

Peer Observation Of Teaching (Pot) In A University Setting

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Abstract

The developments of information system and technologies in health care have increased the demand of good quality nurses. To meet the demand, it is a challenge for higher education in nursing to change their traditional perspective in learning, including individual's development of lecturers in their daily activities. Nursing education institutions are a workplace which provides great human resources and supporting facilities which are ideal for its member to have continuum learning. The method of this study was a case study with observations as the data collection technique. The observation is using the Gosling's peer reviewed model of Peer Observation of Teaching (POT). This study was conducted in the School of Nursing, Midwifery and Paramedicine, University of the Sunshine Coast QLD Australia. Five themes emerged from this study: the conduct of well planned teaching, the use of constructive learning method, adult learning as an effective way to learn, and the use of reflection in the learning methods. The implementation of prepared teaching and learning, the use of adult learning and constructive learning approaches, reflection and audio visual media as supporting tools are proven to be effective. Peer observation on teaching was planned and designed to gain deeper knowledge on high education teaching practice through observing the peer's teaching practices. The peer participants, which in this context have high qualifications and high quality educational environments, were providing a visual learning for the observer. Through POT, the observer as learner gain new perspectives and knowledge then identified new strategies in teaching.

Keywords : Nursing education, peer observation

Introduction

The developments in the health care technologies and the increase of people's knowledge in health have brought new challenges in the nursing fields. Increasing demands for high quality nurses have become a trigger for the nursing education institutions to push its members to give their best performances for its students in delivering the knowledge and skills to their students. Nursing education institutions are a workplace which provides great human resources and supporting facilities which are ideal for its member to have continuum learning. Workplace learning has long been considered as an essential setting for sustainable learning and research (Webster & Wright, 2009).

Peer observation in the university setting is one of the forms of work based learning, which its process can be continuously going as an everyday routine. Peer observations allow peer, novices and unexperienced lecturers to learn methods and skills from their fellows and senior colleagues, which have more experiences in teaching, innovations or other forms of interactions with students. The combinations of reflections in theories, actual knowledge from experience (Raelin, 2008 in Williams, 2010) and the comfortable environment in learning with peers which allow the adult learner to question their premises (Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 2005 in Brady, 2013; Williams, 2010) would enable learners to build their aptitude not only in teaching but in all their roles as lecturers.

The individual's professional development through new innovations and expanded knowledge in teaching practices would increase teacher's capacity. Choy, Billet &

Kelly (2013) stated that the advance of a learner's current knowledge and capacities identified as the answer to the demand and growth in the nursing education fields.

Aim

The goal this research is to develop depth of knowledge about high education teaching in learning practice. The aim would be described in several objectives, which are able to identify, describe and reflect: current teaching process, style and delivery in teaching and post observations assumptions. The reflections of the observations process then can be adapted and shaped in to the learner's teaching practice.

Method

Research design

The model which been used in this research is a case study. A single case design is chosen to capture an everyday situation (Yin, 2014). As this study has only one context, which is the university setting, and one case, which is the teaching style and strategies.

Direct observation was planned to be done as the data collection technique. Direct observation will provide this study with relevant social and environmental condition which may affect the data construction, as Yin (2014) stated that direct observation will add a new dimension of perspectives in the effort to understand either the context or phenomenon that being studied.

Particularly in this study, the observation technique is using the Gosling's peer reviewed model of Peer Observation of Teaching (POT) (Gosling, 2002) which has several characteristics, which are: have the aim of resulting discussions on teaching subjects and reflections on both observer and

peer participants; appraise, discuss and have wider perspectives in methods in teaching; shared learning between observer and peer participants; and have constructive feedback as results.

The design of this research is to observe the teaching activities which cover three domains of nursing which are: cognitive, psychomotor and affective (Oerman & Gaberson, 2009 in Davis, 2013). The POT plan was designed to combine the observer's master's skills and initial knowledge of the current teaching plan with direct visual learning. The steps and approach are adapted from Sullivan, Buckle, and Nicky & Atkinson research in the development of POT as faculty development tool in 2012.

Direct learning from the peer through teaching observations would directly recall the observer experience in teaching practice. Hence, the direct impact and the success of the peer's teaching style and methods would directly be identified. The premises which emerge after the pre observation and observation processes are then confirmed and clarified in a discussion. The results of the discussions are then analysed and reflected to the observer own practice. The design of the POT is depicted in picture 1.



Picture1. POT design

Research ethics

Potential participants were informed verbally and consents were taken under the agreement with the course coordinator where this study becomes parts of the assignments.

Sampling and criteria

Purposive sampling was chosen for this study to accommodate the goal and outcome of this study. Criteria of participants in this study were: formally registered as lecturers, currently active as a course coordinator and have minimum a year experience as lecturers.

The POT was planned to be conducted in the School of Nursing and Midwifery, University of the Sunshine Coast. Approaches to participants were done and two lecturers were willing to be peer participants and with considerations on the likelihood of similar teaching characteristics in one peer participant, the observations stage is done once in each teaching method. POT is planned to be performed in an NUR 211 nursing laboratory practice, an NUR 111 Nursing Practice lecture and tutorial session.

Peer Observation Method

The activities are divided in to three main activities, which are pre observation, observation and post observation.

Pre observation

In the pre observation stage, the information which related to teaching observation session is gathered. The information of teaching content, context, learning outcomes and teaching plan is collected through available resources, such as course outline, workbook and lecture's notes. The assumptions which emerge on the information collection are then

clarified to the peer participants. The information which had been collected and the prior master's skills are the initial knowledge of the observer.

Observation

Visual learning happened during the observation stage. In this process, the observer monitored the implementations of the teaching plan, teaching style and methods, communication's strategies and the difficulties of the teaching process. The steps, feelings and interesting events which occur during teaching practice are written in the observation's form.

Post observation

After the observation process, the peer participants were asked on their reflections towards the teaching practices; their feelings and difficulties on the practice. The observer then gives the conclusion of the observation as a feedback. The premises which appear are then clarified.

The results of the observations would conclude the affirmation of current practices and the findings of new strategies in teaching.

Reflection

Reflection in this POT activity was designed as part of a post observation process. The conclusion from the whole process then related with the observer's current practice and analysed. The findings from the POT can be a confirmation on the observer's present teaching methods and style, which will increase confidence in the use of the practices. On the other hand, the findings on new methods and style in teaching might be considered as new strategies which the effectiveness might be directly seen in the POT processes. The observer then has the

choice in adapting the new strategies to their own methods and styles and implementing it in their teaching practices.

Plan and relevant theories

Opher and Pedder (2011) in their systematic review on teacher's professional development practice stated that teacher professional learning occurs through embedded participations in their learning communities. Through POT, lecturers become the subject and object on their learning communities which provide opportunities to construct the meanings of their practices and developed the knowledge from peer's practices in to their own context (Hamilton E, 2012). POT also led to individual or group reflection, which from the student perspectives (Kenny, Mitchel, Chróinín, Murtagh, & Vaughan, 2014) a reflective teacher tend to be more innovative, open for new ideas and modified their approaches and methods in their teaching practices. Moreover, POT identified to have benefits in the development of teaching practices, increased the peer relations and advanced the teacher's professional development (Bell & Cooper, 2013, Mookherjee, Monash, Wentworth & Sharpe, 2014., Kenny et al, 2014)

The definition of peer for the participants in POT is individuals who have the same or different status or come from the same or different department on the same educational institution. Peer is also identified as an ally, where there is no distinction between the subject and the object of development in the learning process (Gosling D, 2002 & Weller S, 2009). The same definition of peer is also used for this POT activity.

Ideally to reach maximum benefit of POT in university settings, several preparation processes needs to be done. The prior

activities such as; pre POT meetings to reach the goals, objectives, things that will be observed and the POT design; and training for the observer on how to give constructive feedback (Gosling, 2002., Divall, Bar, Gonyeau, Matthew, Van Amburgh, Qualters, & Trujillo, 2012., Sullivan et al, 2012., Bell & Cooper, 2013) are proven to be effective to optimize the POT outcomes. Moreover, the agreement on the whole POT design would build trust and mutual benefit would be perceived between peer participants and observer. To reach the goals of this activity, the approach and design are made and modified from Sullivan's approach (2012). The pre observation process is designed to describe the activity to the peer participants and to clarify their teaching plans and content and to engage more with the peer participants.

Ideally, the lecturer's roles in POT are as observers and as participants (Kenny et al, 2014). Hence, workplaces become learning organisations in which each member has multiple perspectives on the teaching practices and is able to reflect from modified models of their peers. The lecturers in this POT activity only have the role as peer participants, which tend to be view as mentors (Gopee, 2008 in Walsh, 2010), who have the characteristics of role model, standard prodder, teacher-coach and eye opener.

Result and reflection

The reflection in this context is a constructed knowledge which the observer got by relating and reflecting the observation results with previous knowledge and experience and related it with pedagogy theories. The relation was critically appraised and several themes emerged:

Well planned teaching

The POT showed the role of the coordinator in the design of the whole learning in a course. The teaching plan includes content, context, steps and time frame are planned and written in the tutor's teaching note. The teaching plan facilitates the teaching team to have similar steps in the material delivery with the aim of having the same student's outcome. The teaching tips which are written in the activity plan are a great way to inform the lecturers or tutors on the problems which might occur in the teaching context. It is clear that the coordinator reflected on her previous teaching experience, identified new strategies and implemented it in the teaching plan. Jasper (2003) in West, Clark, Jasper (2007) conclude the coordinator's action as Experience Reflection Action (ERA) where the application to practice were constructed through experience learning, reflected it to current practice, identified the learning needs and adapted the learning needs to practice.

Novices, who have roles in the teaching teams often have difficulties in reaching the learning outcomes which are planned by the coordinator without having knowledge sharing on the context and the potential difficulties. Several obstacles such as: having only a course outline which describes the content which has to be given in each week assumed to be a reason of simple lecture delivery without considering a way which was suitable with the class characteristics. Other difficulty is the evaluation process which was caused by different results in student's outcomes. Teaching notes for tutors and teaching team members are a great way in setting the same delivery, preventing possible problems and creating the same student outcomes. It is also a form of sustainable

resources which can be used and updated in the next term of teaching.

The use of constructive learning

The observation results showed the constructive teaching steps which are used in every teaching sessions. Pre readings, case studies and individual practices in the lab encourage students to construct their own understanding towards the learning materials. In constructive alignments lecturers have the roles in creating the learning environment and the students engage with the activities which are designed to attain particular learning outcomes (Biggs, 2003). Through this POT, this constructive way of learning proved to create an active class where every student participates in each activity. Moreover, the enjoyments of learning were seen in every student.

Adult learning as an effective way to learn

One thing which showed up in each teaching methods in this POT is the relaxed and comfortable environment which was created by the lecturers. The effectiveness of creating safe environment for students really showed in the nursing laboratory practices. The students, in this context 1st year students, who were never exposed to clinical environments, were allowed to explore more with the medical instruments by touching and holding the instruments while the tutor described the procedure. The tutor also allowed students to ask questions anytime during the lab practice session. Furthermore, the pre reading material which was given prior to the practice seemed to make the students more active in analysing the procedure and clarified their premises along the demonstration process. Knowles (1990) in Walsh (2010) & Brady (2013) stated that the learning preparedness, the experienced

learning and self concept in learning are the characteristics of adult learning. Adult learning, included as part of a humanist teaching style, emphasises in values and manner as the rational in an individual's growth (Walsh, 2010). Through this mini POT the implementations of the adult learning method proved to be effective.

The used of reflection in the learning methods

Through the mini POT it is shown that most of the lecturers used their own experience as examples and related it to the learning materials. It is also seen that their reflections on their previous practices attract the student's attention that were not familiar with clinical environments and looked forward to their placements. Their reflections were also used in giving descriptions on real clinical context as feedback to students whether in regular discussions, case studies or individual lab practices. The lecturers also encouraged students to critically reflect on their previous readings and experiences to analyse and construct ideas through problem solving activities. Hence, both lecturers and students get the benefits on the use of reflection on the teaching and learning process. Reflection methods by the exposure of clinical scenarios and practical feedback from supervisors would provide critical thinking on the underpinned knowledge and enable learners to develop their practice (Delany & Molloy, 2009)

The used of several media and learning activities for various learning style

The use of pictures and videos in the observed teaching sessions were viewed as a great way to give emphasis to an important subject and a way to keep students attention which might

have different learning styles. Through the discussions which followed the media presentations it can be concluded that the student reflected the visual learning to their prior knowledge and experiences. Kolb and Kolb (2005) stated that to experience learning, the teacher needs to give students chances to feel, think and construct their own learning. Kolb (1984) in Walsh (2010) also conclude the importance of the use of various constructive activities which accommodates the diversities of student's learning styles.

Implementation to current practice

This POT has given a clear description on best practice teaching in university setting. The implementation of prepared teaching and learning, the use of adult learning and constructive learning approaches, reflection and audio visual media as supporting tools are proven to be effective. Related to Indonesian context, which some of universities have numbers of students from rural area, the needs on the improvement in knowledge deliveries are extremely high. Hence, to increase the quality of teaching and learning in observer's organisation, these findings can be modified, adapted and implemented.

POT would be a great way to create a learning environment within the organisations. High quality peers are available and as a growing institution, each member is required to meet the demand in high quality teaching. POT would be an effective way to develop each member's capacity. Related peer reviewed articles and this partnership activity can be used as evidence based to proposed the implementation.

Conclusion

Peer observation on teaching was planned and designed to gain deeper knowledge on high

education teaching practice through observing the peer's teaching practices. The peer participants, which in this context have high qualifications and high quality educational environments, were providing a visual learning for the observer. Through POT, the observer as learner gain new perspectives and knowledge then identified new strategies in teaching. Overall, POT holds an important role in individual's professional development which can be continuously implemented as part of their work based learning.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 POT implementation

Methods	Pre Observation			
	Students preparation	Lecturer Preparation	Learning Objectives	Potential difficulties
LECTURE	Students have workbook which comprises Pre reading, Learning Outcomes and critical thinking which include trigger questions.	Read the material, mind mapping, examined important contents, found stories which integrated in the lecture, practice with the power points.	Recall nursing theories and connect to frameworks, Identify and describe a clinical decision making framework (the nursing process), Develop an introductory understanding of the implementation in the nursing process	The content of the material which identified not interesting for students. The amount of materials which might not fit the time frame.
TUTORIAL	Students have a workbook which comprises Pre reading, Learning Outcomes and tutorial activities	Read the material students activities and supporting media (videos) which designed and written by the coordinator in the tutor's teaching notes.	Recall the historical influences on the development of regulatory and legislative frameworks in nursing, Discuss the purpose of regulatory requirements of the RN, Reflect on the image and role of the RN, Implement some nursing/medical terminology at the beginning level.	The diversity of student's background and the possibilities of having a passive class
LAB PRACTICE	Students have a workbook which comprises Pre reading, Learning outcomes, link to materials, pre/post activities, laboratory case study and documentation's forms	Read and studied the standard procedure, the teaching plan and steps which made by the coordinator	Laboratory practice link the fields of pathophysiology, health alteration and drug therapy in the clinical setting, caring practice in the therapeutic application of care to support adaptation to health alteration, caring and meeting people's need related to health alteration process, collaborative assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation of caring practices to meet the care needs of people.	Some of the students never have their placement and might not have same interest on the procedure.

Methods	Observation			
	Teaching steps	What worked	What doesn't worked	Contribution factors
LECTURE	Introduction, Critical thinking, Nursing process, Discussions	The introductions which related to assignments are a great way to engage with the current issues which was important for students. Reflections on experiences on clinical practices and integrate the stories in to related theories depict the implementation of the theories into practice. The stories were succed to attract student's attention. The using of videos as media identified as a great way to emphasize more on the material	Discussions only happened with several students. Big lecture theater with lots of students in one lecture sessions viewed held lecture's communication process with whole students.	The using of general terms and more explanation were given related to the context, which is 1st year nursing students.
TUTORIAL	Review of last week tutorial finding, discussions on professionalism in nursing topic, discussions on the pre clinical requirements to entry the clinical placements, discussions on nursing and medical terminologies, Group work in medical terminologies and summary of today's tutorial	Several visual medias such as videos and pictures which showed the changing of nursing image related to the eras were attracted the students and encourages them to be more active. The students which already have a nursing background (few of them works as primary nurse) tend to be more active but the tutors always reviewed their thoughts and ask other students opinion too. Reflection on tutor's clinical experiences helped students to get the descriptions on how nurses should act in the clinical settings. The time frame of each session in the tutorial was exactly as it planned on the tutor's note. The pre readings really help the tutors to use in effective way through discussions. Small numbers of students in the class affect on tutor's effort to give the same attention to each students and encourage each student to be more active.	Some of the videos were not working properly and needs several attempts to play it.	The class was held at 9am in the morning, which assume as the best time to learn. The teaching plan, which all written in the tutor's note, was become guidelines for tutors to run the same steps and to reach the same learning outcome in every class. The student's workbook also helps students to prepare the materials prior to the tutorials which allow them to have their premises and join the discussions. Moreover, the available facilities, such as audio visual media player and suitable classroom were support the tutors to engage more with all students.
LAB PRACTICE	Brief explanation on IV insertions theories, preparations and explanation on the instruments, demonstration of IV insertions, evaluations on the theories towards practice through discussions, explanation on the complications of IV insertions, students work on the case study in the workbook, practice on documentations, individual practices of IV insertions procedure on dummies, explanation on fluid balance and how to document it, explanations on indications of complication and Individual practices on observations procedure (BP, HR, Respiration)	The learning situation was relax and comfortable. Students were allowed to touch the instruments and ask questions anytime. The reading material was given before lab practice so the mentor only reviews and discusses student's premises which related with the procedures. Case study which provided in the workbook seems to encourage students to think critically towards the pathophysiology and the possibility of complications incident in the real setting. The procedures are masters by the lab mentors and the reflections on her experiences makes her relates the procedures with the real situations in clinical setting. She also explains the possibility of the gap between theories and clinical practical methods which might occurs in clinical setting. The students allowed to evaluate the demonstrations and lab mentors clarify their questions and premises. Every student got feedback on their lab practices.		The lab mentor called all students by names and uses them as a model in her explanations, for example when she explain about veins location and when she demonstrate on how to feel the vein in human's skin. Lab mentor were creating a relax environment by naturally put in small jokes to interact and to get the student's attentions. Small touches and eyes contacts were frequently done in the communications process. The mentor, who has wide clinical experiences, gave her reflections on real practices towards theories on procedures. Facilities which supporting the process were one of the key factors in this lab practice. Big numbers of instruments and disposables tools which can be used, allowed students to explore more on the practice. Copies on the real documentation forms which helps students to adapt with the real clinical practice situations. Numbers of dummies and small class numbers which allows students to have individual practices on the procedures without waited to long for their turns.

	Post Observation	
Methods	Feedback	Clarified Premises
LECTURE	Overall, the lecture went really well and lecture succeeded to get students attentions through the whole session. Few students were ignorant but most of them morelikely intrested in the videos, the reflections from experienced and the stories which emphasise more to the material.	The lecture was ment for informative teaching session, which not emphasise on students participations. Further in depth learning will be done through tutorial.
TUTORIAL	The tutorial was running smoothly with incredebly precise time framed in each activities. The tutors were succedd in encourage students to participates in the discussions and activities. The medias really helped in depict the current material eventough small technical difficulties occured which may need pre checked before tutorial start.	The teaching tips in the tutor's note can be use and adapt suitable with class's characteristic. The teaching steps were made with the goal to have the same learning outcomes related the evaluation purposes.
LAB PRACTICE	The comfortable environments which created by the mentor was encourage students to actively participates in the learning process. Reflections on experiences really helps mentors to introduce clinical settings to students, especially 2nd year students which never been to clinical settings. Moreover, supported by complete lab facilities the learning process went really well. Small group of students in each session makes the interactions and the discussions process more effective. The time of lab practices, which only 2 hours seems effective for the students. Students seems to connect well and having a stabile excitement during lab practice.	The procedures are updated in accordance with the National standard. Each nursing lab session have its own teaching plan and learning outcome. The evaluation of students skills are done directly through observations during lab practice and followed by continues supervisions on their placement.

