

Coordinators Leading Advancement of Sessional Staff (CLASS) Project

Exemplars of Good Practice Initiatives

MEDICINE, CLINICAL SKILLS, UNSW

EXEMPLAR: MEDICINE, CLINICAL SKILLS UNSW

Title:	Medicine; Clinical Skills – Peer Observation
University :	University of New South Wales
Discipline Area:	Medicine
Subject/Unit Coordinator (optional)	Dr Silas Taylor; Lecturer, Clinical Teaching Unit; Convener, Clinical Skills Program, University of New South Wales
Level of Unit	Years 1 & 2
Number of Students:	570 Students
Number of Sessional Staff	8 Tutors
Delivery Mode:	Face to Face Delivery

Profile: Most tutors are local GPs or hospital specialists with an interest in teaching.

Background/Context: Teaching Clinical Skills to junior medical students in small groups (10-15 students).

Good Practice Initiative:

Peer Observation:

Course coordinator:

- observes tutors during teaching
- Takes notes on all aspects of teaching
- discusses and then sends feedback to tutor on document by email and asks for additional tutor comments

The aim is to improve individual teaching performance, enhance consistency between tutors, and develop tutors and promote career enhancement

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**Tips for
Implementation:**

Negotiate the observation session with the tutor beforehand to reduce tutor anxiety. It is useful to make clear upfront that an observed session will happen at some point in the year.

Evaluation:

Feedback from tutors has been positive. All state that they have learned from the process, as has the observer.

The improvements that can be made are in regard to lessening the anxiety of the session for tutors. Although much would be lost, videoing a session remotely might also provide many similar opportunities and be less anxiety inducing.

Improvements can be made to the current feedback sheet that is used to document and communicate details about the tutors' performance.

Reflection:

Peer observation has been a useful practice in an attempt to ensure 'quality control' for these sessions. Furthermore, good practice has been witnessed and it is then disseminated to the rest of the tutor group. It is noticeable that some tutors are quite anxious about the process and that this reaction itself can provide information or a starting point for discussions about tutor performance. Remedial action can be then instituted as required. The observer too may need to deal with anxiety around observing – and a sense of possibly judging – experienced tutors and colleagues.
