

Learning Observations and Professional Discussions (LOPD)

The following has been adapted from a document from the School of Education which informs PG teaching students of the purpose and method of peer observations in a student/pupil teaching environment. The Department would like to encourage colleagues to try this in Semester 2 of 2022/23. Following an assessment of how it is working, we will then roll it out for all teaching staff in 2023/24.

Career-long Professional Learning

Research has shown that teachers at varying stages of their careers benefit from observing each other's teaching and engaging in professional discussions afterwards (McIlroy and Blake, 2013). This was found to be a particularly rich experience when linking learning observations to theory and discussing these links in the subsequent professional discussion.

Learning Observations and Professional Discussions (LOPD) outlined below provide an excellent context for self-reflection and experiential learning.

Procedure for Learning Observations and Professional Discussion (LOPD)

Lecturers would work in small groups (initially 2) and these groups may be populated with any combination of experienced and less experienced members of staff, at varying stages of their own careers. The makeup of these groups will depend on each individual context and preference. *The intention is to allow observers to watch colleagues teaching and for them to then reflect on their own strengths and development needs, rather than to set a context for assessment/feedback of the person teaching.*

- Observers should think about their approach to learning and teaching when working with students and identify an area to focus on during observation and in subsequent professional discussion.
- They should consider any evidence they might have, in terms of their focus areas eg. prior student feedback/evaluation.
- Observers identify any background reading relating to their chosen focus area and notify everyone participating in the LOPD in good time as to what that reading is, sending links and attachments where possible. Readings should be *realistic and manageable*.
- Observers take their own notes during the observation to help them reflect on their own practice. The observers will use the observed lecture to provide a context in which to discuss their focus area.
- This observation provides the context for two types of exploratory discussion:
 1. The observer can discuss their own focus area in the context of the observed session
 2. The lecturer being observed can seek feedback on their own practice, should they wish.
- The discussions should all be non-evaluative
- The timing of the learning observations and professional discussion will be agreed by all involved.

Possible themes for observers' consideration:

Positive ethos	Inclusive approaches	Positive relationships (Clearly knows students)	Appropriate resources (e.g. Accessible PowerPoint)
Use of voice and language	Questioning	Active learning strategies	Timing and pacing
Thorough planning and preparation	Clear explanations	Learning intentions clear	Plenary to clarify learning
Inspirational and professional demeanour	Checking for understanding	Student engagement	Modelling/demonstrating (where relevant)