tackle the question of lecturer self-assessment, as one might describe the portfolio process, in which the observation process, along with others, is 'owned' by the lecturer being observed".

(NATFHE 2002, p1)

In this context, sectoral changes appear to have led to a shift in the other direction, with an increased use of internal inspections in some colleges that are heavily judgemental as averse to developmental in terms of their aims and procedures. It seems that some principals have responded to increasing competition arising from Foster's 'contestability' proposals (Foster 2005) and the introduction of 'light touch' inspections which place greater reliance on organisations' own quality assurance and self assessment procedures, by trying to 'drive up standards' through their internal audit systems². (Lee 2006, p1)

The University and College Union's (UCU) call for a code of practice in this area is one indication and also consequence of a stronger managerial approach to the use of classroom observation. The UCU now cites more instances where "staff say observations are intimidatory and not supportive". Branches report the use of "unlimited and repeated drop-in observations by poorly trained managers" and that at some colleges, lecturers are being threatened with disciplinary action or refused automatic pay progression if they continue to be rated satisfactory or worse. (Lee 2006, p1)

In both further and higher education, union acceptance of peer/teaching observation has depended on its use for staff development (including development within an agreed capability

² This is not illustrated in the FE college case studies included in this project.

procedure). The union makes a clear distinction between its support for voluntary observation aimed at development (albeit with reservations and conditions attached); and opposition to observation imposed from above that is managerially owned.

In terms of the framework proposed above, it would thus appear that movement along the vertical axis from D to B is associated with an increasing strength of managerial control. Whereas, movement along the horizontal axis from A to C is associated with leadership strength and the development of an appropriate culture. (Prosser et al 2006)

Section 2

Part A The use of teaching observation in HE: three university case studies

All 3 case study universities maintain a central facility to support staff/professional development. Staff in these centres are responsible for delivering and/or supporting programmes for new and existing staff both centrally and at departmental level. In the case studies that follow, these are referred to in generic terms such as: 'professional development centres', with 'centre staff' or 'academic advisers', rather than by their institutionally specific names and titles. However, the titles of each institution's programmes have been retained.

Each of the staff development centres offers a programme which runs throughout the year constructed in the light of consultation with departments. A rich variety of sessions are on offer, including observation training and training for mentoring. The observation training programmes on offer in the case study universities are all optional. Such training is of course, central to the effective use of teaching observation for both QA and QI purposes..

The use of observation in HE: New Staff

All 3 cases study universities run a development programme for new staff. There are variations in

- Whether programmes are accredited
- Mandatory elements
- The use and status of teaching observations and feedback in programmes

University case study (UCS) 1

Programme: **Postgraduate Certificate in Academic and Professional Practice (PCAPP) (60 credits, level 7)**

A Postgraduate Masters level award that is mandatory for all probationary staff, but also attracts a large number of other applicants.

Highly experienced academic staff may be able to apply for exemption or make a claim for the accreditation of prior learning. Over sixty staff enrol each year. PCAPP aims to be faculty-specific and has a substantial practical component, with extensive observation and feedback by course team adviser, departmentally-based mentor and peers. 5

Observations: [reciprocal observations count as 2].

- 1 by and 1 of departmental mentor
- 1 by and 1 of a peer (outside the department)

- 1 by a development centre advisor

The process involves a pre meeting and post observation discussion, which is also included in the report summary which is emailed to observees for their comments.

Mentors' observation reports are copied to the development centre advisor who has a "*QA and developmental role*". If any recurring problems are picked up in the observation feedback, the PCAPP programme leader will discuss this with the department concerned. Candidates do not fail, if there are concerns, they may have further observations.

This is the first year of a revised programme which is in the process of being HEA accredited. The previous programme required 4 observations, 2 by the centre advisor and 2 by the departmental mentor. One aim of the revisions was to make the programme more developmental and reduce the assessment aspect.

The development centre offers training in observing teaching, however this is an option within the overall CPD programme that is offered.

Post Graduate Award in Learning and Teaching in higher Education,

The University requires all post graduates who undertake more than 20 contact hours teaching per year to take part in a training course. This award is for postgraduates who need formal preparation for teaching but for whom the Certificate would be too substantial a commitment. It can be taken in two parts, only part 2 is accredited (30 credits, level 7) and it can count towards the PCAPP award.

Candidates observe a colleague or departmental mentor teaching Have 1 observation by their mentor.

Include reflective summaries in a portfolio

The above programmes are evaluated at programme level. No specific feedback is gathered relating to the observation elements.

University case study (UCS) 2

Programme: Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice in Higher Education (PGCAPHE)

All new teaching staff are required to do the post Graduate Certificate in Academic Practice in HE which is internally delivered by development centre staff. The programme is HEA accredited.

Candidates have 2 observations, one is for the PGCAPHE and the other is for their department. This is carried out by the probationer's mentor who is usually a senior departmental staff member. At present the 2 observations do not come together - ie there are no links between the departmental mentor and the professional development centre.

"In some areas the departmental mentoring process is now 'spreading downwards' (being delegated). This means that people quite raw will be doing probationary observations for new colleagues. In other areas, only senior staff will do it".

Follow up on observations of probationary teachers

"The information goes to the HOD, but it is not clear what happens next. Occasionally staff development is asked to help".

The programme is evaluated however, no specific feedback is gathered on the observation elements.

University case study (UCS) 3

The university does not require teaching staff with probationary appointments to take part in an HEA accredited academic development programme: proposals to introduce such a programme have twice been rejected during University-wide consultations, in 1999 and 2006.

Programme in HE Practice (PHEP)

Academic probation was introduced in February 2005. The PHEP, based in academic staff development is the main professional development programme for probationer university and (from 2006) also college teaching staff.

It is compulsory for new academic staff to participate in 2 programme elements:

- i) 2.5 days seminar which includes a workshop on peer observation of teaching, *"- it's very popular!"*
- ii) 1-2 hour interview with the academic adviser to talk about their role in the university and discuss good practice, for example in small group teaching or supervisions.

After compulsory elements, all participation in the PHEP is voluntary. However, *"60-65% come back at least once"*.

There are no requirements regarding the observation of new staff at the university and departmental practices vary. However, for those new to teaching as well, it was considered by centre staff most likely to take place at this point - if not at any other. In such a case, unless an observation by an

academic advisor was specifically requested, it is likely it would be by a departmental mentor with the feedback informal and unrecorded.

At present, although observing teaching is a popular subject in the PHEP workshops, there is no specific observer training provided, although the centre is encouraging people to pursue this.

For example, the centre plans to approach faculties with high numbers of new teachers in order to offer them some locally delivered and customised observation training. Undergraduate supervision which is not provided in universities elsewhere is new to all staff who are new to Cambridge. And peer observation of supervisions will include discussion of feedback to students.

The Graduate Development Programme (GDP)

Graduate students have the option to become involved in undergraduate supervision. The GDP is strong on lecturing skills and it includes observation and feedback. Academic advisers hope that as people come through this route and recognise the value of the process, greater use of observation in departments might be stimulated.

The Centre delivers local workshops and departments vary in their engagement with the programme. For example, the Department of English wants to strengthen their graduates' CVs by giving them lecturing opportunities and in support of this policy, they have implemented an interesting observation/feedback and buddying system.

Use of observation in HE: experienced teachers

While all University case studies have clear policy statements relating to teaching quality, there are wide variations in departmental practices both within and between Universities with regard to QA and CPD relating to teaching quality generally and the use of peer observation in particular.

University case study (UCS) 1

The university has learning and teaching strategy managed by a *Teaching Quality Team*. This is chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor who is an advocate of the professional development centre.

The university has no policy regarding peer teaching observation. *"This is unusual. Most, even within the Russell Group, will have some level of requirement"*.

The departments are supposed to have their own written policies regarding teaching quality. Some also have their own peer review schemes; but these were really only used for QAA and most have now fallen into disuse. The practice of peer observation of teaching is very variable. *"It's on paper, but it's not really done. The departments have a lot of autonomy, some don't buy in"*.

The university is wary of making it a requirement. *"Every now and then it is discussed - in passing. It's never pushed as a useful thing to do"*.

Quality assurance is based on trusting departments - there are minimal requirements. For example, they need to produce an annual report from the Staff Student Liaison Committee (SSLC) and an annual departmental return. *"The spirit of trust infuses all QA and quality improvement. Some departments take it very seriously - there are pockets of excellent practice"*.

Peer observation is not part of performance management. It might be used informally, eg in response to a student complaint although there is no policy to do this. It is also suggested in the guidance for Post Graduate Scholarships - *"where there is a need to ensure new entrants can teach before they take on work with students"*.

University case study (UCS) 2

The University has formal policies on teaching observation and these, dated 2002, reflect mechanisms for QAA subject review which no longer takes place. Since then the process has largely fallen into abeyance, although there are examples of departments that have carried on doing it. (see below).

"The university is on a 'cusp'. The institution has moved on, but not formally. It is not as it was, or still appears on the face of it".

The Centre is having discussions with Pro Vice Chancellor Learning and Teaching about separating out the inspectorial side from the developmental side for existing staff although they still see the point of using the former in respect of beginning teachers.

The Centre is working to develop the peer observation of teaching process along the lines proposed by David Gosling - ie they are trying to make this a collaborative process.

Centre staff are thus redesigning peer observation of teaching as a 'Peer Dialogue on Teaching' process which recognises the benefits to both the observer and the observee. (See

appendix..) A centre staff member has developed this approach following his work on observers' reports at a previous university which promoted peer observation. He found evidence to demonstrate the benefits of the process to both parties. Feedback forms have now been redesigned to reflect the approach and record the process.

In addition to this, the centre provides two types of observation training: one for practical aspects and one for designing peer observation schemes; although it appears that not many staff take these up (about 2-6 per semester). However, on occasion, individual departments may request some staff development in these areas

Indeed, some departments in the university are now using the new forms: *"It is happening unofficially"*. The process of formalising the approach through the Learning and Teaching Committee has not yet started. *"There is no real lead yet. We want to do it this year. We want to make it 'permissive' ie we need 'consenting adults'. Staff in pre 1992 universities are very sensitive to 'being told'."* The union has not been involved at this stage although they will be when the policy is revised.

Quality assurance and appraisal: there are set procedures for the university *but typical of a pre'92 university, these are 'filtered' in terms of departmental practices.*

Observations are not written into the appraisal procedures at all. Any observations carried out would not be likely to be picked up in appraisal. Observations that have been undertaken may not even be cited in CDP records. All CDP is voluntary.

University case study (UCS) 3

The Vice Chancellor stresses, *"Teaching is as important as research at the university"*.

At an institutional level, there is a *Learning and Teaching Support Group*, but very little at the university is centrally coordinated. For example, the university does not have a teaching quality committee and student feedback on teaching is not looked at by the registry.

There are no central processes or expectations regarding teaching observation. Observation is not mentioned in the documentation relating to the process of *Staff Review and Development*. Teaching performance is looked at when promotion arises. However staff are promoted on the basis of their

research, so teaching would be *"deemed satisfactory, unless they had done something terrible!"*

University procedures and practice regarding peer observation are *"- random, minimalist and departmentally specific"*. If any institution-wide proposals are, or were to be, made regarding this there would have to be clear justification and it would be important to demonstrate what difference it makes.

"You show me that by spending time on it, it will make any difference"

The interviewee's own personal experience is that she has benefited from feedback, but, *"they want proof that it will make a difference, and you can't get this. On the other hand, students' views are not strongly sought on this either!"* If a department introduced rigorous peer observation and then asked if the student experience had been improved, for example, if they gave feedback on a questionnaire: *"what would they compare it to? What was it like before?"*

Faculties and departments are allowed to meet the university's QA policy in their own way. [Therefore, one aspect of the QA process is to ask how they do this]. A narrative statement updates an overall report for each department each year. Every 6 years a department is reviewed and a new statement is drawn up.

In 6 yearly reviews, *"they look at student feedback and talk to students. In between, it is left to departments. They use appraisal - some may use student questionnaires for this, but any observations that had been undertaken would not be picked up"*.

Staff development

The professional development centre provides a range of opportunities for staff to develop their knowledge and skills. [After the compulsory elements of the PHEP for new staff, all participation is voluntary]. The PHEP also includes small group seminars on teaching practice, (for example, lecturing to students from diverse backgrounds). There are also courses on mentoring and appraisal. Annual education workshops (eg with technology department) and lunchtime meetings to engage staff are also held.

Summary

It is clear that at faculty or departmental level, teaching observation practices in respect of new and existing staff vary very widely in each of the case study universities. Further research is therefore needed to explore, these differences and to identify effective practice that can be shared.

All of the case study universities run a central programme which is mandatory for new staff. These programmes vary in terms of:

- Their accredited status: two of the programmes are HEA accredited.
- Their nature and requirements, (including assessment). For example, involvement ranges from seminar attendance of 2.5 days plus an interview with an academic/development advisor, to structured programmes that include workshops and taught elements
- Teaching observation requirements. This ranges from none to five, the latter including 'reciprocal' observations where participants observe others including peers, teaching.
- The nature of the links between participants' departmental and programme teaching observations also varies. At an 'official' level this ranges from no links in two case studies, to department/mentor reports being shared with the academic/development advisor who also has a 'quality assurance' role.

In respect of existing staff, in all three cases, professional development centres provide programmes that are optional and where required, these can be designed and delivered to meet local needs.

All of the case study universities have policies concerned with teaching quality. However, only one has a teaching observation policy - the legacy of QAA Subject Review. Since the latter ended, it would appear that departmental use of teaching observation in all three institutions has largely fallen into disuse. There are however, examples of departments where the practice has been continued and/or developed in order to support teaching quality improvement. In one of the case study universities, this is being supported through a redesigned process of collaborative peer dialogue, promoted by the professional development centre.

Section 2

Part B The use of observation in FE: Three FE case studies

In the further education sector, the observation of teaching is a central requirement not only in respect of the ITT qualifications, but also for managerial functions such as the probationary procedures for new staff, the internal and external quality assurance systems and college staff/professional development processes. In all cases, observer training is crucial to ensure that as far as possible

- a. judgements (usually in the form of grades) are valid and reliable and
- b. the development potential of the process is maximised

The three case study colleges maintain a central facility to support staff/professional development which includes the training of observers and increasingly, mentors. Most colleges now try to ensure that observers receive at least one day's training. And where there is a wish to maximise the developmental potential of the process, there may be more investment in the process selection and training of observers.

Unlike the UCS examples, staff with central responsibilities, such as 'delivering' professional development, generally also have other departmental teaching roles and/or responsibilities. Professional development teams usually include: 'advanced practitioners', and /or expert teachers drawn from subject areas, teacher educators who run ITT programmes and a range of curriculum managers. These staff are likely to have a key role in the college teaching observation process which is overwhelmingly informed by Quality assurance requirements. They therefore try to fulfil both teaching quality assessment and improvement roles in their work with college staff.

In the case studies that follow, generic terms such as staff or professional development are used, rather than institutionally specific names and titles.

The use of observation in FE: New and unqualified staff

All 3 cases study colleges run in- service ITT programmes for new and unqualified staff. They are all active members of the University of Warwick PCET partnership, delivering the university accredited ITT programmes. The courses are taught and assessed by college staff, subject to the university's quality assurance procedures. Up to September 2007, these

included the University of Warwick accredited Certificate in Post-Compulsory Education and Training which was endorsed by the Standards Verification Unit (SVUK) as meeting the, then required FENTO professional standards, and judged to be good provision by Ofsted in 2007; (ie awarded grade 2 in inspection).

From September 2007, the partnership will deliver new programmes which are based on the *New overarching professional standards for teachers tutors and trainers in the lifelong learning sector* (DfES 2006) and designed to meet the requirements of a new framework of teaching qualifications. These qualifications are in turn, part of a wider suite of reforms underpinning the government's sector-wide ITT and workforce reform agenda which aims to improve the quality of teaching and training and 'professionalise' the lifelong learning workforce.

Reflecting a perceived need to increase both the assessment and the development of trainees the observation requirements for the new qualifications have been increased (DfES 2004). For example, a minimum of 8 observations totalling 8 hours observed teaching is required for the Diploma leading to Qualified Teacher, Learning and Skills status (QTLS). Moreover, following weaknesses identified in the support available to help trainees develop skills in teaching in their subject or specialist areas employers are increasingly expected to provide trainees with access to appropriately experienced mentors. (Ofsted 2004, Ofsted annual NAB report 2006, DfES 2004). and latest DfES letter), It is also likely that where it is physically possible, people in these specialist mentoring roles will also carry out contributory formative and/or summative teaching observations.

As members of the PCET partnership, the teacher educators are actively involved in programme design and management as well as its delivery. A prevailing feature of the partnership is their developmental approach. In respect of teaching observation, the assessment of candidates is framed as supportively as possible, allowing for the progressive development of teaching knowledge and skills at each stage and emphasising the significance of effective dialogue, feedback and ongoing support. Observations are assessed on a pass/fail (referral) basis rather than graded. Where trainees fail to demonstrate sufficient levels of teaching competence, further support and assessment opportunities are provided.

In the new programme trainees will also observe other teachers in a range of settings to broaden their own understanding and experience of teaching and learning in the sector; thereby

also reaping the developmental benefits of observation that are acknowledged to accrue to observers. (Gosling 2002, 2005)

The use of observation in FE: Existing and qualified staff

Principal	<i>"Do you think the expectation is that we grade the process"?</i>
Vice principal Curriculum and Quality	<i>"Yes"</i>
Professional Development Co ordinator	<i>"No"</i>
Professional Mentor	<i>"More acceptable as a process if we don't. Developmental not judgemental"</i>

Curriculum Area Review meeting notes (College Case Study)

The case study colleges have centralised teaching observation policies and procedures which cover all full time and part time staff. In some form or another, these have been in place for some time. While they are all designed to address the QA requirements of Ofsted and the LSC (at least one received an Ofsted commendation), there are differences between colleges in the way this is organised. The most significant aspects of these variations arise from attempts to integrate within the schemes, the two aims of quality assurance and quality improvement.

At the heart of the debate about how to manage a process which maximises the possibilities of achieving both aims effectively, lies the question of grading. The Common Inspection Framework (CIF) is used for external inspections and internal self assessment, as the basis for judging the organisation's provision. This is graded at four levels, (1= outstanding, 2= good, 3= satisfactory, 4= inadequate). Individual departments/programme areas incorporate the outcomes of teaching observation into their overall assessment of the *effectiveness of teaching, training and learning* (Key question 2). (Ofsted 2005a).

More often than not, this means that grading applicable to an organisation is applied to individual teachers. There is therefore, an issue about how far the overall quality of provision might be assessed through a process largely looking at the performance of individuals. Better schemes enable the wider context to be viewed at the same time, but there is also scope for abuse in such a system.

"NATFHE cannot deny the place of classroom observation in a number of institutional procedures. The union's concern is to ensure that this is a fair, valid and reliable process that does not focus solely on the

lecturer's competence, but takes into account the totality of the learning experience, the environment and the context in which it takes place. The focus should be on resources available generic skills and competencies, and not on individual performance". (NATFHE [now UCU] 2007)

An additional concern is that by its nature, a grading process will undermine the aim of teacher development. The case studies that follow, illustrate a variety of ways three colleges have found to address the above issues in practice.

College case study (CCS) 1

Aims, personnel and organisation

The Teaching Quality Support Team was established to develop and implement the Teaching Quality Support Programme. It is co-ordinated by the Director of Professional and Quality Development, includes the Vice Principal, Curriculum and Quality and reports to the Quality Assurance Committee. Members of the team are Advanced Practitioners in teaching and learning, tutoring and key skills in each of the college departments.

The system of teaching and learning observation in the college has the following aims. To

- improve the quality of students' learning
- encourage good practice
- support appropriate staff development
- assist staff in the achievement of identified quality criteria e.g. College Charter, the Common Inspection Framework
- provide information to enable the college to complete quality self-assessment and review
- encourage good practice, greater flexibility and diversity of teaching and learning strategies
- offer constructive feedback

The Teaching Quality Support Team meets regularly to plan, review and evaluate the programme. Outcomes inform the Quality Assurance and Training and Staff Development processes. Outcomes of individual observations become an integral part of staff appraisal interviews.

All permanent teaching staff and a representative sample of sessional lecturers and franchise deliverers participate in the Teaching Quality Support programme. It is intended that all permanent staff are observed at least once each year and

that representative courses in all programme areas and levels of study are covered.

The Teaching Quality Support Co-ordinator nominates an observer for each member of staff, although individuals remain able to request an alternative. Procedures covering the whole process are set out in a set of guidelines which include observation criteria, mechanisms for addressing unsatisfactory performance and disputes.

Reporting and follow-up

Copies of the report go to the lecturer (kept in Teaching and Staff Development Personal file), the HOD, Programme Manager and the Teaching Quality Support Coordinator who compiles an aggregated report for the QA Committee and other forums. Line managers pick up staff development and other issues arising from the reports, such as the quality of the learning environment, accommodation or resources.

College case study (CCS) 2

Aims, personnel and organisation

Since April 2002, all full-time and substantive part-time teachers' lessons have been observed and graded annually by a central team of 'advanced practitioners' known as Senior Teachers, who also have a developmental role. The process was commended during a recent college Ofsted inspection, and is considered to have been an important factor in their achievement of five grade 1's (outstanding).

Senior Teachers are drawn from across the College. Their teaching observation role is as part of a centralised cross-college team led by the Assistant Principal (Quality & Services to Students). They are not appointed on a curriculum or departmental basis, although each has a 'teaching and learning' departmental role, working closely with their HoD and Programme area manager.

There are currently 12 Senior Teachers in post. Appointments are made following a process of internal advertisement and interview; they have a 0.6 teaching commitment and are on the Management Pay Spine. (Job Description and Person Specification, **appendix 3**). Upon appointment, Senior Teachers undertake an induction and training programme over a period of several weeks to ensure that they can make accurate judgements and give meaningful feedback with confidence and consistency.

College staff are observed during one of seven departmental 'Observation Weeks' (formally known as Quality Audit Weeks)

which mirror the new Ofsted/ALI inspection arrangements. The Head of Department receives three weeks' notice during which they agree with their Senior Teacher(s) who is to be observed (largely the extent of part-time staff observations), and provide a full set of staff timetables. The Senior Teachers determine who observes whom and when. (They also have to maintain their own teaching commitments).

For 2005-6, the target number of lesson observations was 300 (an increase of over 50% on 2004-05), or an average of 45 per department; consequently, each Senior Teacher conducts about four observations per Observation Week

Reporting and follow-up

Although teachers know the week of their observation, they do not know in advance which lesson will be observed or who the observer will be.

All observers follow an agreed 'protocol' for lesson observations and use an agreed report form. A time and place for feedback is arranged during the following week. No feedback is given immediately following the observed lesson and the report remains as a draft until moderation.

Each Monday morning following an Observation Week, Senior Teachers meet to moderate the judgements and proposed grades for the lessons they have observed.

Following moderation, teachers are given verbal feedback, a copy of their observation report and a 'feedback questionnaire' as an opportunity to comment on their observation experience

On the Monday morning following 'feedback week', the Senior Teacher team meets with the Assistant Principal to produce a departmental Observation Week summary of 'key strengths', 'areas for improvement' and examples of 'good practice'

Along with the departmental summary, the Head of Department receives a copy of all individual observation reports in order to address any issues/weaknesses identified, either as a matter of urgency (in the case of lessons graded 'inadequate') or through the staff appraisal process.

The headings on the report forms cover seven key areas or aspects of teaching, and these are used to highlight areas for follow up by the lecturer, who is offered further support and training. These headline teaching aspects are also picked up by the senior teachers who put on training at department training days and during the summer professional development weeks. There are plans to use a more focussed approach in future, where each year, themes such as embedding Skills for

Life or ILT are worked through in the linked processes of observation and staff development.

College case study (CCS) 3

Aims, personnel and organisation

In 2006 the college completely redesigned the process of teaching observation and the system of internal curriculum audit. The changes anticipated the move to self-regulation and a need for the college to self assess its policies, procedures and overall planned development on a more regular and systematic basis. Staff had previously been observed by Professional Mentors and the staff observation team every 3 years. The changes meant that observations were now arranged for, rather than by, the staff concerned and were carried out without pre meetings; they focussed on one curriculum area at a time and took place within the space of a week.

The new Curriculum Area Review process was designed to address two priorities, one was to improve the QA system, and the other was to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the college. In his introduction to the staff the Vice Principal, Curriculum and Quality explained that, *"It will be entirely supportive and it will be used as a vehicle for sharing best practice and quality improvement. It will also inform the self assessment process and business planning. However, another primary goal is that of improving the student learning experience across college"*.

Throughout the design and development of the new review procedures ran a strong debate between the two main parties involved, the college managers and the professional mentors, who were also teacher educators. Discussions centred on how to manage a review process that provided clear summative judgements on the quality of teaching and learning, and an observation process that was formative and capable of supporting the ongoing development of staff and improvements in teaching and learning. At the heart of this was the question of whether grades should be applied to teaching and by seemingly unavoidable implication, the teachers. If this was necessary for QA monitoring and benchmarking, what impact might it have on the process of professional development and QI?

Against the background of a generally supportive college culture, the debate was particularly well informed by the teacher educators' awareness of the tensions surrounding the pursuit of the two aims plus their evidence and actual experience of the impact of grading on the process of professional learning.

The decision was made that observers should not be expected to award a grade to the individual teachers they observed. Guidelines set out the expectation that they should rather, aim to develop the skills of the teacher through a process of:

- Entering into a dialogue with the teacher about the quality of the teaching and learning taking place in the observed session
- Rewarding the teacher by noting all the good practice seen
- Encouraging the teacher to self-evaluate and reflect on decisions they have made about their teaching and their students
- Drawing up an action plan with the teacher to develop the teacher's skills in those areas noted as weak.

In line with the developmental aims of the process and in particular the focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning, the headings for the observation report are of particular significance. (See example of report form in appendix 2.) These headings with their associated criteria, focus attention onto areas identified by Ofsted as important for effective teaching and learning. In practice they are also areas of teaching frequently found to be weak or underdeveloped. (refs..)

The observation team, who have all received training, includes senior and curriculum area managers, professional mentors and specialist observers with particular areas of expertise such as Skills for Life, disability or learning difficulties.

Reporting and follow up

In the design of this curriculum area review the outcomes of the observation process from the teacher's point of view should thus be: a useful dialogue focussed on their teaching and an action plan focussed on their further development. The observer's report goes to the teacher and their curriculum area manager where it forms part of the Professional Development Review at the end of the year. Senior managers and professional mentors also have access to these.

The college observation process acknowledges that other factors apart from the teacher's own competence impacts on the effectiveness of teaching and learning and the quality of the learners' experience. Observers are expected to note any relevant and significant features of the teaching and learning context that emerge from their observations and discussions with the staff and their learners. (see appendix 2). They therefore contribute to the wider explorations involved in the

review, for example, into the effectiveness of timetables, ILP's, individual and group tutorials; as well as the:

- progress and delivery of key /basic skills
- take up of Additional Learning Support (ALS)
- effectiveness of course management files
- retention and achievement data and progress on development plans.

On completion of these wider aspects of the review process it is also expected that the observer should be able to more realistically assess and grade the quality of the teaching and learning in the session. This grade contributes to a profile of grades for the area and it is not given to the individual teacher observed. *"Therefore, observers will be making two judgements: one about the strengths and areas for improvement of the teacher observed, which will be shared with that teacher; the other judgement relates to the quality of the teaching and learning (experience which) should be shared with the lead reviewer"*.

The lead reviewer incorporates an outline of the strengths, areas for improvement and the grade profile into the final curriculum area report which is then moderated by the observation team before being presented to the curriculum area manager. It then feeds into their self assessment report and the development plan.

Part B Addendum: Quality assurance and quality improvement - the position of in-service trainees

The position of unqualified staff who are members of programme teams and at the same time also participating in training programmes, provides an interesting illustration of the kinds of issues that can arise when trying to pursue within one teaching observation scheme, the multiple aims of quality improvement and quality assurance (which may also include performance management).

Many FE college practitioners involved in teacher education and staff development are well aware of the contradictions that attend the pursuit of these two aims through the use of one common set of teaching observation arrangements; and many also agree that the degree to which observations are judgemental and characterised by unequal power relationships, diminishes or destroys their developmental potential (Ewens and Orr 2002; O'Leary (2006)). Indeed, learning to manage the inherent tensions is a feature of much observer training in FE colleges.

With staff who are in training, organisations are directly confronted with managing the tensions and the case study colleges illustrate a variety of different approaches to this.

CCS 1

As current members of staff, trainees are also included in the college internal audit system. They are thus treated in the same way as everyone else. They are given grades that are recorded and contribute to the overall programme area profile.

In contrast to their experience on the teacher training programme where their reports remain confidential, the trainees' 'audit' reports (and grades) are much more widely circulated; for example to: the trainee/lecturer (and then filed in their Teaching and Staff Development Personal records), the Head of Department (HOD), the Programme Manager and the Teaching Quality Support Coordinator.

It is quite common for these reports to be used to fulfil part of the training programme's observed teaching practice requirements as well. However, the purpose of the observation, the assessment criteria and quality of feedback associated with the audit process are not the same. Therefore, encouragement of this practice (it saves on staff time and reduces the number of observations), raises questions for the qualification's management team who have responsibility for moderating standards and maintaining the quality of the initial teacher training programme.

Above all, the teacher educators are aware of a perceived "lack of fairness" and "the demotivating effect" of grading staff who are taking part in an initial teacher training programme, at the same time as being subject to this quality assurance and performance management process. The tutors have requested that the policy be reviewed for the new academic year.

CCS 2

As in the college above, in-service staff who are on teacher training programmes are regularly observed and graded as part of the college internal observation system, in addition to the observations that are carried out under a completely different procedure as part of the ITT programme.

"We believe that the focus of the (college) observation is very specific and I do not encourage these observations to be used as Cert Ed observations, though all teachers are part of the process whether they are new teachers or not.

We have found that many of the Cert Ed students have achieved high grades. These have provided a confidence boost, whilst also confirming our practice as a Teacher Training team.

New teachers also have probationary observations and so are observed quite a lot really. However this is not necessarily a bad thing". (Interview with college staff)

CCS3

The college has entirely revised its system of curriculum audit so that individual teachers are no longer given a grade (see case study CCS3 above). However even prior to this, there had long been a policy at this college of 'protecting' staff on training programmes from grading.

Under the earlier system, trainees would receive feedback when observed outside their teacher training programmes but no grade was recorded or given. The observation would nevertheless, count towards fulfilling the department's quality assurance requirements.

Thus in respect of staff-in-training, the college had already established the principle of trying to maintain a separation between observation processes having a primarily developmental function, and others. Staff developers recognised that in order to enable practitioners to take risks, reappraise and/or change their practice, conditions needed to be as supportive and conducive to reflection as possible. Indeed, even within

the context of a training programme, teaching observations are assessed.

Perhaps it is because managers too are more directly aware of their investment in staff when they are on training programmes (in such forms for example, as the payment of fees, remission of teaching and provision of cover), that the issues relating to QA processes become highlighted. And along with this, a recognition that different teaching observation procedures may need be applied in order to maximise the potential for teaching quality improvement.

The aim and perceived benefits of not giving **any** teachers grades in CCS 3, and to carefully modify the reporting system (see the revised process of curriculum audit outlined in CCS3 above), has been to harness and to also enhance the developmental potential of what is after all, a costly and resource intensive quality assurance process.

Section 3

Conclusions

A wide range of institutional policies and practices in the use of teaching observation are illustrated in the six case studies drawn from the further and higher education sectors that have been included in this project. The case studies enable some of the key issues attending the use of teaching observation for evaluative and/or developmental purposes to be highlighted (Gosling 2002, 2005). In addition, the case studies enable characteristic features of the approaches to teaching observation found in each sector to be compared. The overall patterns that emerge from this can be illustrated through the use of the analytical framework outlined earlier. (See section 1).

Comparing and mapping approaches to teaching observation in HE and FE.

The university case studies indicate little use of teaching observation overall compared with FE, although there appear to be wide variations in approaches, and practices between universities and between different university departments. (Some aspects of this variation, such as that possibly pertaining between pre and post 1992 universities have not been examined here, as the participating universities are drawn from the former category).

Again, in comparison with the FE sector it would appear from the three case study universities, that quality assurance or quality improvement procedures are managed at faculty or department level with little in the way of centralised management. In marked contrast to the case study colleges, there appears to be very little documentation concerned with teaching observation. Only one case study university (UCS2) appeared to have an institution-wide teaching observation policy in place and this, dating from 2002, was considered to be out of date.

In the university case study examples there are differences in the purpose, use and approach to teaching observation depending on both the status of the staff and the culture and policies of faculties or departments.

For existing or experienced university staff, teaching observations, when they take place at all appear to follow the style of the developmental or collaborative model (Gosling 2002, 2005). However its use is very variable and inconsistent across departments. Since with the end of the QAA Subject Reviews, the observation of teaching for evaluative or QA purposes in the case study universities seems

to have largely fallen into disuse (although practices vary between departments). Illustrating this trend, one UCS, with an institutional observation policy in place, is now seeking to explicitly design and promote a collaborative process which focuses on peer dialogue.

For new university staff, teaching observation schemes in some form or another are more likely to be in place. From the case study examples, these appear to have strong developmental features as well as aspects of the evaluation model (ie in so far as they incorporate elements of assessment). Here however, UCS1 illustrates a move away from the latter model, with recent changes to the observation arrangements in its teacher development programme that are designed to enhance the developmental and reduce the assessment aspects.

Using the mapping framework

Drawing on features described in the university and college case studies in section 2 above, the use of teaching observation can be illustrated, albeit highly subjectively, using the mapping framework set out in section 1 above.

The criteria for 'plotting' each of the three examples in the matrix are as follows.

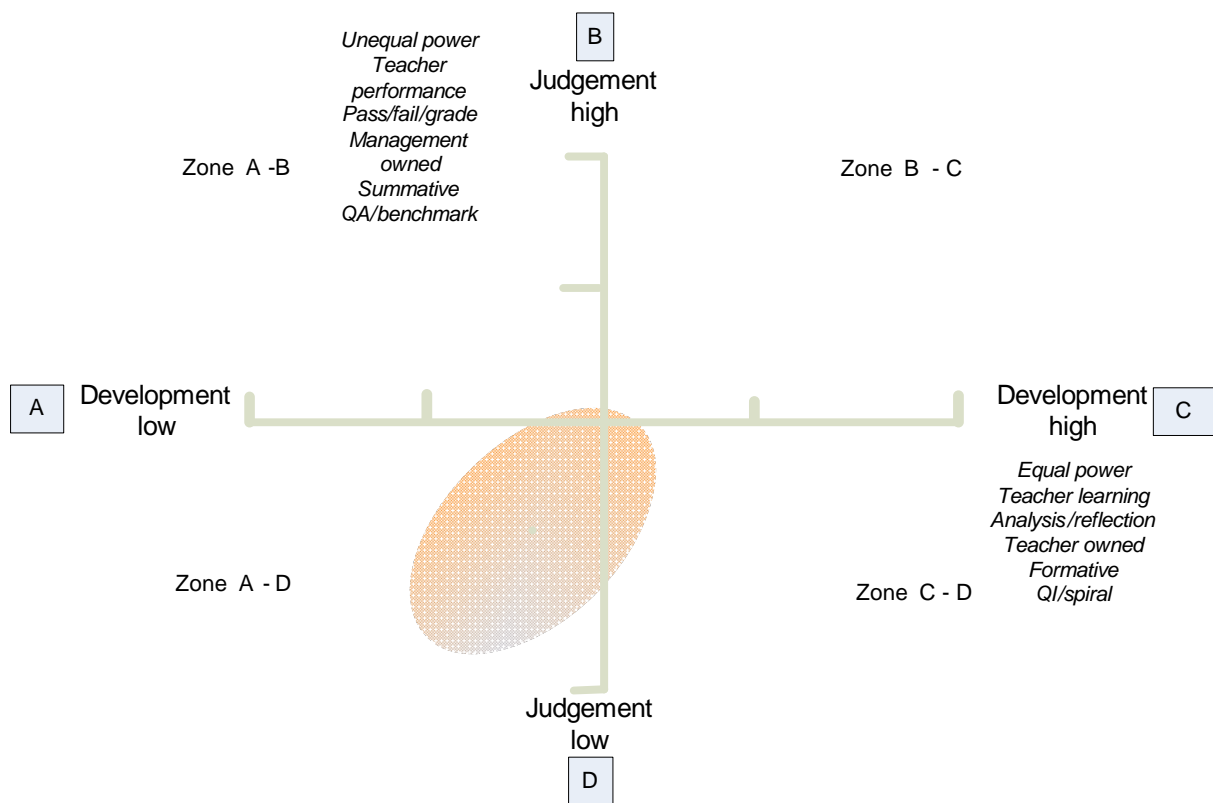
On the vertical axis, movement along the scale from low to high is associated with increasing:

- Inequality of power/status in relationship between observer and observee
- Focus on individual teaching performance
- Focus on assessment, quantitative outcomes (eg grades, pass/fail)
- Management ownership and control
- Summative process
- Quality assurance purposes, benchmarking etc

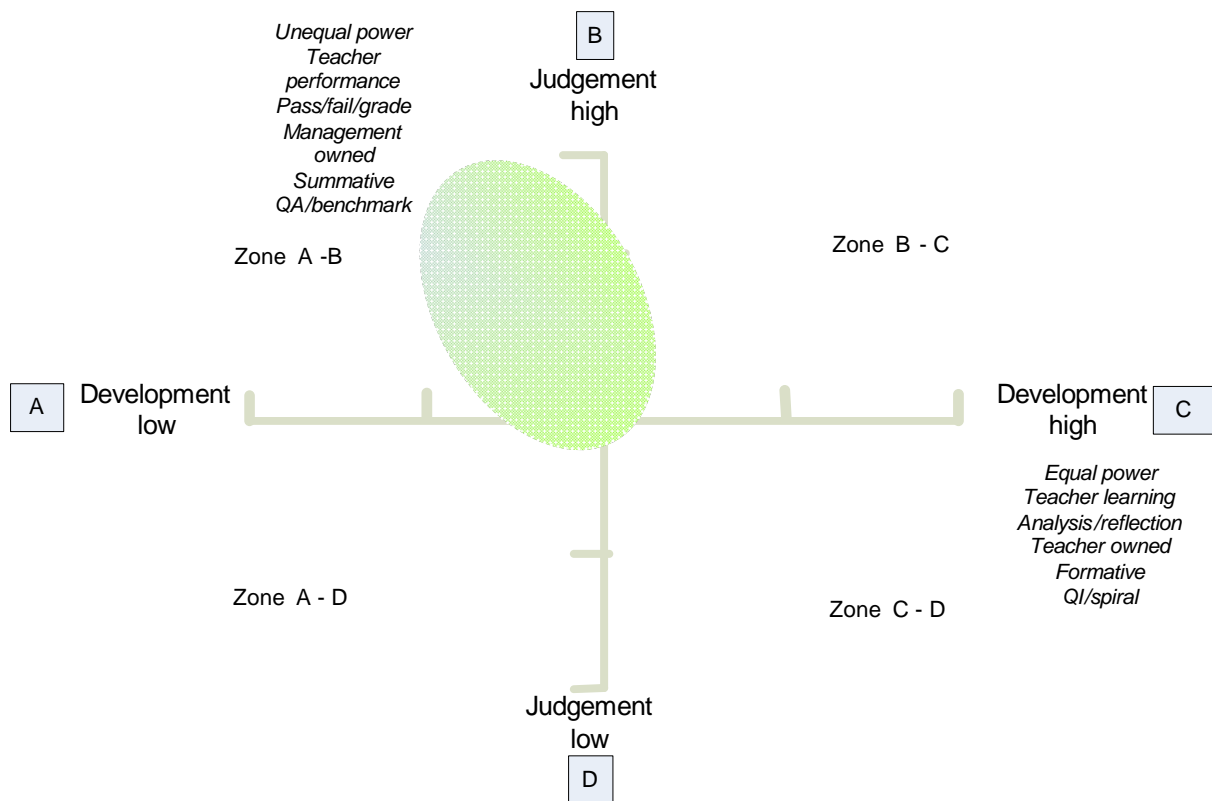
On the horizontal axis, movement along the scale from low to high is associated with increasing:

- Equality of power/status in relationship between observer and observee
- Focus on learning - in relation to the teacher and the students
- Focus on process outcomes relating to reflection and theoretically informed analysis
- Teacher owned and controlled
- Formative process, context of continuous professional development
- Quality improvement purposes, development spiral

University teaching observations located in matrix



College teaching observations located in matrix.



The main purpose of the above illustrations is to indicate where the examples might sit in respect of the four 'zones'. Clearly there are differences between the FE and HE sectors in terms of their policy aims and purposes. Teaching observation schemes in FE are intended to be evaluative (although developmental outcomes are also espoused); in HE the intention is that they are developmental. However, the contention here is that the use of teaching observation in both sectors could be made more effective as a tool for improving the quality of teaching. The mapped illustrations reflect the different contexts and starting points in each case; but the questions that follow need to focus on how to develop features that will move more of the prevailing practice into the zone C - D.

The use of observation to improve teaching quality: Lessons from FE

One of the aims of this project is to use the experience of teaching observation in FE to inform its use in the HE sector. The college case studies show how observation schemes and practices that are strongly shaped in terms of an evaluative model can be developed in the ways that enhance their potential for teacher development, (zone C - D).

In contrast to the university examples above, all of the case study colleges have centralised and relatively well documented QA systems that use teaching observation and cover all teaching staff. Across the FE sector the style of observation is predominantly evaluative and involves grading. There is little or no variation in the way these systems are implemented at departmental level; although as the case studies illustrate, there are variations in practice between institutions.

In the FE sector, regulations ensure that new and unqualified staff take part in teacher education programmes. All of these involve assessed teaching observation although they usually include observations with purely developmental aims as well. In the new teaching qualification framework the minimum amount of observed teaching required has now been increased. (DfES 2004)

As observation schemes are resource intensive and most QA systems entail considerable investment in staff time, FE managers aim to combine the achievement of both QA and QI objectives using one scheme. One consequence is that the effectiveness of the QI process is diminished in proportion to the predominance of the schemes' evaluative or judgemental features.

The case studies are drawn from colleges that integrate effective QA systems within a significantly developmental culture. They illustrate two key ways in which the development potential of 'combined schemes' can be increased.

- (i) The development of effective links between teaching observation outcomes and
 - a. staff development provision at individual, team and college level.
 - b. Curriculum and institutional development processes.

All three examples demonstrate within their procedures, feedback mechanisms enabling evaluative outcomes to be picked up again in a developmental context - thus 'closing the loop'. This requires good institutional links between the QA and QI processes, with the latter supported by a well resourced staff/professional development infrastructure and an organisational culture that prioritises learning.

- (ii) The separation of QA and QI processes.

In the light of the principles underpinning the analytical framework applied here, whereby the use of evaluative procedures is likely to undermine the achievement of developmental aims, a strategy to pursue each of these aims separately would appear to be the most effective solution. But on the whole, institutions apply a 'combined strategy'

on the assumption that this is more cost effective. Stronger drivers on the side of teaching quality improvement are needed in order to shift the balance which currently favours quality assurance outcomes and lends support to this particular rationale. Responses to the position of unqualified staff who are on initial teacher education programmes at the same time as they are subject to institutional quality control procedures (in addition to probationary requirements), illustrates how the rationale can shift in the face of competing priorities.

Within this evaluative context however, one of the colleges demonstrates a sophisticated arrangement whereby the two strands of the 'combined' process are separated, enabling there to be two different outcomes from the same procedure.

- A development plan for the teacher observed and a professional development process to support it
- A quantitative outcome in the form of a grade profile (anonymous) to inform the self assessment report (See CCS 3 above).

Needless to say, a process such as this requires good leadership and careful management.

A key question underlying the whole of this discussion is that, given the relatively clear aims and rationale for the different approaches to teaching observation found in the two sectors, how far are these aims actually met? (A question that is presumably more complex to address in the case of 'combined' schemes). Following this, in what ways might they be improved in order to meet their espoused aims more effectively?

So before returning to identify questions for future discussion and research that relate to making more effective use of teaching observation as a tool for improving the quality of teaching (and in terms of our framework, how to develop features that will move practice into the zone C - D), it is worth considering how the various schemes are currently evaluated.

Teaching observation: evaluation and improvement

"You have to be careful, what might make a difference and how it might happen - you can't be mechanistic. It's not fairy dust, only one club in an armoury". (UCS interview)

Given the significant level of resource involved (staff time, training, management, follow-up), in carrying out teaching observation and especially in view of its frequent, institution-wide application in FE, there is surprisingly little evidence that the process or the schemes are evaluated in either sector, whether in terms of the manner of their application, the achievement of their aims or in terms of their impact.³ The latter is of course difficult to assess in relation to the practice of the teacher (as observee or observer). Apparently the strongest evidence of observation leading to improvements in teaching relates to new staff during their probationary period. (Presumably this group is also one that is very commonly studied). (Bamber, 2002; Smith 2004).

The impact of teaching observation on student learning and achievement is even more complex, not least because the effects of specific interventions are hard to isolate.

Both of the above areas are the subject of academic study in fields that include theories of learning and change, as well as evaluation and impact assessment. (For example, Hall and Loucks 1978; Saunders et al 2004; Guskey 2000, 2002).

The case studies in both sectors show that while professional development, mentoring, teacher education or new staff induction programmes, all of which might incorporate some aspect of teaching observation were evaluated, teaching observation itself was not. And while it would appear from the case studies that the process of FE internal audit is subject to review and revision, it is not clear that any evaluation procedure that might be used to inform this is actually applied.

Interestingly, two of university interviewees who had previously worked in other HEIs, cited examples where observation processes were evaluated, for example through the

³ This lack of evaluation has been noted in relation to continuous professional development processes in the education sector generally. (Cordingley et al 2005; Goodall et al 2005)

It might be noted that the HEA plans to support research into the impact on the student learning experience of their own work. This is will focus on initiatives relating to the development and professional recognition of teachers and the accreditation of programmes. (HEA 2006).

use of feedback from observees. But nothing like this took place in their current organisations. This is clearly an important area for development (along with the issue of learner feedback, see below), because as Gosling points out,

"Evaluation of peer observation of teaching schemes, and where possible, more extended research, is essential if peer observation of teaching is to have a future" Gosling 2005, p39).

Issues for discussion and areas for further research

In HE, the impact of the greatly increased activity and interest in the observation of teaching, particularly arising from QAA Subject Reviews, has had mixed consequences for its subsequent use as a tool for developing teaching. This appears to be extremely uneven across the HE sector. Development is slowed by university staff and management suspicions of centralisation and also the view that teaching observation for QA, evaluation and performance management purposes undermines its use as a tool for professional development. The FE case studies provide some examples of how this can be managed.

The university case studies are however, drawn from three post 1992 universities and by virtue of this, they enable further significant barriers to be identified and add more dimensions to the question of how peer observation can be used to improve the effectiveness of teaching. These issues are outlined below as questions for further discussion and research. They specifically concern the impact of the status of teaching in the University on the use of peer observation, which is also related to:

- o the competing priorities of teaching and research
- o the impact of departmental cultures on the use of peer observation
- o the impact of practices relating to student feedback on the use of teaching observation
- o The impact of practices relating to the continuing professional development (CPD) of staff on the use of peer observation to improve teaching

The impact of the status of teaching in the University on the use of peer observation.

Palmer and Collins (2006) discuss issues of staff motivation in the context of the debate about rewarding teaching excellence. Devising an effective approach to rewarding excellent teaching 'will depend in part on academic staff

themselves seeing convincing evidence that good teaching can be identified reliably, and consistently rewarded. And they refer to Gibbs' point that, 'even in a predominantly teaching institution, there is a negative relationship between the amount of teaching and the salary earned.' (p 197)

Data gathered during the HEA evaluation of accredited programmes showed that ITT programmes had a low impact of on participants' career progression. *"All but one of the universities (a post-1992 institution) can be summed up by the following quote: "Although the programme is helpful in terms of induction and probation, [...] career progression will be based on research portfolios" (Prosser et al 2006, p30)*

This distinction between the pre and post 1992 institutions was again reflected in participants' experience of how their training/development programmes related to the institution's mission and its teaching and learning strategy.

HEI 1

All interviewees at this post-1992 university saw a close relationship between the programme, the institutional mission and the teaching and learning strategy. Participants described how the programme helped them "to understand the strategy and to question and consider [related] issues". Heads of department/deans of faculty saw clear "overlap between the mission, the strategy and the programme". From the PVC's perspective, "the learning and teaching strategy reflects the mission and the programme takes the strategy and reflects it and works with it". This was echoed by members of the programme team.

HEI 2

Most interviewees at this Russell Group university agreed that, at present, there is not a clear relationship between the programme and the university's teaching and learning strategy/mission:

"I have no concept of a relationship - no knowledge of a feedback loop." (programme participant)

"If they meet then it is a happy coincidence, on the whole they have little to do with each other." (member of programme team)

"There is an expression of a relationship but this doesn't mean it works in practice." (head of department)

"Engagement [between the programme and the strategy/mission] is not there yet but is getting better." (PVC)

(Prosser et al 2006, p26)

The impact of competing priorities: teaching versus research

The following examples from the case study universities illustrate the impact of the prioritisation of research on the status of teaching.

Example 1:

"The university is research led. The staff are high profile and leaders in their field - they hold their positions due to their research profiles. Teaching is less important and PCAPP (the accredited programme) is not a priority. When new staff come and find they have to do compulsory introduction to teaching course, they are independent, and resentful. They don't like being told what to do, they are confident and assume they can teach". (UCS 1)

Example 2:

"The vice chancellor is committed to teaching, and it is university policy. But the issues for staff are not straightforward".

The research focus/priority is key. For example, if a new lecturer in a science department is given space and time (2-3 years) to build a research reputation and to get their career going - it lowers participation in teaching quality programmes from the start. Will they re emerge after getting into teaching? The high workloads of academic staff in departments especially, restricts opportunities for them to develop. (UCS 2)

The university case studies also show

- a. how government policies which put an increasing focus on the quality of the student experience, throw the tensions into sharper relief.⁴ And
- b. how the problems of managing these tensions is restricted by economics and funding issues.

Example:

"The teaching versus research agenda is being thrown into sharper relief now. Ten years ago, we weren't hearing so loudly that teaching is not rewarded to the same extent.

⁴ The HEA noted that pressures are unlikely to diminish in the future, as the implementation of the 'New National Professional Standards Framework for Teaching and Supporting Learning in Higher Education' is progressed. Institutions will need to demonstrate how they are fulfilling these.

Now the argument is louder as the tensions have become heightened - now staff are looking at career pathways and the reward for teaching".

For example; "Colleges (of the university) are focussed on teaching and this is not rewarded or recognised in same way".

"The university is in deficit -this won't get corrected through teaching - insufficient income. Teaching officers HAVE to be research active to keep departments running and they get twitchy about time spent on teaching".

"University officers are very wary about taking on college duties now.(College staff are usually members of the university as well). But university officers don't want college support duties. Career aspirations are changing. Now, 80% (of academic university staff) can expect a professorship within a career lifetime. It is very competitive, and because of the way career pathways are set up, (they) have to be of top rank, international research status". (UCS 3)

The impact of departmental culture on the use of peer observation:

Example 1:

"Staff attitudes to peer observation are governed by the departmental culture".

Candidates on the Post Graduate Award are enthusiastic, appreciate the help and respond well to the course. Those who get jobs continue with PCAP (the accredited programme). The concern is that now they are young, keen and motivated. But they can lose it when they get the pressure of the departmental culture, where teaching is secondary - and their voice becomes lost." (UCS 1)

Example 2:

The use of teaching observation following the end of the QAA subject reviews has largely ceased, although it has been maintained in particular areas.

"Those that you would think would not (continue), have not - such as some of the science areas. But in medical sciences, for example where clinicians are involved - they have no difficulties with it. They are used to being observed and discussing their practice".

" In fact, some departments like the School of Historical Studies, are interested in implementing the revised process: the ' peer dialogue on teaching scheme'; and others like the Centre for Mass Communications; Museum

studies and Labour management studies - have started using the new post-observation record forms. So it is happening unofficially". (UCS 2)

Example 3:

"A formative evaluation of PHEP (non accredited, professional development programme) was carried out last year. It included interviews with past and current participants and a sample of HODs. We looked at what they did with their probationers to see how PHEP could fit in. And we got some information about peer observation in departments as well."

For example, found that:

"Engineering give new staff a lot of teaching. They have a significant, structured induction programme to support this".

"Law does a lot in a systematic way and has a good mentoring and in-house buddy programme for all. University and college lecturers are supported. They also do team teaching. It's thematic and systematic - a lot of energy given to discussing teaching".

"Applied maths and theoretical physics has an opt in peer observation of teaching system. They are keen for staff to look across departments".

"History and philosophy of science has a very good peer observation system - involves everyone, from top to bottom. Staff are reminded to pair up and it is followed up. Privacy is maintained".

Experiences are very varied. *"Departmental culture and ethos is important. The lack of administrative oversight doesn't mean it doesn't happen". (UCS 3)*

The impact of practices relating to the use of student feedback on the use of peer observation to improve the quality of teaching.

"I would say peer review/observations are used for the development of the teaching officer rather than used to check back to the student's development. Staff say they are comfortable with how it is - why should it be changed? " (UCS 3)

A number of commentators along with **O'Leary (2006)**, have noted the importance, yet significant absence of student involvement in the use of peer observation that aims at teaching quality improvement. All too often, " *the very people at the centre of*

this whole process, i.e. the learners, are completely excluded from the process of feedback and evaluation, and no consideration whatsoever is given to their experience as active participants in the learning and teaching experience". (p194).

Evidence from one of the case study universities (outlined below) illustrates an exception to this. But the university case studies seem more generally to suggest that student feedback about their experiences of teaching and learning is not seen as a useful source of information for academic staff or managers.

For example two of the three case study universities have, so far withheld from participating in the National Student Survey (NSS). As involvement entails a high degree of public exposure, this has been an issue of much debate among HEIs. Objections have been raised concerning its purposes, design, reliability, acceptability or utility and the two case study universities prefer to rely on their own quality assurance procedures⁵. (Penny 2003)

On the other hand the NSS is a mechanism for supplying comparative monitoring data in a consistent form, for example relating to the students' teaching and learning experience, at subject level, within and across institutions and over periods of time. And, as the recent large scale evaluation notes, "Without the NSS, effects such as these relating to ethnicity could not be detected". (SurrIDGE 2007). Some patterns are already emerging from the overall data, for example consistent weaknesses in the areas of assessment, feedback and learner support. It is hoped that confidence will increase with experience of the survey's use and the findings will stimulate research.

Kahn (2007) points out evidence to suggest that interventions designed to improve teaching and learning can be more effective when combined with information from student surveys and individual forms of consultation. He proposes that rather than focus on individual members of staff, programme teams might usefully be engaged in analysing and using surveys. And projects such as Harkin (2000), aimed at assisting teachers to transform their knowledge of learning and learners into more effective teaching practices, have the

⁵ Objections voiced about the NSS include: Poorly designed instruments; lack of consensus or common language re characteristics of effective teaching; teachers' resistance to accepting or using data; purposes relating to use (eg by managers); and how used (eg ignores context or teachers needs); leads to efforts to improve ratings rather than teaching

use of learner feedback (and learner engagement in the intervention) at their very heart.

However, academic staff raise similar kinds of objections to the use of student feedback within their own institutions as they do to the NSS, as the case studies illustrate. The validity of these objections is not the issue here. Rather it is to explore the impact on the effective use of teaching observation to improve the quality of teaching and learning, when there is an apparent lack of use of student feedback relating to this.

Example 1

The university has withheld participation in the NSS - the Student Union has been maintaining a boycott since it was rolled out in 2004. Information from some faculties is available where students have participated in sufficient numbers for the results to be recorded. The university's own mechanisms for gathering student feedback include the following. Some departments may of course have their own methods, in addition to these.

Regular feedback is gathered through module questionnaires, *"formulaic; they don't achieve very much"*. The departments receive a summary and have to write a response.

"Module appraisal forms are not liked by students or staff. They get them all the time, there is little information, it's procedural - tick-box to cover the QA requirements. Staff have concerns about the quality of the information and they come at the end, so they can't change anything in response. New staff on the training programmes are encouraged to design and use their own".

The Academic Satisfaction Review is a campus wide survey aimed at different cohorts in different years. However, little information about the teaching and learning experience or qualitative data is gathered from this.

Staff Student Liaison Committees (SSLCs) were brought in 35 years ago, following the student sit-ins. *"They seem an effective mechanism for identifying problems and dealing with them. For example, second language lecturers whose English may be proficient for lecturing but not for carrying out a discussion"*. (UCS 1)

Example 2:

There is little interest in participating in the NSS in the university and therefore very little information is publicly recorded. The university's own procedures are very much devolved and therefore, subject to faculty or

departmental practices which probably vary widely. "Students comments on lecturing/the lecture programmes are collected, some are on-line. The comments are analysed and a digest of issues is put together. This goes back to departmental teaching committee who decide what to do with responses. The head of department takes up individual comments regarding a lecturer informally. Unless any problems with the process surface, for example, failures to respond to student feedback, the process isn't followed up by QA". (UCS 3)

As pointed out above, learner feedback and engagement can also be used to enhance the effectiveness of interventions designed to improve the quality of teaching and learning by individuals or teams. One case study university provides an interesting example of this.

Good practice example:

*The Teaching for Learning Network (TfLN)*⁶ has been established at the university with the aim of improving the quality of teaching and the outcomes for students. One of the projects has involved the design and development of "dual scale, value/practice questionnaires" to students.

Areas of practice leading to effective learning have been identified through research and students are asked to provide two scores, one focussed on the value of the practice in respect of their learning and the other on the frequency of the practice in a learning encounter.

[For example, in response to a statement such as: 'Lecturers relate learning to life and practice'. Students may rate the value of the aspect as high, but that aspect in practice, (frequency) may be low. Or, 'Supervisors test my factual knowledge'; students may value- rate low, but in practice, frequency is high].

The value/practice survey has been piloted in Plant Sciences, and its scope will be extended to include all first year biologists. Feedback is given to supervisors running workshops in the department who are engaged as 'co-investigators' in the project.

The value/ practice data is being used to develop the virtual learning environment (VLE) and "Students give very positive feedback to this". A further outcome of research into the

⁶ This is part of a larger Cambridge-MIT Institute project concerned with developing links between academics, industrialists and educators.

Website: <http://www.tfln.org>

aspects valued highly, shows that students want more deep learning.

The researchers have found, from work on this and other projects, that feeding back very subject -specific information results in a very high level of buy in by academic practitioners. For example, in a project involving direct observation of teaching practice in engineering, feedback included photographs and interviews. As the evidence is starting to be presented back, staff are already engaged in questions about how it should be interpreted and what they should do about it. (UCS 3)

The impact of practices relating to the continuing professional development (CPD) of staff on the use of peer observation to improve teaching

"Excellence is not accidental; it requires an engagement with pedagogy, a reflection on practice and a responsive institutional context"

(Angela Glasner, ProVice Chancellor at the University of Portsmouth, quoted in Palmer and Collins 2006, p.198).

The university case studies illustrate the optional nature of CPD activities for academic staff, who are most likely to prioritise work to maintain or build their standing as researchers and experts in their particular subject fields. The case studies also illustrate the provision of high quality, 'customised' resources that are available to support university departments that want to use them, and the fact that many departments do.

However, in a context where the use of teaching observation/peer review to support CPD is relatively low and variable, the demand for training and the development relating to its use is likewise small. But , it should be clear from the earlier discussion that the effectiveness of the process is highly dependent on a number of factors, not least the skills of the staff involved, whether as observers or as observees.

Key elements of this include:

- the development of observation skills combined with an underpinning knowledge of the theories and principles of learning to inform feedback, reflection and analysis.
- Skills in feedback and peer dialogue and/or the conduct of learning conversation.
- Skills in gathering, analysing and interpreting data derived from observers, learners and others, and the use of technology such as video.
- Self evaluation and reflection skills.

This project has explored how the potential of teaching observation/peer review for transforming teaching can be maximised. On its own, the use of this mechanism may be of little use (perhaps even negative) and ineffective in improving the quality of teaching or the learning experience.

In a context where institutions are required to address both quality assurance and quality improvement strategies, the main lessons from the university and college case studies included here are: that while good management is required to pursue both of these aims, the achievement of high quality teaching depends on clear vision and strong leadership.

Areas for future research with regard to the use of peer observation of teaching to improve the quality of teaching.

The research agenda that flows from this project will benefit from collective discussions. Some broad suggestions are included here as a start to the process.

- The impact of observation that is primarily evaluative on its use as a tool for professional development and improving the quality of teaching

Although this is a central proposition of this study, O'Leary (2006) notes that

"the extent to which the feedback from assessment-based (ie graded) observations readily leads to an improvement in future classroom practice has received little detailed analysis in the literature of teacher education/development to date" (p192).

This is therefore a subject for further study, and has links with the question of evaluation.

- Comparison between pre and post '92 universities with regard to teaching observation/peer review policies and practices.

"I came from a university where you had to observe and be observed twice a year. And there were rules - you could not just buddy up and do a deal. Here it is developmental and kept optiona"l. (UCS1)

"At my previous university, staff were paired from peer review clusters formed around common research interests. You could get a research student paired with an experienced member of staff. It was very difficult to give feedback. It is very difficult even if you are on the same level". (UCS I)

As external examiner at a post-92 university *"the role of teaching is very different. It is the main raison d'etre, so they treat quality of teaching and observation very seriously. In pre- '92 universities there is an unspoken attitude that it is not a priority". (UCS 2)*

- Comparative surveys of practice at faculty and departmental level, within and between universities, and the identification of effective approaches.

- Development and dissemination of methods and approaches to evaluating the impact of peer observation of teaching on
 - Teacher practice
 - Student learning and achievement

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Appendix 1

Models of Peer Observation of Teaching

Characteristic	evaluation model	development model	peer review model
Who does it & to whom?	Senior staff, or chosen 'evaluators' or 'auditors' review 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;	Improve teaching through dialogue; self and mutual reflection
Outcome	Report/judgement	Report/action plan for improvement;	Analysis, reflection, discussion, wider experience of teaching methods
Status of evidence	Authority	Expert diagnosis	Peer shared perceptions
Relationship of observer to observed	Power hierarchy	Expert/learner	Equality/mutuality
Confidentiality	Between manager, observer and staff observed	Between observer and the observed, might include manager	Between observer and the observed could be shared within learning set
Inclusion	Selected staff	Selected/sample	All involved in supporting student learning
Judgement	Pass/fail, score, quality assessment, worthy/unworthy	How to improve; pass/fail	Non-judgemental, reflective feedback

	Y		
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	Effective management	Respected 'developers'	A culture in which teaching is valued and discussed
Risks	Alienation, lack of co-operation, opposition	No shared ownership, lack of impact	Complacency, conservatism, unfocused

(Gosling 2005 p14)

Appendix 2:

Example: Documentation to support proposed new peer observation scheme designed with reference to the collaborative model (Gosling 2005)

School of xxx

Peer Dialogue on Teaching Scheme: Post-observation Record

This form should be completed by both the teacher and the observer at or after the post-observation session, and a copy sent to the Staff Development Officer.

Name of Teacher visited _____ Date of Visit

Name of Observer _____

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>What were the key points to emerge from the observation and the post-observation meeting?</u> 	
Teacher	Observer

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>How has the process made you reflect on:-</u> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) <u>your approach to teaching and student learning?</u> 	
Teacher	Observer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) <u>practical steps to be incorporated into your teaching?</u> 	
Teacher	Observer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>What points emerged from the observation and discussion that can be fed back to the School? (include here any individual or group Staff Development recommendations).</u> 	
Teacher	Observer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Any further points that the teacher or observer want to make can be recorded here.</u> 	

Teacher	Observer
---------	----------

We are both satisfied that we have captured the points we made in the observation and reflection processes.

Teacher visited _____

Observer_____

Date _____

Source UCS 2

Appendix 3:

Example: Curriculum Area Review documentation: observer reports (College case study 3)

Record of Observation of Teaching and Learning			
Name of observed teacher		Observer	
Curriculum Area Manager		Date and time of observation	
Date of feedback meeting		Group/Course	
Number of students		Number on register	
Qualifications and experience of teacher observed			
Teaching location			
Context/Notes			

Observer's comments

Possible headings to be used:

Lesson planning

Differentiation and skills development in planning and delivery

Assessment and checking for understanding

Group management

Learner centredness/learner engagement

Promoting learner independence

Equality and Diversity

Use of Resources including ILT

Discussion/queries

Strengths

Evidence

Opportunities for Development

Evidence

Summary by observer

Action plan

		Date
Signature of teacher observed		
Signature of Observer		

Curriculum Area Review: Report on Additional Information

Reviewers will be compiling reports under each of these headings. Observers are asked to record any information which might be relevant to any of these aspects of the CA. Please send to the lead reviewer. Please look for good practice as well as situations causing concern. Please give group name and teacher where possible if relevant.

Individual Learning Plans
Course Management Files
Group tutorials
Individual tutorials
Skills
Additional Learning Support
Self-assessment
Retention and Achievement figures
Registers and timetables
Student perception of course and of college

Any other comments.

Location, group, teacher.....

Name of Observer.....

Guidelines for observers: using the observation report form

Qualifications and experience of teacher

Ask the teacher observed about this. It is useful information for college to know this; it is also useful for you as you make your judgement about the quality of the teaching and learning.

Context/notes

This space is to record anything you feel is significant relating to the context of the observed session. Don't feel that there is one particular appropriate note to go in here: it could be any relevant fact.

Observer's comments

It is recommended that you use these headings to guide your report. As you now have the observation form in its electronic version, it is expected that you will type in your comments under each heading, expanding each area to the amount of space you need. You have several documents to refer to from the training days, to give you help in deciding which comment is appropriate at each point.

Discussion/Queries

There may be many questions which you need answered after your observation. It can be helpful to actually record them in this box, especially when you feel there is a related issue which you may want to include in 'Opportunities for Development'.

Strengths/Evidence

Record here those things which you see the teacher doing which you feel is good practice. It is possible to overlook writing these down: don't! They are really important to the person observed: you will be validating their practice just by stating what good things you have seen. Whenever you can, give a practical example of when you saw this in action.

Opportunities for Development

We used to call these 'Weaknesses'. A more positive way of viewing this part of the report is that these points mentioned here will link to the action plan, where you record what needs to be done, and by whom, to improve the quality of the learner's experience. In this section, it is vital to have your evidence ready about any points you have seen as less than good practice, again given very specific examples: e.g. "The student at the back of the room, under the window, was listening to his music all through the lesson. Did you know?"

"The girl in the blue top didn't know what she was supposed to do - I asked her."

Summary

Usually one or two sentences only:

"An excellent lesson, well taught by an experienced teacher who has her students' respect".

"A interesting session where a new teacher demonstrated enthusiasm for her subject and care for her students."

Action plan

This is the key to the whole report if you feel that in the observed session there were several missed opportunities which need to be discussed and attributed: what does the teacher need to do? What will the observer do in alerting managers to any gaps which have been noted? Where can the observed teacher go to get more help? Some suggestions might be to talk to another teacher who has got it right, observe another teacher who is doing similar teaching, find resources by looking here, asking for more training from a manager, or talking to their curriculum area's professional mentor.

Thirty action plans for one curriculum area will make interesting reading and give the Curriculum Area Manager much useful information.

Appendix 4

Example: Job description and person specification for Senior Teacher role (College case study 2)

POST TITLE: Senior Teacher

SALARY GRADE: MGS 1-3 (inclusive of teaching qualification increment)

POST NUMBER:

RESPONSIBLE TO: Head of Department and Assistant Principal
(Quality & Services to Students)

MAIN PURPOSE OF THE POST

As one of a team of Senior Teachers, the main purpose of the role is to promote improvements and facilitate professional development in the quality of the College's teaching, learning and student support.

ORGANISATIONAL RELATIONSHIP

Senior Teachers will be line managed by their Head of Department but will be led by the Assistant Principal (Quality & Services to Students) in the performance of their Senior Teacher duties. Their annual teaching commitment will be 510 hours (or pro rata).

MAIN DUTIES

1. To deliver and facilitate appropriate in-house staff professional development activities on teaching, learning and supporting students.
2. To contribute towards the professional development and quality improvement strategies of an appropriate teaching department.
3. As a member of the College's Internal Lesson Observation Team, to participate in regular internal; currently, this involves:
 - The organisation and management of Observation Weeks
 - The observation and grading of teaching and learning sessions
 - Giving feedback to staff on the quality of teaching and learning observed
 - Final report writing

- Disseminating good practice
4. To support and mentor individual teachers or trainers.
 5. To contribute towards *Teaching for Learning* staff newsletters.
 6. To keep up to date with current developments in teaching and learning and the techniques used to deliver effective professional development activities.
 7. To participate fully in the College's appraisal and mentor schemes, and undertake appropriate professional development activities that promote improvements in teaching, learning and student support.
 8. Implement and promote the College's ideals and policies on equal opportunities.
 9. To undertake such other duties, commensurate with the post, which the College management may reasonably and occasionally require, including working evenings and covering for absent colleagues.

CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

The appointment is subject to the Conditions of Service for Academic Staff.

SALARY

Including the 'teaching qualification increment', the current salary range for this post is £30,047 to £31,950 per annum.

HOURS OF WORK

The full time hours of work will be based on a 37-hour week.

ANNUAL LEAVE

The post carries 37 annual leave days, with an additional eight public bank holidays plus a further four concessionary days as 'leave to be taken at the Principal's discretion'.

PENSION SCHEME

The College operates an occupational pension scheme, namely the 'Teachers Pensions'.

TRAINING

Undertake any appropriate training and development as required, including Health and Safety.

SMOKING POLICY

For health and safety reasons, North East Worcestershire College has a smoke-free environment in all its buildings.

APPLICATIONS

A completed application form should be submitted.

It would greatly assist the shortlisting panel if the information submitted on your application clearly identifies and demonstrates how your qualities match those listed under the essential requirements on the person specification.

Completed application forms should be returned by **Monday 3 July 2006** to:

INTERVIEWS

As soon as the shortlist has been finalised, shortlisted candidates will be notified with the details and actual date for interview (**during the week beginning 10 July 2006**).

Person Specification

Post: ST1	Essential	Desirable
Attainments (e.g. Qualifications , Experience)	<p>Teaching qualification. (A)</p> <p>Evidence of successful teaching experience within the Construction curriculum area over a period of at least three years (A/I)</p>	<p>Experience of delivering professional development to colleagues. (A/I)</p> <p>Experience of successfully supporting or mentoring teachers. (A/I)</p>
General Skills	<p>Excellent written and verbal communication skills. (A/I)</p> <p>Listening skills.</p>	
Specific Special Skills or Knowledge	<p>Extensive knowledge and understanding of how learning is managed. (A/I)</p> <p>Knowledge and understanding of</p>	
Disposition/Personal Qualities	<p>Enthusiasm for teaching and learning. (A/I)</p> <p>Empathy with the issues of teachers and learners. (A/I)</p>	
General Points		