Peer Observation and Review of Teaching (PORT) program: An initiative for continuing professional development

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Wed 28 June, 2017

THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

Outline

- Introduction: Why do teaching staff engage in professional learning (development)?

- Overview of the Peer Observation and Review of Teaching (PORT) program

- About the PORT survey

- Peer review: my experience

- Peer review: participants' experience

- Concluding remarks

Why do teaching staff engage in professional learning?

Attendance?

Overwhelm?

Confidence?

Student (dis)engagement?

My objectives

To maximise student learning by incorporating different teaching methods into lectures eg. discussion time, examples, flipped classroom, demonstrations.

How will I know I have achieved them?

My objectives

- INCREASE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT
- MAKE STUDENTS ENJOY LECTURE DEMOS.

How will I know I've achieved them

- STUD...

FEEDBACK VIA LECTURES AND/OR DBACK.

...one speaking style, body language ...oblems, discuss questions in the ...lecture (worksheets)

...solving, answering questions

My objectives

- Pacing – delivering content at a good speed
- Holding student engagement from start to finish
- Keep attendance rates

How will I know I've achieved them

- Checking with parallel lecturer
- Seeing whether students ask questions & if so, what they ask
- Look around the theatre during the lecture.

What do our participants say?

Variables associated with student achievement in higher education (Schneider & Preckel, 2017)

Systematic review involving 38 meta-analyses; 3,330 effect sizes; almost 2 million students

1. **Presentation/instructional practices** have medium to large   (> .66) effect sizes
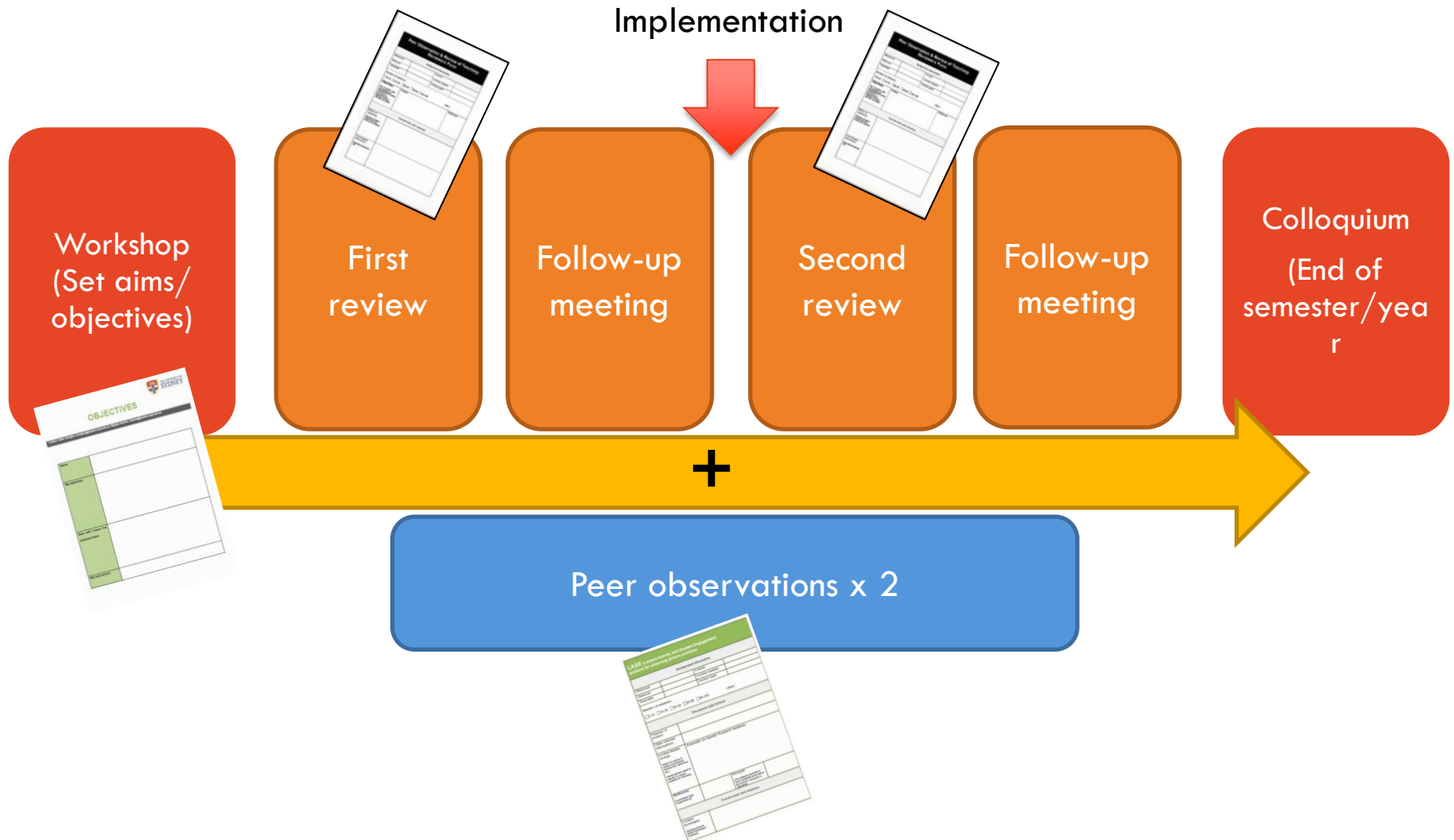
   Qualities of good presentations include
   - Clarity
   - Stimulation of interest
   - Enthusiasm

2. "**Assessment practices** are related to achievement about as strongly as presentation practices" (p. 31)

Schneider, M., & Preckel, F. (2017). Variables associated with achievement in higher education: A systematic review of meta-analyses. Psychological Bulletin, doi: 10.1037/bul0000098

Overview of Peer Observation and Review of Teaching Program

Implementation

| Workshop (Set aims/ objectives) | First review | Follow-up meeting | Second review | Follow-up meeting | Colloquium (End of semester/year |

+

Peer observations x 2

Peer Observation and Review Program (PORT)

- Our program, PORT, combines aspects of both <u>peer observation</u> and <u>peer review</u>

- Provides the benefit of *learning from others* with *engaging in reflective practice* to enhance teaching practice

- The program aims to support academics to develop teaching practice for their face-to-face teaching situation

- To date, lecturing to large groups has been the focus. Teaching small groups and teaching practical skills in the laboratory are also included in the program.

Match with systematic review recommendations for faculty development programs (Steinert et al., 2006).

Recommendations for programs	Peer observation and review of teaching program
Make deliberate use of theory	✓
Acknowledge the importance of context	✓
Extend over time to allow for cumulative learning, practice and growth	✓
Stimulate reflection and learning among participants	✓
Participation is expected and required	✓

Steinert, Y., Mann, K., Centeno, A., Dolmans, D., Spencer, J., Gelula, M., & Prideaux, D. A. (2006). A systematic review of faculty development initiatives designed to improve teaching effectiveness in medical education: BEME Guide No. 8. *Medical Teacher*, *28*(6), 497-526.

Presentation style and strategies/techniques faculty may observe

Presentation Style

Atmosphere, Connection, Enthusiasm, Pace, Format (e.g. story telling)

Strategies and Techniques

- Interactive quizzing e.g. think-pair-share
- Audience response systems
- Worksheets
- Demonstrations, videos/multmedia

Distinctive aspects of the program: is it effective?

1. Focus is on teaching strategies; overall presentation style and delivery is included in the feedback

2. Enables lecturer/tutor to get feedback on student engagement

3. The review process is one of mentoring and coaching i.e. non-judgmental. In the follow-up (review) meetings the conversation is structured yet informal (illustrate).

1. The requirement for participants to provide objectives provides a valuable measurable outcome

2. The survey was undertaken to answer whether:
   a) Our PORT program is effective
   b) Any positive effects are sustainable

About the survey and how it was developed

- On-line questionnaire consisted of 35 open and closed questions, with multiple response categories

- Questionnaire designed by PORT team and advisors to determine experience and effectiveness of the program and whether positive impacts were sustained

- Hosted by Survey Monkey

- Ethics approval was obtained from Human Research Ethics Committee (The University of Sydney)

- Participants were invited by email; two reminders were sent out prior to closure
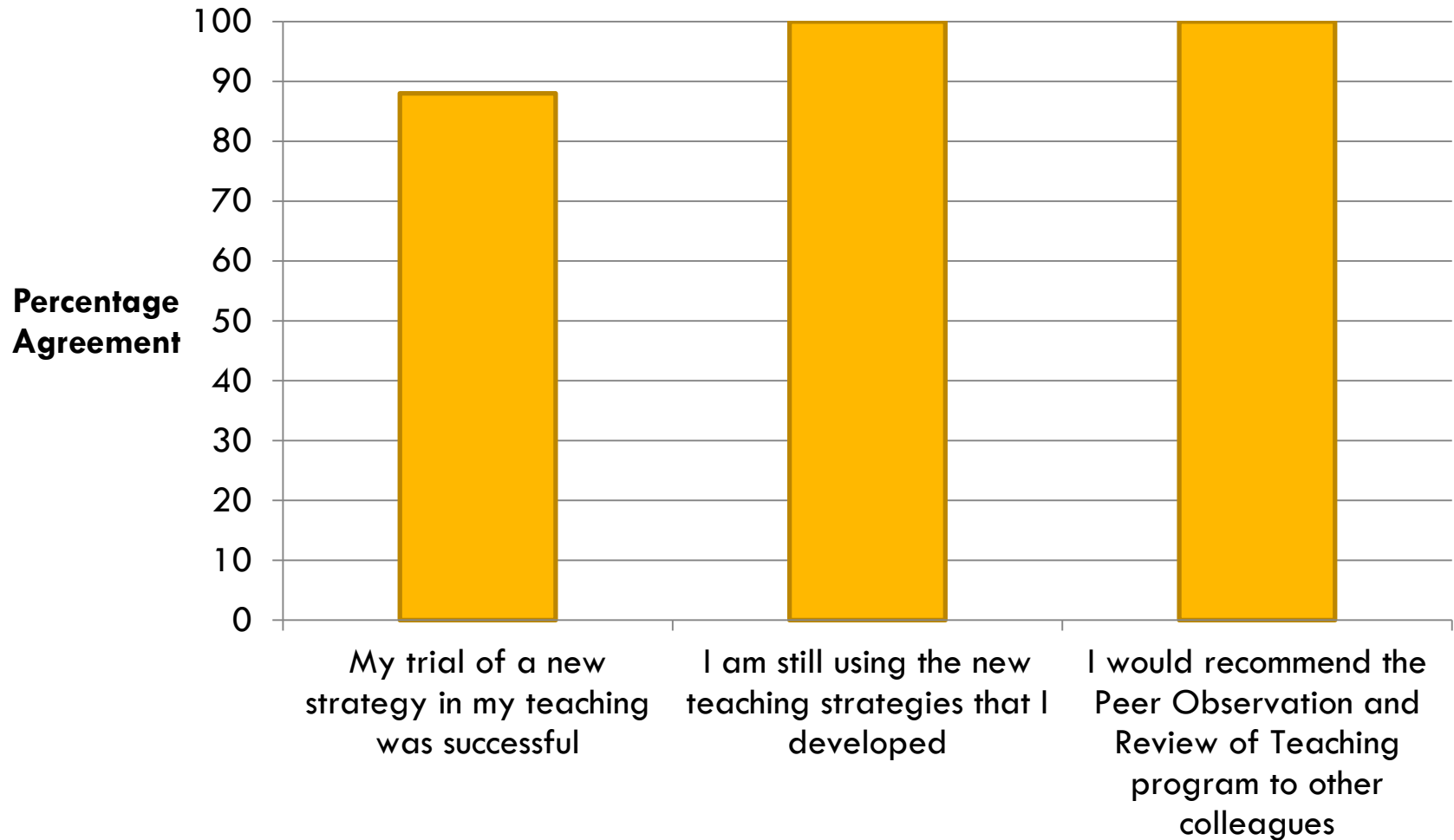
Background of participants enrolled in the program 2014-2016 and who completed the survey (37% response rate)

Academic level	Number
Postgraduate student (sessional/casual teacher)	1
Associate Lecturer	2
Lecturer	7
Senior Lecturer	3
Associate Professor	3
Total	**16**

Results – Participants' learning and motivation
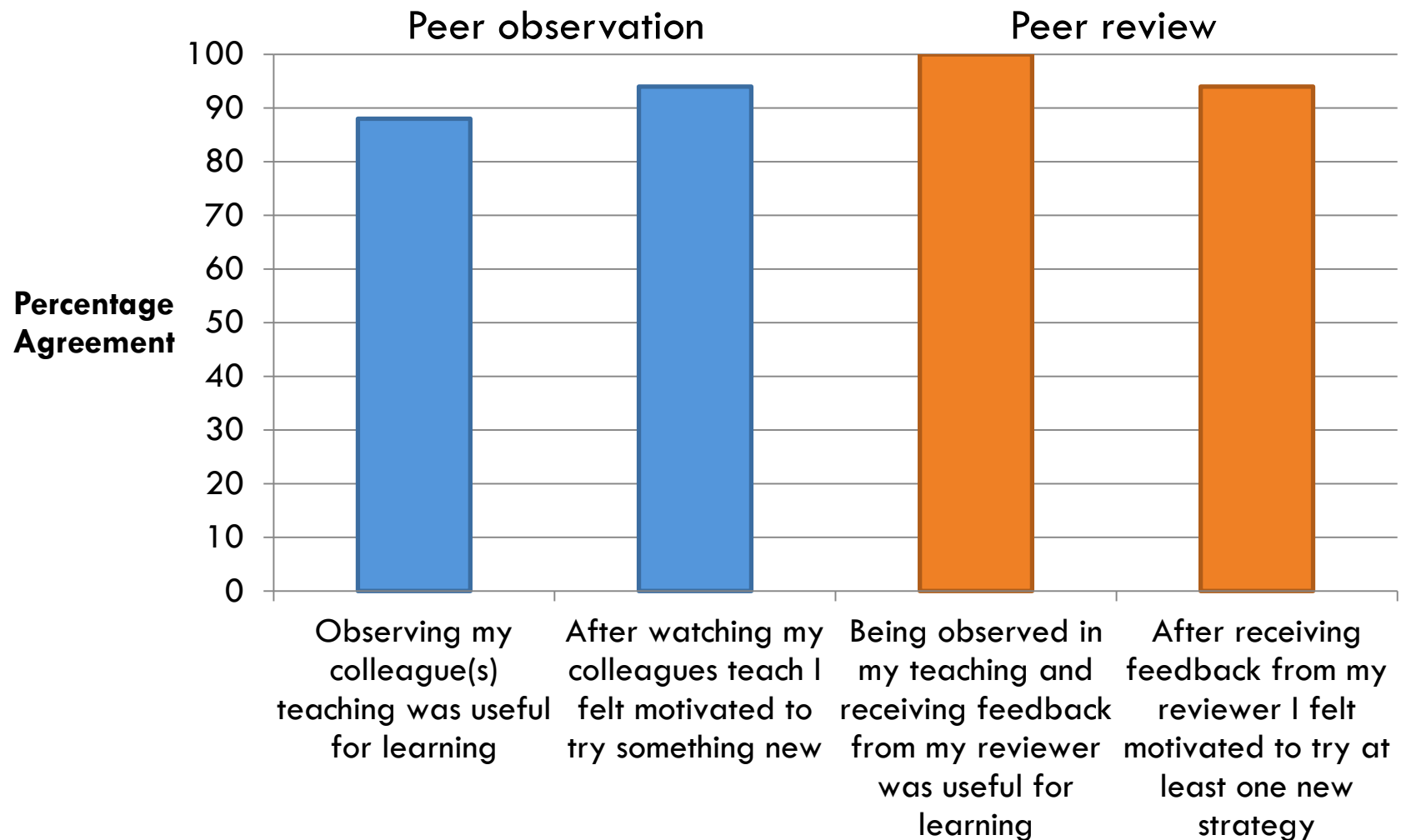
Results – Participants' change in practice

Peer review: my experience

Objective of participant (Lecturer): to increase student engagement

Altered teaching practice:

- ✓ Use of student response system, used multiple times throughout the lecture

- ✓ Having students hand-write equations and formulae

- ✓ Integrated own research using the response system

Transformation: I was dazzled! Participant had created a class that was fun, engaging, informative and varied, and had the students' attention throughout :)

Peer review: my experience

Objective of participant (Lecturer): to gain confidence

Altered teaching practice:
- ✓ "Owned" the slides
- ✓ Simplified the lecture structure
- ✓ Interacted with students: welcomed students into class, engaged in conversation during the workbook exercise

Transformation: participant clearly "in command" of the class, presented with more confidence, created a class that was easy to follow, engaging (great slides; interesting material), informative and interactive.

The participant's experience …

Peer review: participants' experience

"To me the [PORT] experience has been very beneficial, though after 20 years of teaching … I would've thought I had it all figured out. Having another pair of eyes in the back of the room observing students' engagement, and many other important aspects … has been very useful. I found the [first and second] review conversations very motivating as well." (Associate Professor)

Peer review: participants' experience

"… first experience (of lecturing) … slightly overwhelmed… main goal - being confident… I was able to restructure and simplify the lectures… modifying the slides to allow delivery of the same material from my perspective. I could also specifically implement points of real interaction with the students. In the 2nd meeting, it was affirmed to me that the changes that I had made did make a difference in my delivery, with much more confidence …Overall, the feedback from the students was good … and gaining a round of applause in my final lecture!" (Lecturer)

"But I think the key was the chance to sit down informally and find common ground with a highly experienced lecturer and have excellent advice to overcome or deal with my concerns"

Concluding remarks

— The categories presentation and social interaction, which require face-to-face classroom teaching skills, are strongly associated with student achievement (Schneider and Preckel, 2017)

— The positive survey results and responses received from participants provide evidence for the effectiveness of our PORT program, at the point of delivery

— Our program in its current form does not address curriculum development or assessment; we recognise the crucial importance of both these areas for provision of excellent teaching and student learning outcome

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