Reflecting on reflective practices within peer observation

Linda Hammersley-Fletcher & Paul Orsmond

[a] Staffordshire University Business School, Stoke on Trent, UK
Version of record first published: 20 Aug 2006.

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Reflecting on reflective practices within peer observation

Linda Hammersley-Fletcher* and Paul Orsmond
Staffordshire University Business School, Stoke on Trent, UK

Peer Observation of Teaching is one process employed within higher education establishments in Britain that can be instrumental in developing the reflective practices of professional lecturers. It is a means of making the focus and purpose of reflection more explicit and effective through allowing academics to consider their roles as professional educators, and to seek and engage in relevant developmental processes as a consequence. In so doing, peer observation becomes key in attempting to define the quality of learning and teaching within an institution. This paper reports on peer observation practices in one post-1992 university. It utilises data from semi-structured interviews with lecturers, and identifies the need for peers to be more aware of what reflective practices involve. In addition, it identifies a need for using reflection to open up wider academic debate in order to develop more meaningful learning environments for students to work in.

Introduction

Peer observation is seen as a mechanism through which learning and teaching can be improved. At its best, the peer observation of teaching is a process that encourages reflection on teaching practice, identifies developmental needs, and fosters debate and dissemination around best practice (Brown & Jones, 1993; Fullerton, 1999; Gosling, 2000). Such 'best practice' is, to a large degree, dependent on the quality of the processes in place, and on the practices of those conducting observations and being observed. With the current heightened emphasis on academic review (Quality Assurance Agency, 2000) as a way of monitoring institutional quality processes, peer observation will have a central role to play. Work has been conducted around the importance of the relationship between observer and observee; for example, the relationship between them must include confidentiality and the creation of a non-judgemental environment (Tremlett, 1992; Brown & Jones, 1993). However, little detailed attention has been given to the role of peer

---

*Corresponding author: Institute for Education Policy Research, Staffordshire University Business School, Leek Road, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 2DE, UK. Email: l.j.fletcher@staffs.ac.uk

observation in developing the reflective practitioner. In peer observation the observer should act to provide the observee with as an objective view of the teaching session as possible, and review and reflect on that experience with the observee in a way that informs future thinking and practice. Mezirow (1990) stated that reflection is an 'examination of the justification for one's beliefs primarily to guide action and to reassess the efficacy of the strategies and procedures used in problem solving' (p. xvi). Therefore reflective practitioners are those who use experiences as opportunities to consider both their philosophy and their practice. While the process of peer observation is intended to enhance debate between the observer and observee, reflection and reflective practice are often not clearly understood.

According to Kuit and Gill (2001), a good teacher may be a number of things, for example, intuitive, imaginative, evaluative, a good listener and willing to change. However, reflective practice involves the *process* of teaching and the thinking behind it, rather than simply evaluating the teaching itself. It is, therefore, addressing the question of *why* as opposed to *how* and, most important, it is about learning from this process. Moreover, reflective practitioners are involved in comparing the quality of their teaching against experiences and knowledge of educational theory. Reflection, therefore, leads to self-knowledge, and this is important if not fundamental to the professional development of lecturers. A number of research studies have noted a strong relationship between peer observation and professional development (Beaty, 1998; Race, 2001; Allen, 2002; Bell, 2002). Thus in an educational setting a process of peer observation that encourages and supports reflection is likely to have important benefits in terms of the refinement of teaching skills (Martin & Double, 1998). Wubbels and Korthagen (1990) suggested that reflective teachers are more open to innovation, and that in addition relationships with students and colleagues were more favourable for teachers with higher levels of reflective thinking. Furthermore, improvement in teaching and heightened connections between theory and practice are evident in reflective educators (Bolin, 1988).

Reflection is most effective when supported by others committed to reflective strategies (Thorpe, 2000). This shows the advantage of like-minded colleagues coming together to consider and reflect on issues shifting them from a pragmatic understanding of the pedagogy to a more reflective approach (Kuit & Gill, 2001). Reflection then becomes what Kuit and Gill identified as the middle ground, where theories are brought to bear on the analysis of the past actions, from which insightful future planning can be developed. Similarly, Boud and Walker (1998) argue that it is important not to underestimate the effects the learning context, within which a subject operates, has on the process of reflection. Reflection, in this context, leads to more creative thought and the development of strategies to cope with the cultural, social and political environment where learning takes place. Thus, for Boud and Walker reflective processes need to focus on both the learners' assumptions and expectations of learning, and on the processes and appropriate roles for teachers and learners. Some of the difficulties in engaging lecturers in such meaningful reflective practice have been illustrated by Harvey and Knight (1996). Learning can be constrained by what we believe, so simply reflecting on learning and teaching can be problematic, and is not the same

as using experience to change those ideas. Hinett (2003) considered that reflection is more than cognitive skills such as 'how' and 'when'. Students, she claims, need to 'make sense of and appreciate beliefs, values understandings and perceptions' (p. 7). Reflection, therefore, involves emotional as well as cognitive activity. Within this context, Moon (1999) argued that reflection is a form of thinking to achieve a particular outcome using knowledge, understandings and emotions to process complicated or unstructured ideas. Hence the focus of reflection needs to be on determining what is meant by quality teaching and learning, and good-quality teaching is, according to Trigwell (2001), a scholarly process orientated towards high-quality student learning.

One way of pursuing reflective practice, suggested by Brookfield (1990), is the identification of assumptions that underlie our thoughts and actions. By using critical incidents, a specific event in your practice that gave you a 'high of excitement, satisfaction, and fulfilment' (p. 182), assumptions about good practice can be analysed. The reflective process in peer observation may be stimulated by the observer providing the observee with feedback about the session observed. This process needs careful management, as MacKinnon (2001) pointed out, or the power relationship between observer and observee can become imbalanced. MacKinnon suggested that a working alliance can help to avert such problems. Here the observer and the observee work together to identify and improve factors contributing to student learning and satisfaction by using a 'three-step approach' to giving feedback. Step 1 involves spending time making a considered written review, Step 2 is where strengths and weakness are identified and Step 3 is the summary pulling out key points for discussion. Clegg *et al.* (2002) identified different groups of reflectors, one of which was deferred reflection. Deferring the formal part of reflective practice helps create the preconditions for a different kind of reflection.

Brockbank and McGill (1998) argued that, in order to facilitate learning, teachers need to develop not only their own ability to engage in reflective practice, but also the skills necessary to enable others to engage in reflective practice. To this end, the feedback sessions, that involve both the observer and the observee reflecting on an observation, should act as a key trigger and means of enhancing the reflective process for both parties. If this process involves constructive criticism, it will encourage professional development (Hogston, 1995). In addition, as Lueddeke (1998) suggested, there is a need for organisations to build in mechanisms for the effective dissemination of good practice. Moreover, as Clegg *et al.* (2002) pointed out, new quality assurance agendas in higher education mean it is important to have evidence of improvement. In addition, Coldron and Smith (1999) highlighted the need to consider how professional teachers acquire their professional identity, as a means of understanding how staff development might be approached. Thus the introduction of quality staff development involves careful consideration and understanding of how people learn. If practice is understood purely in behavioural terms, there is a danger that you miss what it is to be a practitioner in professional terms. However, reflection upon the distinctive nature of professional knowledge may be helpful in the tighter guidelines quality debate, and put peer observation as central in setting a quality agenda.

This paper is based on findings from a study of two alternative models of peer observation used within a 'post-1992' university. While a previous paper (Hammersley-Fletcher & Orsmond, 2004), looking at these two mechanisms of peer observation, found a number of differences between the two systems, here it is suggested that the issues raised and discussed around the operation of reflective processes within peer observation are characteristic of both systems. Thus this paper addresses questions about the effectiveness of current reflective practices and methods, by which the effectiveness of processes of reflection within peer observation, and therefore the quality of learning and teaching, might be improved.

Methodology

This paper is based on gathering detailed information about the reality of the peer observation process through the use of semi-structured interviews within one 'post-1992' university. Documentary evidence relating to the peer observation systems employed was sought from two schools within the university over the academic year 2002/03. These two schools were piloting alternative systems for adoption by the other academic departments. Interview data were collected from lecturing staff immediately following the completion of the peer observation process over one academic year. Five observers and four observees were interviewed from each school, giving a total of 18 interviews, thus providing a reasonable balance of views and experiences. Observers and observees were asked to volunteer, and were then selected on the basis of providing a range of age and experience. In addition, Deans and Associate Deans were interviewed to gain their thoughts about the process, the systems and the realities.

Two models of peer observation

Data were gathered on the peer observation process from the School of Law and the School of Sciences within one post-1992 university. The School of Law encompassed a Department of Law and an Institute of Social Work, and had adopted a model of peer observation that involved senior staff in developing paperwork, training observers and linking developmental outcomes to staff appraisal. The School of Sciences included departments of Biology, Chemistry, Geography and Psychology and had adopted a system of trios, whereby each person was observed by the other two within their group. This enabled there to be possibilities for a three-way debate. Here it was felt important not to make links between peer observation and appraisal systems.

School of Law

Law operates a system of peer observation that is under the auspices of the Associate Dean, and has been developed by the schools' lecturing staff. Initially, more senior lecturers were asked to volunteer as peer observers. These volunteers were then trained in the process of peer observation by an external adviser. However, the quality

of the training was in some doubt and, as a consequence, the peer observers met together as a group and agreed between themselves the purpose of their role and developed paperwork to accompany and support this. One member of staff was selected to coordinate this process. This role involves distributing the paperwork at appropriate times, organising meetings of peer observers, collecting observers' feedback on the general issues they are meeting during observations, and writing annual reports to present to the Associate Dean in order to identify staff development needs. In addition, the peer observers and observees agree some developmental outcomes that could go forward to their appraisal session. Appraisers see the developmental outcomes only and not any other information.

School of Sciences

The sciences system of trios involves all lecturers taking on the roles of 'observer' and 'observee'. Each department appoints a coordinator to manage and implement the peer observation process. Ideally groups of three people are identified to act as trios, one acting as the facilitator. Each member of the trio should be observed once and be an observer twice during each academic year. The trios identify where the observation process has been beneficial and where staff development could be useful. At the end of semester 2, the facilitators make a summary of the main issues arising from the feedback sessions and record of evidence. This is forwarded to the coordinator, who will make a summary of points from each trio highlighting good practice and areas for staff development. Once a year, peer observation coordinators will meet with the Associate Dean to review how the process has operated across the school.

When interviewing lecturers in the sciences, they were asked to respond in terms of their perspectives either as an observer or an observee, in order to make some comparisons with law. However, it should be remembered that they acted in both capacities.

Relationships and their effects on reflective practice

As already argued, the relationship between observers and observees needs to be open, allowing for honest reflection within a process where confidentiality is assured. This was an issue that was highlighted as of paramount importance by the lecturers interviewed in both schools, and, in particular, from the perspective of the observee. Fears about possible problems with confidentiality were highlighted by one observee who, when asked whether there may be benefits in conducting the peer observation process across schools, responded:

> to be honest in some ways … I would feel slightly more on edge … but strangely reassured, I suppose, by being assessed by someone outside the school. I suppose it reassures the confidentiality element, if you have a bad session how many people are going to know about it … if it is someone from outside I suppose it gives you reassurance. (Law observee)

An observer faced with the same question concurred with this view:

> that might be exactly the strength because it would be even more anonymous and there wouldn't be the risk of relationships getting snarled up. (Law observer)

These two examples indicate the vulnerability felt by those being observed and observing, the second quotation indicating that peer observation had implications for and a potential impact on relationships.

There were a considerable number of responses that indicated lecturers' anxieties around giving feedback and how colleagues might receive criticism:

> if you saw something absolutely dreadful you'd feel a little embarrassed, I suppose, and you wouldn't want to bring it to a colleague, you'd feel awkward ... that could be a potential problem. (Sciences observer)

> I tend not to be as open with my critical suggestions ... with most people I've found them open and, you know, if they are open with me I'm open with them. (Sciences observer)

This fear was not only expressed by observers. Observees also raised issues about the difficulty of giving or receiving criticism:

> One of the problems with peer observation is that it is actually done by peers. Those peers are peers within your school, your department. There is inevitably therefore a difficulty in saying to someone, well really you aren't doing a very good job, that is not a good way to present material, the course is not very structured. (Law observee)

> I can imagine if you are a person who was reviewed negatively it could damage your confidence quite badly ... well it would me. (Sciences observee)

This indicates a propensity to view critical feedback in a negative light, seeing it as criticism rather than a developmental issue. Thus critical feedback must be presented in ways that are constructive and will lead to new understandings and improved practice. Any feeling that judgements are being made will act to detract from such benefits, and call the whole peer observation process into disrepute. In the sciences trios are developed from people who work closely together. Despite knowing each other well, and describing their relationships as open and honest, lecturers nevertheless worried about giving and receiving criticism. Consequently, there may be increased difficulties as personal relationships complicate the feedback process. However, fears that judgements are being made can dissipate over time, as a sciences observer pointed out:

> a number of people are still apprehensive ... this feeling was quite strong three or four years ago. I think things have mellowed because people are seeing effectively the use of the process so people are less defensive. (Sciences observer)

As the Associate Dean for Sciences pointed out, 'if done in the spirit intended, it could break barriers down ... create an interaction within the community'. Therefore it is important that such fears are addressed before the benefits of a truly reflective experience can be realised.

Another issue related to the quality of the process of peer observation was that the observee is reliant on the observer for the feedback to be conducted fully and thoroughly. The feedback process was described in some detail by one law observer, and this illustrates how the process is ideally operated in both schools:

> just before the session, I ask the person in question what they want, what they are going to do and is there any relevant material … is there anything they wish to tell me, its place in relationship to the course and area they are looking at and things like that … after the session has come to an end we have a brief discussion because during the session I tend to make rather covert notes … then I make some general points related to the session, then in fact, suggest subjectively which it has to be, of course, I always make that very clear to the person in question, any issues that may be taken on board as far as the session is concerned … we agree at a later date to do the paper-chasing exercise. (Law observer)

If the process is handled well, this can work to the benefit of both parties as a law observer illustrates:

> certainly for myself, it has improved relationships because you sometimes observe people whom you don't have much to do with on a day-to-day basis, so that's quite nice … a lot depends on how you handle the feedback, I think, and how you reassure people before-hand … if something hasn't gone quite right, if you begin by asking the tutor how they thought it went, 99% of the time they identify the thing you thought was not right … if people identify for themselves it's far less threatening. (Law observer)

The comment that there are benefits from getting to know someone better as a result of the observation can only be argued for the Law School. This is because the Law School, in contrast to sciences, operated a system whereby observers did not observe someone within their own teaching team. This slight distancing may have some advantages for giving critical feedback.

In addition, these quotations illustrate the relative power of the observer within such interactions. It is in the observer's remit to organise the process and to contemplate how to tackle the issue of feedback, though in the sciences this involves a three-way discussion, which might alleviate this power relationship to some degree. Nevertheless, the Associate Dean for Sciences argued:

> the emphasis of the process is … how much focus or too much focus on the observee … rather than considering the relationship between the two … a bit hierarchical the way it is structured … it is clear the observer can control the process. (Associate Dean for Sciences)

Thus the observation process is built on the sensitivity and understanding of the observer in both schools, and the person in the role of observer controls how the process is conducted.

Another issue raised, in particular, by a law observer was that of how peer observation was timed. This observer considered that the process needed to operate in a way that gave lecturers time to reflect and to act on those reflections, particularly in respect of what point in the year peer observation is conducted:

> what always worries me is that things get left and drift and we get to this stage [mid-semester 2] of the academic year and it still isn't done … I'd like all peer observation done if not in the first semester, at least ideally by half-way through semester 2 … this would get it sorted, but also people have a chance to do something about the feedback received. (Law observer)

This is an important point, for, as the literature suggested, conducting deep reflection is an involved process and should be given the respect necessary to achieve real improvements for learning and teaching. It seems likely that, as this observer pointed

out, lecturers may be less receptive to developmental initiatives towards the end of the academic year, when they are busy with such things as writing new modules, marking and graduation ceremonies.

Engaging in the reflective process

Understandings of the process of reflection expressed by lecturers seemed set within the more limited interpretations of the concept. For example, observers argued that they benefited from observations where they picked up tips, techniques and ideas from their colleagues. None of the lecturers interviewed talked about relating findings from the observation process to developing understandings and philosophies about education, or in relation to research knowledge. Neither did they discuss observations in the light of wider school developments. Instead, they simply talked about the value of peer observation in encouraging reflection. Here reflection was presented as an uncomplicated event that everyone understood:

> provided you are not sort of dead from the neck up invariably however well you think you are doing things [peer observation] encourages you to reflect watching anybody who does the same sort of thing as you encourages you to reflect. (Law observee)

> [peer observation] does increase the process of reflection, by and large, and makes people think that what he said or she said in fact isn't a bad point … I'll think about that and see if it works. (Law observer)

These reflective processes seem to be concentrated on techniques of teaching and teaching materials. It is also interesting that reflection is linked to thinking, as if the two processes are the same. This is in contrast to earlier arguments that reflection is about scholarly activity, involving reading literature and taking part in debate. One observee felt that people were either reflective or not, and peer observation would only encourage those who were already reflective:

> [peer observation] would encourage those already probably doing *reflection*, and those that don't, I don't think the process would make them do it anyway. (Sciences observee)

If such a belief is true, then the ability of some lecturers to grow and develop through self-questioning and re-examination in the light of new evidence would be severely hampered. Another quotation illustrates the notion that reflection is understood in terms of teaching techniques, but that this happens for the observee before the observation takes place:

> I think a lot [of reflection] happens before the event, it certainly does in my case … it forces me to think about the way a tutorial is structured whether there is too much of the lecturer himself talking not allowing the students to perhaps struggle significantly … there is a tendency when the students go silent to leap in and provide an answer, and the more experienced you get, the less inclined you are to do that. (Law observee)

The idea that the reflective element of peer observation is about lesson structure and the degree of interaction with students demonstrates a rather restricted view of the process. Such responses would seem to indicate that understandings of the peer

observation process are based around the mechanics of teaching and the student experience. To this extent, reflection was considered by most of the respondents to be useful:

> peer observation is meaningful when you do reflect but we are all human and unless we are actually forced to reflect we don't take the opportunities. (Sciences observee)

It is almost as if the notion that people engage in reflection is enough: no questions are asked about what such reflection might mean for learning and teaching within the school, or how such reflections might feed into wider developmental strategies. Moreover, what is immediately apparent from this evidence is the unstructured nature of the reflective process. This is problematic in relation to the earlier arguments that for deep learning to take place, reflection must involve issues beyond those of the teaching and delivery processes. However, some lecturers had notions of extending reflection to become a learning experience at a school level:

> reflection depends on the individual and that's where it's a staff development issue … if you had a session at the end of the process [giving overall feedback], reflection would be more active. (Sciences observee)

> without some sort of peer group process, there isn't going to be that sort of academic debate about what exactly is a lecture or seminar … I think this is needed each year as a school whether we have got it right. (Law observee)

This idea that reflection might be an active process involving the whole school in the process opens up new possibilities for developing understandings of it. As the literature indicates, reflection should include a consideration of learning processes and a belief that lecturers are a part of this learning. Thus opening up debate at a wider level may encourage greater discussion of educational philosophies and beliefs, and cause reflection at a deeper level. In addition, the point that a peer group process might encourage debate appears to ignore the fact that peer observation was designed to develop those processes. Nevertheless, the importance of encouraging wider reflection among peers and within schools is clear. Thus any school-wide processes that might help develop such reflection should be encouraged. Lecturers need to enter the debate about learning and teaching philosophies in order to come to some common understandings that improve the quality of learning and teaching.

Conclusion

As Clegg *et al.* (2002) stated, 'reflective practice is becoming the favoured paradigm for continuing professional development in higher education' (p. 131). Therefore adopting reflective practices and considering what is meant by reflection are of increasing importance to all higher education institutions. Reflection is a very important part of learning. Vehicles that can encourage and develop reflective practice are essential, and peer observation processes can form an important part of such developments. However, this study indicates that, in conducting the process of peer

observation, valuable opportunities may be lost where there is no discussion or debate around what reflection is and how reflection might be enhanced for maximum effect.

Effective relationships between peers are crucial for peer observation to become a meaningful process, as Tremlett (1992) pointed out. It is important that peer observation does not become too cosy or a substitute for a social agenda. In this study, a number of references were made to how well people knew each other and how well they got on. At the same time, references were made to apprehension about and the need for caution when giving feedback, an issue discussed by MacKinnon (2001). Consequently, there may be some questions about how deep and strong these personal understandings or relationships are. For the most part, they seem to be still at a sensitive, superficial level of engagement. Part of the difficulty in giving feedback might be the lack of meaningful language, and a lack of direction and clarity about what the process is trying to achieve. In order to add some depth and meaning to the peer observation process, it must be clear why feedback is being given. For example, feedback may motivate, clarify or help staff better understand some aspect of their practice. Thus, if the process of peer observation is to develop, issues about how lecturer interaction takes place in the pre- and post-observation sessions will need to become more sophisticated. As Brockbank and McGill (1998) argued, it is important that both the observer and the observee see this as a developmental process relevant to themselves. One way of focusing this development aspect of relationships is by utilising some aspects of reflective practice in the process, perhaps by using a critical incident method, as suggested by Brookfield (1990).

Peer observation provides one of the few opportunities where tutors can come together and discuss learning and teaching issues in a meaningful way. Peer observation needs to be central to higher education institutions' learning and teaching strategies, and linked into continual professional development programmes. Schools and departments can help in this respect. For example, a whole school/department presentation could be delivered at the start of the academic year identifying issues of language, reflective processes and concepts of learning and teaching, before the peer observation process begins for that year. This could also identify key issues that the school/department would like the peer observation process to address that academic year. If a culture of debate is nurtured, then the agenda for the following year might emerge from the previous year's observation process. This could be formalised through another presentation to staff at the end of the peer observation process, providing feedback and considering issues for further development. This process would then begin to provide depth and meaning to reflective practices within peer observation, and opportunities for lecturers to become involved in the direction the school/department is taking. Such a process would also raise the level of the debate and steer lecturers away from the superficial and cosy. In this way, the learning context, highlighted as important by Boud and Walker (1998), becomes one of reflection and debate.

Reflection is something more than simply thinking, and, just as we need to be taught how to think effectively, so we need to learn how to be effective reflective practitioners. The peer observation of teaching provides a vehicle for encouraging

academics to develop their reflective thinking about their role as professional lecturers, and to seek and engage in developmental processes as a result. As Wubbles and Korthagen (1990) argued, reflective teachers tend to be more open to innovation. This takes lecturers beyond the point of being a subject specialist who reflects on subject content, and into consideration of learning and teaching philosophies and cultures. In this way, academic debate is encouraged and more collegiate responses to 'how we learn and teach here' developed. Building consensus which is based on academic debate and consideration can help develop high quality learning environments for students to enjoy. It is important the process of peer observation does not stagnate, and this can be avoided by encouraging the observer and observee to engage in reflection that will enhance their understanding of approaches to curriculum, teaching styles, students' learning and subject matter.

References

Allen, L. (2002) Consenting adults in private—union and management perspectives *on peer observation of teaching*, LTSN Generic Centre. Available online at: http://www.ltsn.ac.uk/genericcentre/ (accessed 01 March, 2004).

Beaty, L. (1998) The professional development of teachers in higher education: structures, methods and responsibilities, *Innovations in Education and Training International,* 35(2), 99–107.

Bell, M. (2002) *Peer observation of teaching in Australia,* LTSN Generic Centre. Available online at: http://www.ltsn.ac.uk/genericcentre/ (accessed 01 May, 2004).

Bolin, F. S. (1988) Helping student teachers think about teaching, *Journal of Teacher Education,* 39(2), 48–54.

Boud, D. & Walker, D. (1998) Promoting reflection in professional courses: the challenge of context, *Studies in Higher Education,* 23(2), 191–206.

Brockbank, A. & McGill, I. (1998) *Facilitating reflective learning in higher education* (1st edn) (Buckingham, Open University Press).

Brookfield, S. (1990) Using critical incidents to explore learners' assumptions, in: J. Mezirow *et al.* (Eds) *Fostering critical reflection in adulthood: a guide to transformative and emancipatory learning* (San Francisco, CA, Jossey-Bass).

Brown, S. & Jones, G. (1993) Editorial, in: S. Brown, G. Jones & S. Rawnsley (Eds) *Observing teaching* (Birmingham, Staff and Educational Development Association).

Clegg, S., Tan, J. & Saeidi, S. (2002) Reflecting or acting? Reflective practice and continuing professional development in higher education, *Reflective Practice,* 3(1), 131–146.

Coldron, J. & Smith, R. (1999) Active location in teachers' construction of their professional identities, *Journal of Curriculum Studies,* 31(6), 711–726.

Fullerton, H. (1999) Observation of teaching, in: H. Fry, S. Ketteridge & S. Marshall (Eds) *A handbook for teaching and learning in higher education* (London, Kogan Page).

Gosling, D. (2000) *Guidelines for peer observation of learning and teaching, for Escalate Regional Networking Seminars The Higher Education Academy.* Available online at: http://www.escalate.ac.uk/exchange/peerreview/ (accessed 01 May, 2004).

Hammersley-Fletcher, L. & Orsmond, P. (2004) Evaluating our peers: is peer observation a meaningful process? *Studies in Higher Education,* 29(4), 489–503.

Harvey, L. & Knight, P. (1996) *Transforming higher education* (Buckingham, Open University Press).

Hinett, K. (2003) *Improving learning through reflection: part 1.* Available online at: https://www.ilt.ac.uk/portal/showfullarticle.asp?_article=3601&_se (accessed 01 May, 2004).

Hogston, R. (1995) Evaluating quality nursing care through peer review and reflection: the findings of a qualitative study, *International Journal of Nursing Studies,* 32(2), 162–172.

Kuit, J. A. & Gill, R. (2001) Experiences of reflective teaching, *Active Learning in Higher Education,* 2(2), 128–142.

Lueddeke, G. (1998) UK higher education at a crossroads: reflections on issues and practice in teaching and learning, *Innovations in Education and Training International,* 35(2), 108–116.

MacKinnon, M. (2001) Using observational feedback to promote academic development, *International Journal for Academic Development,* 6(1), 21–39.

Martin, A. G. & Double, J. M. (1998) Developing higher education teaching skills through peer observation and collaborative reflection, *Innovation in Education and Training International,* 35(2), 161–169.

Mezirow, J. (1990) Preface, in: J. Mezirow *et al*. (Eds) *Fostering critical reflection in adulthood: a guide to transformative and emancipatory learning* (San Francisco, CA, Jossey-Bass).

Moon, J. (1999) *Reflecting in learning and professional development* (London, Kogan Page).

Quality Assurance Agency (2000) *Handbook for academic review* (Gloucester, Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education). Available online at: http://www.qaa.ac.uk (accessed 01 April, 2004).

Race, P. (2001) *The lecturer's tool kit* (2nd edn) (London, Kogan Page).

Thorpe, M. (2000) Encouraging students to reflect as part of the assignment process: student responses and tutor feedback, *Active Learning in Higher Education,* 1(1), 79–92.

Tremlett, R. (1992) Peer support for improved teaching, *New Academic,* Summer, 16–17.

Trigwell, K. (2001) Judging university teaching, *International Journal for Academic Development,* 6(1), 65–73.

Wubbels, T. & Korthagen, F. A. J. (1990) The effects of a pre-service teacher education program for the preparation of reflective teachers, *Journal of Education for Teaching,* 16(1), 29–43.