Peer Assisted Teaching Scheme

Teachers helping teachers
Building quality in higher education units

Participant instructional workbook

2011

Version 1.0

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Introduction

Welcome to the Peer Assisted Teaching Scheme commonly known as PATS. The scheme was first piloted in the Faculty of Information Technology in 2008 at Monash University, Caulfield Campus, Australia. Following its initial success, PATS was funded by a 2010 ALTC Teaching Fellowship, so that now PATS is open to all who wish to improve the health and quality of their units. The scheme aims to inform and equip academics with skills and strategies to improve their units. It provides opportunities for teachers to share ideas; to discuss improvements and to develop future educational innovations. PATS brings together teachers and researchers with a common interest in building peer capacity to enhancing learning and teaching.

We have planned an interactive and engaging scheme, with pre-semester, during semester and post-semester tasks. Tasks will appear in a variety of formats and focus on aspects of unit improvement from four perspectives: self, students, peers and the literature.

In this instructional workbook we have set out to give you an overview of the Peer Assisted Teaching Scheme and its tasks and requirements. Included is a table of scheduled meetings and an outline of the PATS process. Templates have been developed to provide a structured guideline for participants to follow. Partners need to complete the following tasks:

**Pre-semester tasks**
1. Meet and greet
2. Break down the barriers
3. Set goals for improvement

**During semester tasks**
1. Listen to your students
   - Decide how to gather informal student feedback
   - Gather feedback
   - Discuss feedback with your mentor
   - Conduct a summary of feedback session
2. Listen to your peers
   - Decide what to observe
   - Perform a peer observation of teaching
   - Discuss observation with your peer
   - Produce a joint statement

**Post-semester tasks**
1. Critically reflect on the semester and your goals for improvement
2. Incorporate your improvements into your professional development plan
### Timetable of activities

The PATS activities have all been designed to help you through the process of improving your unit. We have provided step-by-step instructions with each task carefully chosen for the purpose of guiding you through your journey of improvement.

#### Pre-semester tasks

1. **Meet and greet** — introduce yourself and meet your partner
2. **Break down the barriers** — consider the roadblocks preventing improvements to the unit
3. **Set goals for improvement** — develop a plan of action and specific strategies to achieve these goals

#### During semester tasks*

1. **Engage your students**
   - Decide how to gather informal student feedback
   - Gather feedback
   - Discuss feedback with your mentor
   - Conduct a summary of feedback session
2. **Engage your peers**
   - Decide what to observe
   - Perform a peer observation of teaching
   - Discuss the observation with your partner
   - Produce a joint statement

#### Post-semester tasks

1. **Critically reflect on the semester and your goals for improvement**
2. **Performance planning** — incorporate your improvements into your professional development plan

*Participants can keep a reflective journal throughout the semester. This is completely optional.*
The PATS process

PATS is a developmental and confidential process in which two or more colleagues, within a faculty, collaborate to improve the quality of a unit. Partners work together setting goals for improvement in the unit. Using a collegial approach, strengthened through a series of centrally delivered workshops and informal discussions over coffee, the partners develop strategies to achieve the set goals. Informal student feedback and peer observations are used during the semester as tools to enhance unit quality.

There are two modes of operation for partnerships:

1. **Mentor-mentee partnership** - partnership focuses on the mentee's unit
2. **Reciprocal partnership** - partnership works together providing support and mentorship to each other in improving their individual units

The PATS process which is outlined in Figure 1 is divided into three stages that include: pre-semester, during semester and post-semester tasks. Tasks will appear in a variety of formats and focus on aspects of unit improvement from four perspectives: self, students, peers and the literature.

Supporting PATS are professional academics development workshops delivered at your university. Make sure you take the time to find out what is offered. You will meet together on several occasions prior, during and after the semester. To facilitate these meetings ask your faculty to provide you with ten coffee vouchers each. These meetings are an opportunity for you to share and develop your theory and philosophy about teaching and learning in higher education as well as cover the tasks involved in the PATS.

**Recap**

- About the PATS process
- Know your pre, during and post-semester tasks
- Complete the tasks

**Task checklist**

- Complete the pre-semester, during semester and post-semester tasks outlined throughout the workbook

**Resources**

- Improving Teaching and Learning: [http://www.uoit.ca/teachingandlearning/contact/apr10/knapper.mp3](http://www.uoit.ca/teachingandlearning/contact/apr10/knapper.mp3)
Getting the PATS process going

Figure 1.

**PRE-SEMESTER TASKS**

- Recruitment / Partnerships
  - Teaching Team
  - MENTOR
  - MENTEE

**DURING SEMESTER TASKS**

- Mid-semester meeting with Fellow
  - STRATEGY PLAN
  - SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK
  - TEACHING OBSERVATIONS
  - GATHER INFORMAL STUDENT FEEDBACK
  - GATHER INFORMAL STUDENT FEEDBACK
  - CRITICAL REFLECTION (EXAMINER’S REPORT)

**POST-SEMESTER TASKS**

- Teaching Team
  - Rewards / Acknowledgement

**Recommended Timeline (week)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>-4</th>
<th>-3</th>
<th>-2</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>4-9</th>
<th>6-9</th>
<th>13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| BRIEFING
  - Academics are invited to participate in PATS. If deemed appropriate by the ADES/NoS, the academic responsible for teaching a unit that requires improvement is partnered with an academic leading a high performing unit to discuss practical ways to improve teaching, course curriculum, and unit development. A briefing session outlining the scheme and its aims is given by the teaching fellow to potential partners prior to semester.

**MEETINGS**

- Partners are expected to reflect on the unit, students’ feedback, and examiner’s report and review teaching materials. They would openly exchange views and teaching ideas, discuss ways to improve the unit, collect informal student feedback during the semester and organise a peer observation of teaching. It is expected that at least three meetings will take place before the unit is next offered, at least four meetings should occur during semester and two will occur after the semester has concluded.

**INCENTIVES**

- Incentives such as coffee vouchers will be issued to each participant to encourage partners to meet informally pre, during and post-semester. Academics who are able to show improved outcomes by way of an increase of at least 0.5 in unit evaluations may be rewarded in some way as determined by their faculty (i.e. via an academic performance development scheme, towards promotion or a certificate for teaching improvement).

**WORKSHOPS**

- A series of teaching workshops will be organised by the teaching fellow, in which mentors will share their teaching strategies and methods. In addition academic staff from the OPVCLT will deliver workshops on peer observation of teaching, assessment strategies and curriculum alignment. Ongoing support and monitoring will be provided by the teaching fellow to ensure the successful operation of the partnerships.

**DELIVERABLES**

- As part of the scheme, PATS mentees are expected to produce four deliverables:
  1. A strategy plan – the issues to be addressed and how this can be achieved.
  2. A summary of feedback – which is fed back to the current cohort of students, areas of improvements that can be made.
  3. A peer observation of teaching – in the form of a joint statement between the PATS mentor and mentee which sets out where and when the Peer Observation of Teaching (POT) occurred along with a summary of good practice observed and other issues that need attention.
  4. Critical reflection – a summary reflecting on meeting the goals for improvement.

**DEBRIEFING**

- Takes place at the conclusion of the semester in the form of two separate focus group discussions between the PATS mentees and the PATS mentors with the teaching fellow about the process, their own experiences and ways to improve the scheme for future participants.
Pre-Semester Tasks

Task 1. Meet and greet

It is time to put yourself back into the driver’s seat and start to think differently about your unit. Any worthwhile journey needs planning and to help start your journey we have three pre-semester tasks. We want to create a habit of how to think differently about yourself, your unit, your students and your learning and teaching environment. To begin we need a map and a process to plan our journey. We have developed three pre-semester tasks. Each pre-semester task sharpens your focus and is designed to get you organised and prepared to make changes to your units. We want you to have the most successful unit transformation. You are not alone, many academics want to change their unit and make them more stimulating, challenging and valued.

It is time to be open to change. Your first task is to introduce yourself to your partner, tell them your name, what you do, and why you are doing PATS. Outline the unit you teach and establish some ground rules so you can work effectively over the term of the semester. Visit the PATS website to view the PATS guide, newsletters, teaching modules and video clips.

Recap

✓ Introduce yourself to your partner
✓ Look out for regular guides, newsletters, programs, videos, and much more

Task checklist

☐ Introduce yourself - tell us a little about yourself, for example:
   • Your name and the unit you are teaching
   • What do you do? (work, study, parent)
   • Why are you doing PATS?
   Maybe you have something in common or you have an insight to share. Some of our greatest lessons have come from colleagues.

☐ Plan your meeting dates for the rest of the semester. Following each meeting, write a one sentence summary of what was discussed

☐ Received coffee vouchers from ADE

☐ Organised to view previous unit evaluation qualitative comments and teaching evaluations

Resources

Task 1 worksheet

To get the PATS process underway, introduce yourself and get to know your partner. Plan your meetings for the rest of the semester and discuss arrangements if you are unable to meet face to face.

Provide a brief biography

Background context of the unit

Establish some ground rules on how to operate effectively as a partnership

PLAN: What do you want to achieve from each meeting? (Set the meeting dates for the rest of the semester and complete the summary after each meeting)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting Dates</th>
<th>One sentence summary of the meeting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pre-semester</td>
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<td>1.</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>during-semester</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>post-semester</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Task 2. Break down the barriers

Pre-semester Task 2 considers what is holding you back from making improvements to your unit. How do you think about your students, unit content, and curriculum? Academics are faced with many barriers which can often cause units to under perform — these are road blocks. There are three types of road blocks: 1. Internal barriers 2. External barriers within your control and 3. External barriers outside of your control. In this task it is time to identify these barriers and find ways to break though the road blocks. Write down every barrier you have faced that has caused your unit to underperform.

Recap

✔ Now is the time to take full responsibility and reflect on your unit
✔ If you want to transform your unit, you need to understand the barriers
✔ Three types of barriers:
  1. **Internal barriers**: For example: I’m too tired, I’m not motivated, it’s not worth trying, I might fail, I’ll look silly.
  2. **External barriers within your control**: These are barriers prompted by external factors which you still have some control over. For example: poor organisation of teaching materials, the textbook is out of date.
  3. **External barriers outside of your control**: These are external factors that you have absolutely no control over, real emergencies. For example power failure, students not having the pre-required knowledge, timetabling, room allocation.

Task checklist

☐ List the barriers in the worksheet on the following page. Write down every possible barrier you can think of into all three categories.
☐ Discuss barriers with your partner
☐ Write down solutions for each barrier. For example if ‘Students do not have the right pre-required knowledge’ is one for your barriers, to overcome this you may write ‘Find out what pre-required knowledge they come in with and whether additional classes can be set up’.
☐ Forward a copy of worksheet 2 to your <HoS>

Resources

agog Monash University Lectures Online (MULO)
http://www.mulo.monash.edu.au/
agog Monash Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)
http://vle.monash.edu.au/
agog Monash Peer-Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) program
Task 2 worksheet

It is time to break down the barriers. Write down every barrier you have encountered in the past, or are currently facing, as to why your unit has performed poorly. Discuss these with your partner and develop solutions together.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Internal barriers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Solutions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. External barriers - within your control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Solutions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. External barriers - outside of your control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Solutions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Task 3. Set goals for improvement

Each year, all faculties undertake evaluations for all their units and teaching using the <Student Evaluation of Teacher and Unit (SETU)> instrument. These questionnaires typically use standard university-wide questions that are consistent across all faculties, for example at <Monash University> these questions are:

1. <LIST QUESTIONS USED IN EVALUATION>
2.
3.
4.
5.

Responses to these questions use a <5 point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1) with 3 representing Neutral. Options for Not Applicable (6) and Don’t Know (7) are also provided but are not counted in the response analysis>. Students are also able to provide qualitative comments to two open ended questions, along with specific information about an academic’s teaching. The <two> open ended questions are:

1. <LIST OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS>
2.

Faculties use this data to help them identify units that are meeting students' expectations and needs, as well as units that require improvement. Comments specific to an individual’s teaching are collected through the teaching questionnaire part of the survey. These results are interpreted to provide a quality assurance measure for senior management.

<Monash University focuses on item 5 (reporting overall satisfaction) in providing university managers with an easy way of monitoring aggregate performance of the unit. Using question 5 as the key question, a “traffic light” indicator was developed to interpret the results. The four components of the indicator are:>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colour Code</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
<th>Unit Measure</th>
<th>Characteristics of unit response distribution</th>
<th>Targets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>“overall” item median ≥ 4.7</td>
<td>A considerable majority of responses are “strongly agree”</td>
<td>5% of units have medians ≥ 4.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting aspirations</td>
<td>“overall” item median between 3.6 - 4.69</td>
<td>Responses are generally above “neutral”, the great majority are “agree” or “strongly agree”</td>
<td>80% of units fall in this band</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needing improvement</td>
<td>“overall” item median between 3.01 – 3.59</td>
<td>Responses are generally “neutral” or bimodal with no clear trend</td>
<td>10% of units fall in this band</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needing critical attention</td>
<td>“overall” item median ≤ 3.0</td>
<td>Responses generally below “neutral”, majority “disagree” or “strongly disagree”</td>
<td>5% of units have medians ≤ 3.0</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Unit evaluations are intended to provide a “snapshot” of students’ perceptions of a unit, and are only one indicator of unit performance.

Task checklist
- Discuss your unit evaluation results (qualitative and quantitative) with your partner
- Identify 2-4 goals for improvement
- Produce a strategy plan to address the identified areas

Resources
- Check out the units that have scored outstanding (>4.7) using the Monash Business Intelligence system online at: https://bis.monash.edu.au/portal/page?_pageid=331&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL
Task 3 worksheet

Look through students’ comments and set 2-4 goals for improvement. For each goal, produce a strategy plan. Later in the semester, revisit your strategy plan and use the following codes to indicate the status of your plan: commenced (C), in progress (I) or has been achieved (A).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals for improvement</th>
<th>Strategy plan</th>
<th>Status (C,I,A)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</table>
During Semester Tasks

Task 4. Gather informal student feedback

To check if you are on the road to improvement, participants will collect informal feedback from their students. The collection of feedback can be done via an online survey or handwritten during the class. A template for gathering ISF can be found in Appendix 1. Brandenburg (2010) provides many strategies in which to collect and use informal student feedback.

You will be required to collect feedback form your students to see if you are on the right path for unit satisfaction. Students’ responses will be discussed with your partner and considered in terms of what can be addressed and improved, and what can remain unchanged because it is truly outside your control. At the following lecture you will deliver a summary of feedback.

The summary of feedback (Appendix 2) is the heart of the informal student feedback process and is delivered at the start of the next lecture. Key issues highlighted by the feedback are communicated back to the students. During the session, the lecturer takes approximately five minutes to create a ‘moment of truth’ for the student group. The lecturer communicates the feedback in a sincere way and demonstrates his or her commitment to transparency and accountability. When skilfully delivered, the summary of feedback builds trust and respect and opens the whole group up to learning. With successive applications of the informal student feedback (ISF), the students adopt more collaborative behaviours towards each other and the lecturer.

Recap

✓ There are different ways to gather informal student feedback
✓ Feedback is only useful if it is carefully considered and changes can be made
✓ Remember to let the student know what can be changed that is in your control, and what is outside of your control

Task checklist

☐ Decide how you will gather informal student feedback with your mentor. Decide when and where feedback will be gathered. Organise a time to meet with your mentor and discuss the feedback
☐ Gather the feedback from your students
☐ Reflect on the feedback with your mentor and draft a summary
☐ Set aside time in the next class to give feedback to the students based on changes that you will make that are within your control, and what can be done about those things that are outside of your control

Resources

It is important to plan how you will gather informal student feedback and deliver the summary of feedback in the following lecture.

PART A. When and how will you gather student feedback

Date: 
Time: 
Venue: 
Type of session (lecture, tutorial, lab): 
Method of gathering feedback:

PART B. Identify what students liked, disliked, want improved

Draft your summary of feedback with your mentor
Task 5. Perform a Peer Observation of Teaching

A peer observation of teaching (POT) is where two or more colleagues collaborate in observing each other’s teaching and then provide feedback and suggestions for improvement. It can provide a number of benefits both to the teacher and the teaching institution.

Peer observation works to build supportive teams and can increase your repertoire of teaching strategies. The opportunity to participate in peer observation focuses on your own development and critical reflection on the practice of teaching. It is surprising how much you can learn by observing other teachers’ classes and by looking through their class materials. You can always pick up new and ingenious ways to inform your own practice!

There are many benefits associated with peer observation of teaching, with the main purpose being to enhance the teacher’s own learning and teaching. It can also bring improved quality of student learning, an increased awareness of what material colleagues are covering, and dissemination of ideas about best practice.

A peer observation of teaching consists of four stages:

1. **Briefing session**
   An initial discussion between the partners about the nature and aims of the activity so both can benefit from the experience.

2. **Observation session**
   Observer records their observations through the session about the various interactions between the teacher and the students.

3. **Post-observation session**
   A collaborative reflection where the observer provides feedback in the form of constructive criticism and suggestions for improvements.

4. **Production of a joint statement**
   A short summary containing a log of who was observed by whom, a good practice observed and any other issues related to the promotion of high quality learning and teaching.

The template provided in Appendix 3 will assist in your planning, observing and recording. A variety of templates are available from:


These publications allow the use of their templates, with acknowledgements. You may modify these to better suit your purpose or you may find others more suitable.

**Task checklist**

- Organise a briefing session with your mentor, decide on which peer observation instrument to use. We have provided two instruments (see appendices 3 and 4).
- Complete the observation
- Post observation session
- Production of a joint statement

**Resources**

- This site contains links to various universities who have developed peer review instruments: [http://www.tedi.uq.edu.au/evaluations/Strategies/index.html](http://www.tedi.uq.edu.au/evaluations/Strategies/index.html)
Performing a peer observation allows colleagues to provide honest, positive and constructive feedback. Complete the form below prior to the observation and then use the peer review instruments in Appendix 3 as a detailed guide when observing your partner and vice versa.

PART A. When and how will you conduct your peer observation of teaching?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venue:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Type of session (lecture, tutorial, lab):
Method of conducting peer observation:

What would you like to get out of the observation?

PART B. Use the peer review instruments in Appendix 3 as a detailed guide when observing your partner.
Post-Semester Tasks

Task 6. Critical Reflection

Critical reflection on your unit and your teaching is a key ingredient in professional development (Brookfield 1995). It is also important to reflect on how well you achieved your goals for improvement. Your participation in PATS provides you with the knowledge and experience to develop as a reflective practitioner, in this case a critically reflective lecturer in higher education. PATS is expressly designed to provide a rich source of data for you to work with.

Critical reflection is another key element in any Peer Observation Partnership, in which teachers and colleagues reflect together and individually on teaching events in order to develop teaching skills and understanding (Bell, 2007).

Your ‘during semester tasks’ reported the evidence you gathered about your unit and your teaching, this task requires you to analyse and reflect on that evidence without the bias of <SETU>. Your reading and viewing of the podcasts will assist you to theorise about your teaching and your students’ learning; the evidence you have gathered, your response to the reading you have done will form the foundation for this piece of writing.

Task checklist

- Reflect on your teaching and unit
- Did you achieve your goals for improvement?

Resources

- Critical Reflection and Critical Pedagogy
- Learning through reflection
Task 6 worksheet

Self reflection on your unit and teaching is vital part of your professional development. It displays a desire to acknowledge what you do well and what you can improve on. Revisit worksheet 3 and reflect on your goals. Comment on whether these were achieved.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal for improvement</th>
<th>Strategy plan</th>
<th>Were you satisfied? Y/N</th>
<th>Comment on achievements</th>
<th>What would you do differently next time?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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</table>
Task 7. Performance planning and strategies

One way of capturing both the qualitative and quantitative changes in the performance of academics, in relation to unit and teaching improvement, educational leadership and education standing is via the Performance Development Online (PDO) tool. This tool is available to support academic staff in managing their performance development cycle in a timely and consistent way, and is the final post-semester task of the PATS process.

Frame the goals achieved in terms of your professional development and don’t let this effort go to waste. Use this material to make an entry in your academic performance plan and start a teaching portfolio.

Task checklist

- Discussed with partner about completing your teaching improvement, educational standing or education leadership in your Personal Development Plan
- Entered improvements into your Personal Development Plan
- Reference your SETU results
- Consider a promotion application
- Create a teaching portfolio which contains all of your achievements (eg. awards, certificates, commendations, emails from peers or students, etc)

Resources

  Choose “Lecturer” or “Assistant Lecturer” and referring to the Education column develop a draft academic performance plan you can then discuss with your supervisor at your mid-cycle professional review.
- All Monash quantitative UE results can be found at: https://emuapps.monash.edu.au/unitevaluations/wr/uewr_rp1_faculty_yearseme.jsp
- Education Focused Roles
- Academic Performance Standards
Informal Student Feedback Form

Name of unit: ________________________________

Student name (optional): _______________________

Please tick ONLY one box for each statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>1 (Strongly Disagree)</th>
<th>2 (Disagree)</th>
<th>3 (Neutral)</th>
<th>4 (Agree)</th>
<th>5 (Strongly Agree)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am finding the unit stimulating</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The resources are supporting my studies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So far I am satisfied with the quality of this unit</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would recommend this unit to others</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. What are the best aspects of the unit so far and why?
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

2. What aspects of the unit so far would you like changed and why?
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

3. Any further comments?
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
Appendix 2

Example of a summary of feedback session

Lecture feedback was sought in this instance, one example is given under each category.

After the last lecture I sat down with some volunteers and reviewed your feedback. Firstly, I am pleased that the class is willing to give this process a fair trial. Your written feedback gave me a chance to know how many of the key ideas you remembered in the session and what you were really thinking.

The information you give me is very valuable and I very much appreciate your contributions. I am going to ask you to do this again in a couple of weeks time.

I'll talk first about what you liked, disliked and then the changes you suggested.

**Likes - Student participation**

Most students found the student participation part of the session was very useful in that it consolidated some abstract concepts and made the lecture more interesting and enjoyable. For instance student1 and student2 said:

- “Practical examples backing up the theory. This makes it easier to remember because of the variety of ways the information was presented” student1
- “Having a lecturer which involves the students encourages us to pay attention rather than tune out and wait for the hour to be over” student2

**Dislikes - Lecture theatre lights and wind noise**

An anonymous student mentioned the technical difficulties encountered in the lecture theatre.

- “Fix the lights! When going from projector to computer mode lights automatically turn on. And the wind noise when you close the door.” student3

I contacted the technical assistant and explained the lighting problem. He told me that Rm 117 has problems with the lighting control, and to monitor the change more closely to pinpoint when it occurs to see if anything can be done about it.

**Changes - Copy of Coded Examples**

The first comment I'd like to acknowledge is one by student5, who suggested something that might help improve the class's learning and understanding

- “I would like a copy of the code to help me remember what we did”. student5

Thank-you student5, a copy of all my code can be downloaded from LMS please click on the examples link.

Thank-you again for all your comments and this concludes the summary of feedback for week 4.
Appendix 3

Macquarie University have developed the following tools for conducting a Peer Observation of Teaching.

**PART 1.**

Observation check list

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher:</th>
<th>Observer:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observation date:</td>
<td>Timing:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity type:</td>
<td>Unit:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning/organisation/content</th>
<th>Observed?</th>
<th>Brief comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching purposes are clear and stated in appropriate term e.g. aims, outcomes etc</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching purposes are appropriate to the needs, experience and abilities of students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure of session: introduction, development, conclusion are evident</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content is appropriate for the level, abilities, needs and interests of students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content is well researched and up-to-date</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching strategies/resources</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Methods are appropriate to purposes of session</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods are chosen with regard to students’ abilities, needs and needs of unit/content</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods are chosen to gain interest and participation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Class management is effective and appropriate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources are used effectively and complement content, methods and purposes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation, management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective presentation/communication skills are used</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employs effective use of questioning to promote monitoring and understanding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student contributions and participation are encouraged in a positive atmosphere</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal opportunities exist for all students</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment/monitoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suitable methods are used to identify and monitor student progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructive feedback is provided</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extra comments:

- Planning/organisation/content
- Teaching strategies/resources
- Presentation/class relationships/class management
- Assessment and monitoring of students
- Additional comments and suggestions for future development

When completed, this form stays with the observed teacher for their records
### Guidelines for observation – free response

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<th>Activity type:</th>
<th>Unit:</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

When recording in free response mode you might like to focus on some of the following: Context (e.g. links between other areas of the curriculum), Structure (well organised, key points signposted), Level pitch and pace (could students cope; any provision for students experiencing difficulties?), Clarity, Use of examples, Preparation undertaken by the teacher, Student responses, Interactions (between student & teacher or teacher & student), Involvement (active/passive?), Venue suitability (seating, lighting, AV aids).

When completed, this form stays with the observed teacher for their records.
## Planning the session
- how does the plan relate to the previous session?
- are there clear aims and objectives?
- how does the session fit with the overall program or unit outcomes?
- how are resources organised for the session?

## Introduction
- is it clear how the work relates to other sessions?
- does the introduction set the scene and give an overview of outcomes expected?
Delivering and developing the session

- is the communication of ideas relevant, clear and coherent?
- is there opportunity for the students to clarify their understanding? How is this handled?
- what strategies are used to gain attention, and to ensure attention is maintained?
- are the students motivated?
- are the teaching methods appropriate to the tasks in hand?
- are there opportunities for the students to think, question and feedback?
- what modes of delivery are used; is more than one mode used?

Concluding the session

- is the session drawn to a satisfactory conclusion?
- is there a summary of the main ideas or a review of the point reached so far?
- does the conclusion look forward to the next session?

When completed, this form stays with the observed teacher for their records
PART 4.

Summary overview record and permission note

Section A (Please complete this part)

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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We confirm that the observation has taken place and feedback has been given. We agree to the release of the information listed or attached below.

Observed.............................................................. Date...........................................

Observer.............................................................. Date...........................................

When completed, copy this form and give to your peer observation coordinator.

Section B (This part is optionally completed)

Summary of shared good practice – perhaps three things that went really well (either as part of the observation process or as teaching practice).

Any other agreed comments
PART 5.

Observer record

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</table>

Record your thoughts and comments on the experience of observing. This might include your impression of being an observer, examples of teaching methods that you might find useful in your own teaching.

When completed, this form stays with the observer for their records
Acknowledgements


