




JOURNAL OF CREATIVE WRITING

VOLUME 8 ISSUE 1

2024, Pp 1-16

ISSN 2410-6259

© TAHMINA SHARMIN

 [HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.70771/JOCW.V8I1.84](https://doi.org/10.70771/JOCW.V8I1.84)



OPTIMIZING TEACHERS' CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH PEER OBSERVATION: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS FOR IMPLEMENTATION IN A GOVERNMENT COLLEGE, DHAKA

TAHMINA SHARMIN¹ 

ABSTRACT

Peer observation is a useful tool for the professional growth of teachers as it enables two peers work together, observe each other's teaching, share helpful suggestions, and engage in reflection on their instructional abilities. This study aims to explore the effectiveness of peer observation in tertiary education to foster teachers' continuing professional development, formulate a framework for its implementation to improve teaching performance and seek possible solutions to some potential challenges regarding the implementation of the peer observation of teaching (POT) program in a Bangladeshi government college. Therefore, the researcher used a secondary data analysis method in which around 30 papers, including journal articles, conference proceedings, research reports, were studied, analyzed, and discussed. Moreover, two case studies in international contexts were reviewed elaborately. The result found that the implementation of peer observation of teaching program would enhance teachers' professional development and consequently, the students' success would be accelerated. After analyzing the documents, an implementation plan for POT in the researcher's college was devised and some strategies were suggested to overcome the challenges that might arise during the process.

¹ Assistant Professor of English, Government Teachers' Training College, Dhaka, affiliated with the National University of Bangladesh, Email: tahmina.mishu@yahoo.com, <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-0769-1954>

KEYWORDS

Peer Observation of Teaching (POT), continuing professional development (CPD), Observer and Observee

INTRODUCTION

In today's rapidly evolving educational landscape, the role of teachers extends beyond imparting knowledge; it encompasses continuous adaptation to new pedagogical techniques, educational technologies, and diverse student needs. With globalization and technological advancements reshaping the way knowledge is accessed and consumed, higher education institutions face growing demands for more effective teaching strategies. Teachers, particularly in tertiary education, are challenged to keep up with these shifts, balancing traditional instruction methods with innovative approaches.

In this context, Continuing Professional Development (CPD) has emerged as a critical component of modern teaching. However, despite its recognized importance, teachers in many parts of the world, including Bangladesh, struggle to access robust CPD programs due to financial constraints and institutional limitations. Peer Observation of Teaching (POT) offers a promising solution. By fostering collaborative reflection, POT allows educators to learn from one another, share constructive feedback, and refine their teaching practices, making it a potent tool for enhancing professional growth.

This study critically explores the effectiveness of POT in the context of a government college in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Through a comprehensive analysis of existing literature and international case studies, it aims to design a feasible framework for implementing POT as part of a CPD strategy in this institution. By doing so, it addresses a pressing need in Bangladeshi higher education: equipping teachers with the skills and support necessary to navigate the complexities of modern classrooms and elevate the overall quality of education.

Teaching in higher education has grown complicated and difficult due to the globalization of knowledge acquisition in world markets (Donnelly, 2007). This suggests a variety of disciplines, rising student expectations, new course designs, and innovative methods of instruction. To keep up with the changes, teachers should experiment with various theories and methodologies in different teaching scenarios and critically reflect on them with their colleagues' feedback on teaching (Danko et al., 2016). Nowadays, peer observation of teaching (POT) is receiving a lot of interest in the teaching-learning process. During the POT process, both teachers-the observer and the observed- learn by observing other's instructions and receiving feedback (Richards & Farrell, 2005). According to Alam et al. (2020), peer observation is a useful technique for the professional growth of teachers as it enables them to share helpful suggestions and engage in reflection on their instructional abilities. Therefore, this study will explore the effectiveness of peer observation in tertiary education to foster teachers' continuing professional development in a Bangladeshi government college.

BACKGROUND OF THE PAPER

Teachers' continuing professional development (CPD) is a widely addressed topic in today's era due to its crucial function in maintaining the professional skills of the lead learners. CPD procedures help teachers identify the most recent student-learning strategies, maintain their technical expertise, and keep their professional skills and knowledge up to date (Awal, 2022). Recognizing the significance of teachers' professional development, in the National Education Policy-2010 of Bangladesh, a few provisions regarding teacher training have been included. However, college educators in Bangladesh are not getting the necessary professional training due to state financial limitations and a lack of concern. The researcher's institution, one of the leading government teachers' training colleges in Bangladesh, offers both professional courses and training programs for teaching and learning. To provide high-quality education to students and future teachers, educators must stay updated with the latest pedagogical theories,

technological advancements, and training methodologies. In order to create more inclusive and productive learning environments, newly recruited and permanent teachers of various disciplines also need to learn about a variety of learning styles, assessment methods, and strategies for meeting the needs of individual students. Like many higher education institutions, this institute also requires to meet specific accreditation and quality standards. Teachers who participate in CPD can better match their teaching practices with these requirements and contribute to institutional improvement initiatives. Therefore, enhancement of CPD is a must in this institution to ensure that educators remain effective, adaptable, and responsive to the changing educational landscape, to improve teaching quality, foster student learning experiences, and contribute to the overall success of the institution.

Different CPD activities, such as self-monitoring, teacher support groups, team teaching, journal writing, teaching portfolios, peer mentoring, peer observation, peer coaching, and action research, are available to enhance teachers' knowledge, skills, and practice (Richards & Farrell, 2005). Among them, peer observation of teaching (POT) can be a tool to increase the teaching skills of the teachers of the researcher's college and provide the students with a better education. When POT will be introduced, the teachers will get the opportunities to observe one another's teaching strategies, which will help them reflect upon and bring about necessary changes in their current practices for further development. The newly appointed teachers can significantly enhance their teaching performance by observing their experienced teachers (Bell, 2001). Novice teachers frequently find themselves in difficult situations to handle mixed-ability learners in large classrooms. Though most of them have foundation training which emphasizes on developing administrative skills, few teachers received training programs for professional development. Therefore, most teachers can depend on collaboration by reflecting on one another's classes and providing constructive feedback to improve their teaching practices, classroom management strategies, and assessment techniques. The experienced teachers can also find POT as a reflective tool (Bell, 2001). When observing other teachers' teaching practices, they can evaluate the teachers' instructional practices with much more insight developed through experience. Besides, the experienced teachers can update their teaching performances by observing other teachers' instructional practices, cutting-edge educational technology, and approaches in the classroom. Thus, the POT process will allow experienced teachers to modernize their teaching practices and share their experiences and reflective feedback with other teachers. Therefore, to ensure teaching standards and institutional goals, the implementation of peer observation to enhance CPD of the teachers is imperative in this institution. That is why, based on sufficient evidence from literature and the case studies, the study aims at designing a model for implementing peer observation to enhance teachers' CPD at the researcher's institution.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

In Bangladesh, government colleges face significant challenges in providing effective Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for teachers, largely due to financial constraints and limited institutional support. These barriers prevent educators from keeping up with modern pedagogical techniques and meeting rising educational standards. Peer Observation of Teaching (POT), a collaborative method of professional development, offers a promising solution for fostering teacher growth in contexts where traditional CPD is lacking.

International case studies, such as Tenenberg (2016) and Danko et al. (2016), have demonstrated the effectiveness of POT in enhancing teaching practices, promoting reflective learning, and increasing collegiality among educators. However, the application of POT in a Bangladeshi government college, which operates under different cultural, financial, and institutional conditions, remains unexplored. Specifically, the question arises as to how the

models of POT used in international contexts can be adapted to meet the unique challenges faced by educators in Bangladesh.

Therefore, the research problem this study seeks to address is: How can Peer Observation of Teaching (POT) be effectively implemented as a tool for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in a government college in Dhaka, Bangladesh, and what challenges and opportunities might arise in adapting POT models from international contexts to this setting?

In order to address this research problem, two case studies taken from foreign contexts as the best practices were discussed, analyzed, and connected to the researcher's institution's present milieu.

Case Study 01: Learning Through Observing Peers In Practice (Tenenberg, 2016)

Overview of the study

The case study of Tenenberg (2016) sheds light on how teachers might learn by observing one another's practices. The majority of research on peer observational learning in higher education has been conducted from the viewpoint of the teacher being observed. However, this study explains how observing a peer teacher facilitates learning for the observer. This paper also contributes to showing the advantages of peer observation for the learner's growth and learning.

Identifying the key issues

The data used for this qualitative study came from interviews conducted as part of a faculty development project. The project's objective was to encourage knowledge exchange and introspection among a team of academics who work in several institutions of higher education in the same geographic area and instruct the same discipline. Each cohort of between 10 and 20 people meets once a month for a few hours during the course of an academic year. The partners were instructed to conduct a three-part format for their meetings (pre-meeting, observation, and post-meeting). The observers were apart from any formal institutional arrangement and unacquainted with the context, but they were acquainted with the details of the observed course. A leader who served as the facilitator for each cohort planned the agenda for each meeting and organized the participants' specific activities. Nine teachers who taught Computer Science were chosen as participants in the faculty development project, and semi-structured interviews were employed as a tool to get insight into their experiences. The interview protocol contained inquiries about the focus and effects of participation, opinions of the participant's portfolio, changes in participants' views of instruction, and adaptations to teaching methods as a result of participation. For the distance, all interviews were conducted by phone for 30 to 60 minutes four months following the cohort's final monthly meeting. Every interview was transcribed professionally. From the interviews of nine participants, one interview with a university lecturer named Elizabeth (a pseudonym) is focused. The story is depicted using interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA). Through IPA, the researcher interprets the interviewee's reported experience in the third person, and thus he tries to move from meaning construction to information processing.

Analyzing the findings of the study

Three important features of the observer's process of change as a result of observation are noticed-double-seeing (using culturally assimilated ways of seeing to compare the observer's classroom activities to those of the colleague who is teaching the same content because both teachers have already gone through similar activity sequences in their own classrooms), creating a problem and solution pair (identifying an issue in the observer's own classroom after noticing a solution to a related issue in another colleague's classroom), adapting a solution to the local context (implementing the colleague's method in the observer's particular

circumstances). The two conditions of the observation session's structure that appear to be significant for learning are that both of the pair's members teach the same subject at different universities, and power dynamics are eliminated from the observation process. Since learning for the observer is the primary goal of peer observation, there may be less need for the post-observation discussion, which would minimize the time and effort costs for both sides. Moreover, a pre-observation meeting that was intended to give the observer context may not be necessary if the observer is well-informed about the course that is being taught by the observer.

This study explores how learning can occur from observing a peer engaged in practice from the perspective of the observer. Two structural conditions and a theoretical model for observation-based change are presented through an interpretive phenomenological analysis of a case of peer observation. This kind of peer-to-peer learning goes beyond the confines of constructivism, as the learner's prime objective is not only the active construction of meaning and its incorporation into current knowledge, but also the evaluation of actions that are already effective and comprehensible to the learner.

Case Study 02: Peer Observation In Higher Education As An Agent Of Change In Teaching And Learning (Danko Et Al., 2016)

Overview of the study

The case study of Danko et al. (2016) explores the views of teachers and students about the pedagogical process. The study experimented on a peer observation of teaching (POT) program that was developed at the Faculty of Administration (FA), University of Ljubljana. Its goals were to analyze observations rather than evaluate the teaching and learning process, investigate how teachers and students view the teaching process and compare the observations to identify the aspects of teaching practice that both groups consider crucial and any areas where they may have agreed or disagreed.

Identifying the key issues

The 'peer review model' in which teachers observe one another's teaching, had been chosen for the FA POT project. A three-part activity, including a pre-observation session, an observation, and a post-observation reflective session, was adopted. The aim, goals, and advantages of POT were first explained to the FA staff, along with a brief literature study of teaching observation practice. Students were included in the observation process to promote a teaching and learning environment. In this qualitative study, the survey was carried out using observation forms for both teachers and students. The data analysis was conducted with 24 teacher observation forms and 170 student observation forms. The observation forms for teachers and students were designed to obtain information on teaching. Data from student and teacher observation forms were analyzed using a well-known technique for organizing qualitative data called qualitative content analysis (QCA). It is a method for condensing many words of text into fewer content categories using specific coding principles. The analysis alone just reveals what is written or spoken, without revealing why, who, or how it was said.

Analyzing the findings of the study

The FA's pilot POT experiment identified valuable strategies to create a more engaging and effective teaching environment. Students demonstrated higher motivation when theoretical concepts were linked to real-world applications and relatable, everyday examples. Active participation and student engagement increased with teamwork and the use of ICT tools. However, challenges emerged when the lecture pace was misaligned with students' needs—too fast or too slow—and when information was excessive, repetitive, or presented in a monotonous reading style without interaction. Improvements could include beginning each session by clearly stating learning objectives, demonstrating knowledge confidently, and using a clear, engaging voice, while also providing accessible study resources. Techniques like role-

playing, debates, teamwork, practical tasks, thought-provoking questions, and randomly calling on students can elevate engagement levels. Short quizzes at the end of each lecture or tutorial provide useful feedback on student comprehension. Moreover, teachers who show enthusiasm, preparedness, and an ability to deliver content with clarity are seen as role models, inspiring students to emulate their commitment and approach to learning.

This study explores that both the teachers who are being observed and their peer observers find the POT project at the FA to be beneficial. It offers the observed teachers an opportunity to reflect on their lectures to make them better, and the observers get the ability to learn more about their colleagues' teaching methods both from the perspective of the students and from their own presence. It also gives students a chance to contribute creatively to the changes occurring in higher education. In the next part, the comparative analysis of the two case studies is highlighted in light of the literature.

Connecting the Two Case Studies to a Bangladeshi College Context

The findings of the two case studies provided the scenario of POT implementation to enhance the professional development of their teachers. They inspired the researcher to apply POT at her college as this tertiary level college has not yet gone through the process. The government colleges of Bangladesh can implement the POT process to increase the teaching skills of their educators. Thus, if the educational institutions follow the peer review model, the novice or inexperienced teachers may observe the expert or experienced teachers. To identify the effectiveness of POT and confirm the accountability of teachers, proper feedback should be ensured and the three stages of the POT process should be followed to get optimal learning. Since both case studies focus on observations rather than evaluation of the teaching-learning process, and far from formal and institutional systems, administration should not interfere in the POT process as evaluators because peer observation is solely a teacher-led activity with the goal of enhancing instructional practices. The instructional leader can help educators improve professionally and mutually through arranging trainings or workshops in a friendly and cordial setting. Students as important stakeholders, should be involved in the POT process and trained to become excellent and interested partners in the recognition of achieving the desired objectives of learning in higher education. In the next section, the researcher proposed a POT implementation model to enhance the collegiality and professional development between the novice and experienced teachers.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study draws on Gosling's (2002) peer review model, which categorizes peer observation as a tool for either evaluation, development, or peer review, but critically, it does not adequately address the role of senior teachers as observees. In traditional hierarchies, senior teachers may be reluctant to be observed by less experienced colleagues, leading to potential gaps in their own professional development. This study will adapt Gosling's model to include strategies that ensure senior teachers also benefit from observation, fostering a mutual learning environment.

Additionally, the study reflects on Richards & Farrell's (2005) three stages of the POT process (pre-observation, observation, and post-observation). While this model is effective in fostering reflective practice, it lacks accountability mechanisms linking the process to institutional goals or oversight from a monitoring committee. Without institutional engagement, POT can become informal and inconsistent, limiting its long-term impact. This research will integrate Bandura's social learning theory to emphasize the role of feedback loops in ensuring institutional accountability and teacher motivation for continuous improvement.

To address these gaps, the researcher uses insights from two international case studies (Tenenberg, 2016; Danko et al., 2016) to design a context-appropriate POT framework for a

government college in Bangladesh. These studies highlight the importance of collegial relationships, student engagement, and the adaptation of teaching practices. By triangulating these findings with Gosling's and Richards & Farrell's models, the researcher proposes an adapted POT framework that incorporates both bottom-up reflective learning and top-down accountability structures to enhance professional development in the Bangladeshi context.

This theoretical framework will guide the development of a peer observation model that is sensitive to local cultural dynamics, addresses the professional development needs of both novice and senior teachers, and ensures institutional commitment to the process.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The researcher attempts to achieve the following research objectives:

1. To find out the effectiveness of peer observation as a CPD tool
2. To explore the best methods to implement a peer observation of teaching (POT) program in a government college offering tertiary education
3. To seek possible solutions to some potential challenges regarding the implementation of the POT program

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a secondary data analysis approach, relying on the review of scholarly articles, conference papers, and research reports published between 2000 and 2024. The data were gathered from reputable academic databases, including Google Scholar, ERIC, JSTOR, etc. with a focus on research related to Peer Observation of Teaching (POT) and Continuing Professional Development (CPD). More than 30 sources were analyzed to explore the effectiveness, challenges, and best practices of POT in enhancing teacher professional development.

To support the study's objectives, two international case studies were selected and analyzed in detail: Tenenberg (2016) and Danko et al. (2016). These case studies provided valuable insights into how POT was implemented in different educational contexts and were used to inform the design of a localized POT framework for a Bangladeshi government college. A thematic analysis of the literature and case studies helped identify key patterns, challenges, and strategies relevant to the context of Bangladesh, guiding the development of a practical and culturally appropriate implementation plan for POT.

FINDINGS OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, the definition of POT, the goals, the process, and the advantages of peer observation are reviewed on the basis of the literature.

What Is Peer Observation Of Teaching (POT)?

Peer observation is a significant tool for professional growth, introspection, collaboration, and ultimately improving student learning experiences in higher education. Generally, this activity is a procedure where a teacher watches the instruction of another teacher (Kenny et al., 2014). Peer observation, according to Bell (2012), is a cooperative, developmental process in which professional people support mutually by watching one another teach, delving into what was experienced, exchanging teaching strategies, obtaining student feedback on how well they were taught, reflecting on their own perceptions, feelings, and behaviors, and experimenting with new ideas. Hendry & Oliver (2012) define peer observation as a practice that involves two teachers working together and observing each other's instruction with the basic purpose of improving teaching standards. This offers them fresh perspectives for their classes and reinforces their own teaching strategies. Gosling (2002) asserts that peer observation of teaching is frequently utilized for new lecturers as well as in the process of developing individual teachers or the department as a whole. This is occasionally agreed upon by both parties, and sometimes it is imposed. Shortland (2004) concurs with the idea that POT is a

component of an ongoing development program for both novice and expert faculty, providing teachers with a great opportunity to foster self-knowledge and self-improvement. Gosling (2002) also emphasizes the necessity for POT to address student feedback, assessment procedures, learning outcomes, and instructional materials in addition to teaching.

Though the person being observed usually benefits from peer observations (Hammersley-Fletcher & Orsmond, 2004), there is a growing realization that the observers who embrace the best practices utilized by the teacher being observed are the main gainers of peer observations (Hendry & Oliver, 2012; Tenenber, 2016). This claim is in line with Bandura's theory of self-efficacy, which contends that watching someone else succeed at something gives other people the courage to give it a try. Motallebzadeh et al. (2017) also agree that peer observation fosters collaboration and the sharing of learning experiences among teachers, which can be advantageous for both the observer and the observed. Therefore, POT is more about learning through observation, than just focusing on the feedback that the observing teacher provides.

Three Models Of Peer Observation

According to the three models identified by Gosling (2002), peer observation is often structured inside an organizational framework: evaluation, development, and peer review. These can be differentiated most clearly based on **who** is observing (senior officers, pedagogical specialists, and other educators, respectively), the **objective** of the observation (quality management, improving instruction, self-reflection), and the key **concerns** involved in this type of observation (alienation, lack of impact, complacency).

The Phases Of Peer Observation

The main objective of observation is learning from the perception of observation (Richards & Farrell, 2005). They also claim that for the purpose of POT, the following three distinct yet interrelated activities are carried out:

- i) Pre-observation meeting: The observer and the observee decide the observation's focus during the pre-observation meeting. Farrell (2001, p. 368) calls this interaction between the observer and observee 'critical friendships: professionals supporting one another improve' during the POT. The observers can also learn about the classroom setting and issues that will likely arise in the classrooms in advance during this meeting, which truly helps them reflect on what will likely happen (Richards & Farrell, 2005).
- ii) Observation of the lesson: During this phase, the observer makes a scheduled visit to the observee's class. Informing students about the observation and assuring them that it is not meant to evaluate them but to help the teacher or observer improve their professional abilities is important (Donnelly, 2007). He also added that during the session, the teacher observer would focus on students' enthusiasm, listening, understanding, and learning. The learners should also be informed of the observer's presence (Kohut et al. 2007). The written narrative format of field notes is ideal for recording the observation (Richards & Farrell, 2005). The observer can provide the observee with precise feedback and ample evidence with a written record.
- iii) Post-observation meeting: In this meeting, the couple discusses the instruction from both the perspectives of the observer and the observed (Carroll & O'Loughlin, 2014). This meeting will serve as an example of how to provide and receive feedback (Donnelly, 2007). According to Ewens (2001), feedback should be constructive and motivational. The feedback could be provided at a predetermined time and location, either right away after the observation session or the next day (Hampton et al., 2004).

Peer Observation And CPD

Continuing professional development (CPD) is an ongoing, structured, and long-term learning process that teachers can use to improve their individual and professional effectiveness and progress their knowledge, abilities, and practices, and this empowers instructors, and benefits both institutions and students (Padwad & Dixit, 2011). According to Awal (2022), CPD is a prerequisite for every lead learner because it enhances the content's standard, broadens the subject knowledge, and improves classroom management and student-evaluation ability. Among many CPD activities, peer observation serves as one of the best instructional tools that encourages collaboration for professional growth (Alam et al., 2020). Peer observation allows educators the opportunity to examine one another's instructional strategies and explore new techniques that could improve teaching and learning while also allowing them to assess their own strengths and weaknesses. Richards & Farrell (2005) claim that such a practice may enable them to learn from one another and, as a result, have a more perceptive attitude toward their professional development.

The Advantages Of Peer Observation

Peer observation provides several advantages that can assist teachers in improving their instruction, student learning, and professional development (Belarouci & Abdellatif, 2023). The researchers also found that peer observation enables the observee to apply new or successful teaching approaches that have been learnt in workshops, conferences, and training courses. One of the features of POT is that it fosters a culture of collaboration and community learning. Corcelles-Seuba et al. (2024) in their study confirmed that reciprocal peer observation improves teacher collaboration which is a crucial aspect of professional development. Moreover, this collaborative practice fosters teachers' sense of collective agency and teachers' preference for collaboration over individual work. Another benefit is that POT allows educators to reflect on their own pedagogical practices and enhance their instruction. Peer observation, according to Hammersley- Fletcher & Orsmond (2005), promotes reflection and satisfies individual development goals by offering teachers the freedom to rethink their teaching style and experiment with new techniques. Handayani & Fithriani (2024) also added that POT involves colleagues in observing each other in a reciprocal process to improve classroom teaching through self-reflection. Another advantage is that peer observation can enhance the quality of educations by developing teacher professionalism because correlation and input from peers can provide better teaching methods and innovation (Handayani & Fithriani, 2024). Moreover, Grech (2024) claimed that POT acts as a mechanism for enhancing teaching practices, promoting professional growth, and cultivating a culture of continuous improvement which is in line with Richards & Farrell (2005)'s study. Katal et al. (2022) also supported this idea by stating that POT is a beneficial tool for teachers' professional development. The study of Miquel et al. (2024) showed that at the post-observation phase in reciprocal peer observation process, most teachers identify their area for improvement, reflect on it further in the feedback meeting and finally write it down as a learning goal. Thus, peer observation acts as a technique to identify professional learning goals.

Based on the theoretical framework the researcher devised an action plan for implementing peer observation in her college to enhance professional development.

Implementation Plan Of Peer Observation At The Researcher's College

Since the principal as an instructional leader can decide regarding the implementation of POT in his institution, he should initially be informed and convinced about the POT's effectiveness in the college context. To prepare and motivate the teachers about the POT process, a preparatory workshop or in-house training session with a pool of experts can be arranged where the purposes, benefits, and the teachers' responsibilities can be elaborately discussed. Following the preparatory workshop, the implementation of the POT process can be taken in

the respective departments. In this regard, two case studies and literature review findings will guide the implementation of POT in a faculty of the researcher's college.

The effectiveness of peer observation largely depends on how well it is designed, implemented, and embraced by participants. For an effective POT process in a faculty, the following action plan is proposed, and a detailed description is given below:

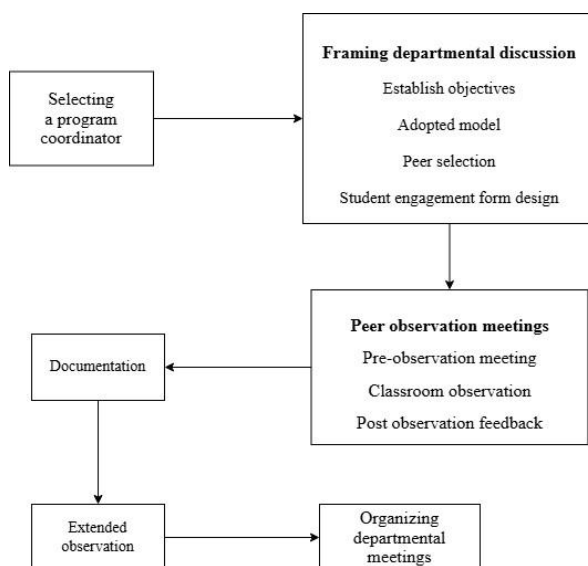


Figure 1: The action plan for implementing peer observation in a faculty

Step-1 Selecting a program coordinator

The college authority will select the department head as a program coordinator to facilitate the POT program among the faculty members. The primary focus of the coordinator will be to supervise the teaching-learning process. The leader will set the agenda for each meeting and organize the participants' specific activities in accordance with Tenenberg's (2016) recommendations. He will also act as a go-between for the department and the administration.

Step-2 Framing departmental discussion

The department will make core decisions regarding basic objectives, form design, peer selection, student engagement, and the adopted model associated with its POT process.

Establish objectives: The basic purposes of POT in the department will be-

- i) to detect expertise and areas for development in teaching
- ii) to learn what teachers and students think about the pedagogical process
- iii) to know about innovative teaching and assessment strategies

Adopted model

The POT process will be based on the peer review model developed by Gosling (2002), in which teachers observe each other's classes, engage in mutual reflection, analyze, and discuss a variety of teaching methods, receive constructive feedback, and get mutual benefit from the experience. In this model any teacher can be the observer for another one. Danko et al. (2016) and Tenenberg (2016) also used the peer review paradigm for promoting academics' reciprocal observation.

Peer selection

POT participation will be voluntary, as recommended by Danko et al. (2016) and Gosling (2002). Educators will be invited to self-select their peers from the same department to reduce anxiety and worry about the process. According to Carroll & O’ Loughlin (2014), an effective peer observation strategy is primarily built on peer self-selection, interpersonal support, and teamwork between participants.

Student engagement

Students will participate in the POT process as they are the real stakeholders in the pedagogical process, and they will highlight areas for improvements in teaching and learning as proposed by Danko et al. (2016) and Khan (2019).

Form design

To record information on teaching techniques, observation forms will be designed for both observers- students and teachers. The observation forms will be prepared in accordance with Danko et al. (2016). The observation form for students will include open-ended questions on a variety of observational topics, like the classroom environment, the teaching methods, the inspiring aspects of the lecture, students’ interactions, instruction materials, how organized the teacher’s explanation was, how well the lecture achieved its goals, student evaluation, and potential future improvements.

The teacher observation form will also focus on the observer’s reflections on the teaching being observed and his/her feedback on it while learning from the process through some semi-structured questions. This observation form will include the four parts of observation: the introduction of the lecture, its main points, its finishing activities, and the observer’s own views. At the beginning of a lecture, the observee’s presentation of the objectives of the lecture and the main ideas of previous lectures will be observed. The central part of the teacher observation form will include various lecture-related topics, such as student engagement, teaching materials, pace of lecture, teaching strategy, etc. In the ending activities, observee’s assessment of the taught material and attainment of the lesson’s learning outcomes will be observed. In the personal reflection part, the observer will discuss what he or she has learned from the observation and the further actions he/she intends to take to disseminate the experience.

Step-3 Peer observation meetings

Peer observation meetings will be conducted following a three-part structure: pre-observation meeting, classroom observation, and post-observation feedback, according to Danko et al. (2016) and Tenenberg (2016).

The observer and observee will discuss during the pre-observation meeting on the teaching schedule, the timeline for feedback meetings, the learning objectives, the preference of classroom activities like group work, the delivery styles of lectures, the learning materials, or discussions on potential difficulties in the class to gain an optimal advantage, as suggested by Donnelly (2007).

During the observation of teaching, students will be informed about the objectives of observation, though some of them will participate in the observation process and will also be made aware of the observer’s presence. We will provide observation forms to both teacher and student observers to record classroom observations with quick writing, as recommended by Montgomery (1999). For adequate evidence, the observer and the observed will be convinced to use video recording, as it provides precise feedback and unambiguous proof (Keig & Waggoner, 1994).

A post-observation meeting will be planned either sooner following the observation session or a day later to facilitate reflection by the teacher observer and observee. A dialogue

model will be followed in which both the teacher observer and the observed will be seen as equal and get mutual benefits from the experience instead of the conventional concepts of 'giver' and 'receiver' (Gosling, 2005). The feedback will acknowledge the observee's efforts, be specific and grounded, and focus on a procedure to implement the teaching techniques where the observee was deficient (Brookhart, 2017).

Step-4 Documentation

The coordinator of the POT process will preserve all submitted observation forms to ensure that every faculty member will go through the POT procedure twice a year, which will reinforce the idea of continuing enhancement in teaching ability. The best performers will be rewarded as recommended by Khan (2019), as it will help boost their performance in a healthy competitive setting.

Step-5 Extended observation

The valuable data gathered on teaching effectiveness and instructional strategies from the observation forms of both students and teachers, will be used to inform institutional decisions related to professional development and curriculum enhancement. After a successful POT implementation, the design will be implemented in other faculties at the researcher's institution, and the observers of the same discipline from other institutions of higher education will also be invited for getting unbiased feedback, as suggested by Tenenberg (2016).

Step-6 Organizing departmental meetings

The department will schedule biannual meetings to reflect individually and collectively on the innovative teaching and assessment strategies of their observed experiences and record their reflections in a personal course portfolio, as recommended by Tenenberg (2016). The report of these meetings should be communicated to the principal by program coordinator. Undoubtedly, these meetings will foster educators' ongoing professional development and the academic excellence of the institution.

The above structure of the POT process convincingly illustrates that the faculty members and the institution as a whole in the researcher's college will get benefit from implementing the POT program. To successfully implement a peer observation program in an institution, the environment must be supportive. The researcher's institution possesses some key strengths that are helpful for effective peer observation implementation. In this college, there is a culture of open and constructive communication where faculty members can feel comfortable discussing teaching practices and giving and receiving feedback. Moreover, it is well-equipped with some experienced and trained academics who received trainings on pedagogy from many local and foreign institutions. They share their insights about modern teaching techniques and teaching tools through workshops, seminars, and in-house trainings. The instructional leader of this college values continuous learning and so, prioritizes professional development and welcomes diverse perspectives and teaching styles. One very important aspect is that teachers have the autonomy to plan their lessons without any interference from outside forces. They enjoy flexibility to handle each of their classes individually. Undoubtedly, these strengths and qualities of this institution can create a conducive environment for the implementation of peer observation and a community of educators committed to continuous improvement.

CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTATION

This institution can indeed face several potential challenges while implementing peer observation. Some faculty members might be resistant to the idea of being observed by their peers or changing their teaching methods. As a potential barrier to the POT process, faculty opposition to change was also mentioned by Knight (2002). Some educators might fear that peer observation will be used as a basis for formal evaluation or criticism. Khan (2019) asserts that psychological fear prevents observee from performing naturally, even in formative

evaluation. Richardson (2000) also claims that the fear of being judged, more than the act of being watched, is what makes people uncomfortable about peer observation. Faculty members may perceive peer observation as time-consuming, especially if they have heavy teaching loads. It is possible that observers lack the skills needed to conduct effective peer observations or provide constructive feedback. Peer observation may often lead to biased commentary because of individual differences. Moreover, observers and observees may come to the idea that they should favor one another throughout their respective sessions as their positions are frequently reversed. Carroll & O'Loughlin (2014) also feared that might happen in POT.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Addressing the challenges proactively can help ensure a successful and effective peer observation program. Based on research, some strategies to overcome those challenges are briefly discussed below:

- The benefits of peer observation should be explicitly explained to reluctant faculty members through in-house training, workshops, and seminars. Donnelly (2007) encourages faculty buy-in and adoption for a successful POT program.
- It should be emphasized that peer observation is primarily a formative process aimed at improvement rather than evaluation.
- Constructive comments should be non-judgmental, meticulous, and assisted by lots of proofs and real cases (Peel, 2005).
- It is important to provide training on observation techniques, effective feedback practices, and facilitating productive discussions (Cosh, 1998; Khan, 2019).
- The nervousness and worry of bias can be avoided by establishing mutual trust and collaboration between the participants and inviting external faculty as observers (Khan, 2019).
- The instructional leader should be engaged in the planning process of POT to ensure confidentiality, technical and financial assistance. The study by Ahmed et al. (2018) asserted that the administration should act as a facilitator rather than an evaluator in the POT process.

A peer observation program that benefits both faculty members and the institution can be successfully implemented at the college by addressing these challenges with thoughtful planning, clear communication, and ongoing support.

CONCLUSION

Continuing professional development programs help teachers grow personally and professionally. Peer observation is a popular CPD activity used as a catalyst for change in tertiary classroom instruction and student learning. This paper reviews some scholarly articles and analyzes two case studies by Tenenberg (2016) and Danko et al. (2016) on the effective application of the POT process in their respective institutions, and following their strategies, an implementation plan for the POT process in a faculty of a teacher education college in Bangladesh is provided. As the real assessors and unbiased collaborators in the observation process, students are empowered to address areas for teaching and learning improvement. It is proposed that the department head be chosen as a program coordinator to supervise the teaching-learning process among the faculty members and mediate between the department and institution. The department will decide fundamental issues like the POT process's goals, the design of observation forms, the choice of peers, and the accepted model. The three stages of peer observation meetings will be set up to help the observer and the observed accomplish their objectives. The information obtained from the observation forms will be recorded to ensure that all faculty members participate in the POT procedure biannually. The implementation plan also proposes rewarding top performers, inviting external academics, and holding biennial departmental meetings to share observed experiences.

Moreover, this study has identified some key strengths that are needed for a productive peer observation framework, like collegiality, experienced faculty, teacher autonomy, reciprocal trust, and teamwork. Some possible difficulties are also noted, like reluctant faculty members, the fear of being judged, anxiety, inexperienced observers, and biased criticism. To address these challenges, some strategies are recommended, like organizing internal trainings, workshops, and seminars about POT's goals and observational techniques, providing non-judgmental constructive feedback, and including administration in the POT process. Before it can become a common practice for all faculty, administration must recognize POT as a crucial component in producing top-notch academics and in evaluating the academic performance of the teaching staff and institution. The instructional leader should provide financial support and allocate resources to run the program to help educators grow professionally and collaboratively. In conclusion, this assignment views POT as a chance for both professional and personal development and a process of learning for both the observer and the observed. Thus, peer observation as a crucial instructional tool can lead to improved teaching practices that can meet the ever-changing needs of learners and provide an inclusive learning environment.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The researcher would like to thank her academic supervisor Dr. Hjh Shamsiah Banu bt Hj Mohammad Hanefar, Assistant Professor, Centre for Academic Partnerships & Engagement (CAPE), University of Nottingham Malaysia, who helped her understand the content.

REFERENCES

- Ahmed, E., Nordin, Z. S., Shah, S. R., & Channa, M. A. (2018). Peer Observation: A Professional Learning Tool for English Language Teachers in an EFL Institute. *World Journal of Education*, 8(2), 73-87.
- Alam, J., Aamir, S. M., & Shahzad, S. (2020). Continuous Professional Development of Secondary School Teachers through Peer Observation: Implications for Policy & Practice. *Research Journal of Social Sciences and Economics Review*, 1(1), 56-75.
- Awal, M. R. (2022). A Literature Review on the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for Accounting Teachers: Perspective of Government Colleges in Bangladesh. *Global Journal of Management and Business Research: D Accounting and Auditing*, 22(1), 47-51.
- Belarouci, L. and Abdellatif, S. (2023). Using peer observation as a learning tool for EFL novice teachers to foster their teaching readiness. *International Journal of Learning and Teaching*. 15 (1), 10-17.
- Bell, M. (2001). Supported reflective practice: a programme of peer observation and feedback for academic teaching development. *International Journal for Academic Development*, 6(1), 29-39.
- Bell, M. (2012). *Peer observation partnerships in higher education*. Higher Educational Research and Development Society of Australasia.
- Brookhart, S. M. (2017). *How to give effective feedback to your students*. ASCD, Alexandria, USA.
- Carroll, C., & O'Loughlin, D. (2014). Peer observation of teaching: enhancing academic engagement for new participants. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 51(4), 446-456.
- Corcelles-Seuba, M., Sala-Bars, I., Soler, M., & Duran, D. (2024). Impact of reciprocal peer observation on teacher collaboration perceptions. *British Educational Research Journal*. 50(3), 981–1001. <https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3958>
- Cosh, J. (1998). Peer observation in higher education--a reflective approach. *Innovations in education and training international*, 35(2), 171-176.

- Danko, M., Keržič, D., & Kotnik, Ž. (2016). Peer observation in higher education as an agent of change in teaching and learning. In *INTED2016 Proceedings* (pp. 7600-7610). IATED.
- Donnelly, R. (2007). Perceived impact of peer observation of teaching in higher education. *International journal of teaching and learning in higher education*, 19(2), 117-129.
- Ewens, D. (2001). *Observation of Teaching and Learning in Adult Education: How to Prepare for It, How to Do It and How to Manage It*. Learning and Skills Development Agency. London.
- Farrell, T. (2001). Critical friendships: Colleagues helping each other develop. *ELT journal*, 55(4), 368-374.
- Gosling, D. (2002). Models of peer observation of teaching. *Learning and Teaching Support Network Generic Centre*, 2-5.
- Gosling, D. (2005). Some thoughts on sustaining POT over time. In Peer observation of teaching, 45-9. *SEDA Paper*.118. London: Staff and Educational Development Association.
- Grech, A. (2024). Faculty's perception of peer observation of teaching: the case of a higher education institution in Malta. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2024.2349995>
- Hammersley-Fletcher, L., & Orsmond, P. (2005). Reflecting on reflective practices within peer observation. *Studies in higher education*, 30(2), 213-224.
- Hammersley-Fletcher, L., & Orsmond, P. (2004). Evaluating our peers: is peer observation a meaningful process? *Studies in higher education*, 29(4), 489-503.
- Hampton, G., Rhodes, C., & Stokes, M. (2004). *A practical guide to mentoring, coaching, and peer-networking: Teacher professional development in schools and colleges*. Routledge.
- Handayani, S., & Fithriani, R. (2024). Peer Observation as a Professional Development Tool for English as a Foreign Language Teachers. *JIE (Journal of Islamic Education)*, 9(2), 473-490.
- Hendry, G. D., & Oliver, G. R. (2012). Seeing is believing: The benefits of peer observation. *Journal of University Teaching & Learning Practice*, 9(1), 1-9.
- Katal, A., Singh, V. K., Choudhury, T., & Imran, F. (2022). Enhancing teaching and learning through peer observation: an Indian case study. *Education Research International*, 2022(1), 7825178.
- Keig, L., & Waggoner, M. D. (1994). Collaborative Peer Review: The Role of Faculty in Improving College Teaching. *ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 2*. George Washington University, Washington, DC.
- Kenny, A., Mitchell, E., Chróinín, D. N., Vaughan, E., & Murtagh, E. (2014). 'In their shoes': exploring a modified approach to peer observation of teaching in a university setting. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 51(2), 218-229.
- Khan, S. I. (2019). Teachers' attitude towards peer observation at Najran university: a case study. *English Review: Journal of English Education*, 8(1), 27-32.
- Knight, P. (2002). *Being a teacher in higher education*. SRHE and Open University Press.
- Kohut, G. F., Burnap, C., & Yon, M. G. (2007). Peer observation of teaching: Perceptions of the observer and the observed. *College teaching*, 55(1), 19-25.
- Martin, G. A., & Double, J. M. (1998). Developing higher education teaching skills through peer observation and collaborative reflection. *Innovations in Education and Training International*, 35(2), 161-170.
- Miquel, E., Monguillot, M., Soler, M., & Duran, D. (2024). Reciprocal peer observation: a mechanism to identify professional learning goals. *Education Inquiry*, 1-17.

- Montgomery, D. (1999). *Positive teacher appraisal through classroom observation*. Routledge.
- Motallebzadeh, K., Hosseinnia, M., & Domskey, J. G. (2017). Peer observation: A key factor to improve Iranian EFL teachers' professional development. *Cogent Education*, 4(1).
- Padwad, A., & Dixit, K. (2011). Continuing professional development: An annotated bibliography. *New Delhi: British Council, India*.
- Peel, D. (2005). Peer observation as a transformatory tool? *Teaching in higher education*, 10(4), 489-504.
- Richards, J. C., & Farrell, T. S. (2005). *Professional development for language teachers: Strategies for teacher learning*. Cambridge University Press.
- Richardson, M. O. (2000). Peer observation: Learning from one another. *Thought & Action*, 16(1), 9-20.
- Shortland, S. (2004). Peer observation: A tool for staff development or compliance? *Journal of further and higher education*, 28(2), 219-228.
- Tenenberg, J. (2016). Learning through observing peers in practice. *Studies in higher education*, 41(4), 756-773.