Peering Across the Divide: Cross School Peer Support Scheme for Students

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**Peer Observation**

- Accountability (Allen, 2002)
- Enhancing learning and teaching through reflection (Brown & Jones, 1993)

**Peer Support**

- A tool for *discussion and promotion* of best practice (Gosling, 2005)

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Gosling, David. (2005) Peer Observation of Teaching. SEDA Paper 18, Staff and Educational Development Association Ltd


Northumbria University Peer Support Scheme applies to any aspect of the academic learning and teaching role.

- Classroom practice
- Pedagogic innovation
- Curriculum planning
- Assessment and feedback practice
- Student support
- Use of new technologies and online environments
- Development of online and distance learning materials
Intended benefits of Northumbria Peer Support Scheme

• Gain insight into different learning and teaching strategies used in another subject area
• To learn from others’ experience
• To have a truly independent observer from outside their peer group
• To have more focused and productive feedback from an individual who has experience in the particular learning strategy under review
Academic staff to share practice and have feedback on their performance or learning and teaching strategies used.

Pilot Study for Cross School Peer Support Project
Project approval granted by relevant School committees

Invitation e-postcard sent to academic staff

Cross school matching process – based on area of support identified (e.g. classroom teaching, assessment and feedback)

Ethical approval for evaluation interviews

Anonymous evaluation – link e-mailed to participants (with reminders)

Participants given contact details of their matched partner and referred to University peer support guidelines
Online Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Response rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HCES</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSS</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NBS</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100%</td>
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</table>
Benefits of Cross School Peer Support

• Sharing good practice with colleagues and opportunities to share ideas
• Commonalities of challenges faced
• Externality and a fresh independent perspectives
Impact

• 56% of participants identified an element in their academic practice that they would change for the next academic year as a result of participating in the scheme

• 91% of the participants said they would participate in a cross-school peer support scheme in the future
What next...?

- Repeat project in the three schools
- Apply for external funding (HEA)
- Re-evaluate
- Dissemination - internal workshop, conference, Emerge
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Any Questions?