

Tools for Reflection and Professional Development

Dr Mary Fitzpatrick
Centre for Teaching and Learning



Overview

- **Tools & Sources of feedback**
 - SETs
 - Peer observation
 - Portfolio Development
 - Focus groups
- **Evidencing teaching**
 - Uses and reservations
 - Lecturer reflections
 - CPD and next steps



- *We teach to change the world.....What we think are democratic, respectful ways of treating people can be experienced by them as oppressive and constraining. One of the hardest things teachers have to learn is that the sincerity of their intentions does not guarantee the purity of their practice. The ...complexities of learning and the ways in which power complicates all human relationships mean that teaching can never be innocent.... Teaching innocently means thinking that we are always understanding exactly what it is that we are doing and what effect we are having....teaching this way is naive...at worst it induces pessimism, guilt and lethargy as we frequently misread how others perceive our actions, an uncritical stance toward our practice sets us up for a career of frustration...* (Brookfield, 1995:1)

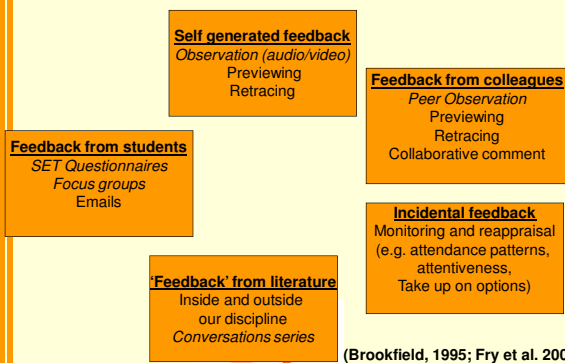


Tools and Sources of feedback:

*for what, for whom
and
to what ends?*



Sources and Tools for feedback – UL supports



How do *you* make use of these sources of feedback?



Student Feedback

- Students may be the most appropriate judges of day to day teacher behaviours in the classroom - they are not the most appropriate judges of the accuracy of course content or use of acceptable teaching strategies in the discipline....



Acting on feedback

- Interpreting feedback from students can be emotional:
 - Dismissing unwelcome feedback
 - Dwelling on less favourable feedback
- Important to call in 'second opinion' – how to capitalise on strengths and address weaknesses



Benefits....

- Active self development - Reassess own teaching in the light of teaching of others:
 - But as I look at you with my lens, I consider you a mirror. I hope to see myself in you...seeing you allows me to see myself differently and to explore the variables we both use' (Faneslow, 1990:184)



Reservations in gathering evidence?

- Vulnerability
- Lack of confidence
- Fear
- Source of feedback
- Use
- Goes against personal ethos
- Opening the class room door
- Junior V Senior faculty engagement
- Who is a peer?
- Confidentiality
- Time, time, time.....
- Format and structure



What lecturers say...

- I wouldn't mind a friend coming to see me teach as long as he didn't join in or anything – he would need to be gentle as I don't think I would be able for too much criticism.
- I have been told that watching a video of yourself teaching can be worthwhile but the very thought of it scares the hell out of me!



(Gibbs & Habeshaw, 1997)

What lecturers say...

- I've sometimes tried doing something different but I can't tell whether it has worked or not.
- I think the students have a right to expect us to evaluate what we do and how we might improve – after all they are the customer and we are providing the service.



(Gibbs & Habeshaw, 1997)

Reflection....UL Teachers

- (When developing a portfolio) the thing is you are always being reflective on your teaching and that is the biggest thing. I found that the day you stop questioning what you do in the class you lose ..you become de-motivated, you are not going out there thinking about the students, or to make things better, it is always good to say am I doing this the right way – that is the biggest thing.



Reflection...

.....is an opportunity to draw it all together and see whether your teaching is enough to keep you happy and in turn, students, or whether you really need to start addressing some of the areas where you're weak. I'm always looking for new ideas and new ways to try and relate to students and I'm happy enough with some of the ideas I come up with.



After reflection

- **Now what??? So what?**
- After reflecting on practice, there should come planned change
- Can be as simple as changing a font on a presentation or difficult as being more assertive with ground rules in seminars
- What next?
 - To plan our own identified development needs
 - To plan for future action



Principles of CPD

- Development should
 - Be continuous, in the sense that the professional should always be actively seeking improved performance
 - Be owned and managed by the individual learner
 - Start from the individuals current learning state while fitting appropriate organisation or client needs



(CIPD 1995)

Principles of CPD contd

- Learning objectives should be clear although they may be complex, and wherever possible, should meet the needs of the organisation as well as the individual
- Investment of time in learning would be regarded as being as important as an investment in any other activity



Next steps.....



Thank you

Questions?

