**Exploratory pedagogic inquiry. Reflecting about our teaching**

This session and handout is based on an initiative developed by the WIHEA Learning Circle ‘Pedagogic Research in HE’ led by John Kirkman and Richard Smith. The main aim is to develop an approach that HE teaching staff with multiple demands on their time can adopt to engage in inquiry into teaching and learning, with ultimate benefits for improvement of student experience but also with immediate benefit to participants themselves. You can read more about it [here](https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross_fac/academy/activities/learningcircles/pedagogicresearch/).

**Introduction – Setting the scene**

The broad goal of this session is to explore and develop our current practice with the help of our peers. Together, we can view the current challenging circumstances as a learning opportunity, with positive effects for ourselves as well as students.

Experience so far suggests that benefits include:

* gaining peer support and new perspectives from across the University
* an enhanced understanding of teaching and learning issues
* an increased appreciation of your own achievements
* a better understanding of student perspectives
* an increased sense of being in control of your further pedagogic development
* enhanced ability to coach others to engage in pedagogic inquiry
* documentation of your practice which may be useful in promotion and fellowship applications

# Suggested procedure:

## Overall process

In a pair with another participant, engage in a dialogue session reflecting on and documenting the experience, and sharing your reflections within our group, so that we can continue to develop as coaches and as teachers with one another, and develop the approach overall for the possible benefit of others in the future.

## Aims of peer-coaching

The overall aim is to identify, explore further and build on recent pandemic professional experience – your partner will help you, and you will help your partner to identify possible pathways forward, for further development.

## Rapport

Try to create a trusting relationship based on:

* genuineness (be sincere and truthful in your relationship with your mentee, with an understanding attitude)
* open-mindedness (be willing to consider new ideas)
* free-heartedness (create an environment to help your partner feel free to express their true feelings and opinions)

## Take turns

Take turns in speaking – ensure that each partner has an opportunity to coach and be coached, for a roughly equal amount of time per person during each session.

## Listen attentively, 'reflect back', ask questions, avoid judging

Remember to sometimes ‘reflect back’ what the other person says to enable them to think about it. Also, utilise coaching skills like attentive listening, asking for clarification, probing, etc., and avoid judging or offering direct advice. Don't hesitate to ask for clarification.

## Take notes and reflect afterwards

Take notes during the session on what your partner says about their experience to avoid forgetting key details.

## Respect confidentiality

Don't share any personal information (including difficulties, successes etc. of your partner) outside your one-to-one sessions, unless you have permission from them to do so.

**Before the session:**

Reflect about your teaching this year and try to identify examples of success and challenges in your teaching practice.

If you have not taught this year, try to reflect about your strengths and to anticipate certain challenges you may face next year.

**During the session:**

**Peer Coaching** **(30-35 minutes)**

This is an opportunity to reflect on practice through looking at strengths and challenges with goal of beginning to identify a topic for further investigation.

### 1. What is your context? (5 minutes total)

Exchange basic information about your teaching context.

* Who do you teach?
* What level? What type of classes? Lectures, seminars, etc.? Online or face to face?

### 2. What have you gained professionally overall in recent (crisis) times? (10 minutes total – 5 minutes each)

Take turns to share about this. Take notes as you listen, filling out the template on page 6.

Example prompt questions:

* What do you feel you have gained as a teacher in recent months?
* What positive feelings arose for you while teaching during the pandemic?
* What skills do you feel you have developed since March last year?
* *Your questions…*

### 3. What main problems/difficulties have you been facing professionally, and how have you attempted to overcome them? (5-10 minutes each)

Take turns to share about this. Take notes as you listen.

Example prompt questions:

* What have you found challenging or frustrating in your recent teaching?
* What have students said they find difficult / what have they 'complained' about (if anything)?
* Is there anything you have realised you need to learn more about?
* *Other questions…*

After the session

# Reflecting on your conversation and identifying particular experiences of success and difficulty

## Debrief

Reflect on the session by answering or thinking about the following questions.

As someone being listened to *and* as a 'coach':

* How did you feel?/ How did you benefit?/What did you learn?
* What made you feel this way/benefit in this way/learn in this way…?
* What was the value of this session? Why was it/was it not valuable?
* What will/might you do differently as a consequence of this session?/ Did questions for further exploration arise for you?

## Make the notes about your partner's achievements and difficulties clearer

Edit the notes you made while your partner was speaking making them clearer and send them to your partner.

Inspired by your conversation identify some *particular*, concrete examples of success and difficulty that you have had recently.

Add your ideas to the table below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Specific examples of my achievement** | **Specific examples of my difficulties** |
| *e.g. Prepared a 10 minute video about a particular concept that students found useful.* | *e.g. When I ask a question to students during a synchronous session I receive no response.*  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
| **Specific example of what I want to find out more about and why I want to find out more** |