

## Classroom Observation Guide for Peer Reviewer – example of using a time-diary

Source: Harland, T. (2012). University Teaching: An introductory guide. London; New York, NY: Routledge.

### Field note 2

#### How I work with peer review

When I observe a colleague teaching I create a minute-by-minute description of what is happening in the session. I jot down everything that is happening, however mundane it might seem.

- 8.58 Students streaming into the lecture, picking up handout on the way in. Some seem to forget to do this and turn back when they realize, creating a log-jam of students
- 8.59 Opening PowerPoint slide is up now and two students are wanting to talk to the lecturer
- 9.00 Lecturer talking to the two students
- 9.01 Late students arriving through the other door and no handouts available on that side of the lecture theatre
- 9.02 Lecture starts, students still settling and talking. Late arrival looks embarrassed
- 9.03 and so on ... for 47 minutes

During this process, when an event occurs that may have some bearing on the issues that I have been asked to focus on, I note my thoughts down. Whenever something occurs outside this brief, I also write this down if I think it might be important. I mark each of these observations in a different way.

When we debrief, I simply read through my time-diary, pausing at the end of each observation. What then happens is that my colleague will respond and a conversation develops around a point of practice. The entire debrief is structured by the written time-diary.

When we come to explore issues raised in the briefing, I try to give these more thought and time. Whether or not I decide to raise issues that were outside the brief is a more difficult decision and requires fine judgement. On balance, I feel that it is best to have this option because it is not always possible to predict and plan for everything in advance of a teaching session. It is also surprising how often a small piece of advice can make an important difference. In the example above, it was a better way to ensure all students got a handout in a timely way.