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**THE ROLE OF PEER OBSERVATION AND PEER REVIEW
IN THE PROFESSIONAL FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF AMERICAN
AND BRITISH HIGHER EDUCATION TEACHERS**

© Belmaz Y., Otroshko T.

Municipal Establishment

«Kharkiv Humanitarian-Pedagogical Academy» of Kharkiv Regional Council

Information about the authors:

Yaroslava Belmaz: ORCID 0000-0002-8823-640X; yaroslava_belmaz@ukr.net; Doctor of Pedagogic Sciences, Professor, Head of the Department of Foreign Philology, Municipal Establishment «Kharkiv Humanitarian-Pedagogical Academy» of Kharkiv Regional Council, 7, Rustaveli Lane, Kharkiv, Ukraine

Tamara Otroshko: ORCID: 0000-0001-5777-2309; ped_osvital6@ukr.net; Candidate of Pedagogic Sciences, Professor, Dean of the Faculty of Social and Pedagogical Sciences and Foreign Philology, Municipal Establishment «Kharkiv Humanitarian-Pedagogical Academy» of Kharkiv Regional Council, 7, Rustaveli Lane, Kharkiv, Ukraine.

In the article peer observation and peer review are defined as effective forms of professional development of higher education teachers. For illustrative purpose experience of the USA and Great Britain is given.

In defining the concept of "professional development", the works of American and British teachers who use different definitions are analysed: "professional development", "career development", "staff development", etc.

It is noted that professional development is usually seen as a process aimed at improving skills through formal or informal learning. Professional development should be related to the needs of the individual and be consistent with the current situation in society and education.

The authors emphasise that peer observation and peer evaluation as a form of professional development of higher education teachers are increasingly used in higher education institutions in the USA and the UK, receiving support from organisations involved in improving the quality of learning and teaching in higher education.

The paper emphasises that peer observation is not a control or critical evaluation of teaching activities. It is seen as a support system and a means of professional development of the teaching staff.

The advantages of peer observation are analysed both for those teachers who are observers and for those whose classes are observed.

The authors note that there are formative (developmental) and summative (for solving personnel issues) peer observation.

In the process of peer observation, three stages can be distinguished: preparatory (instruction), observation as such, or attendance at a class, and final (feedback and analysis). The article analyses all of these stages in detail, emphasising the importance of each of them. Particular emphasis is placed on feedback, without which it is impossible to achieve the effectiveness of peer observation.

As an example, the article provides recommendations for visiting, observing and analysing classes during a peer observation at Keele University and the Center for Effective Learning and Teaching at North Carolina State University.

Keywords: peer observation, peer review, peer evaluation, higher education teacher, professional development, feedback, the USA, Great Britain.

Бельмаз Я. М., Отрошко Т. В. "Роль взаємовідвідування і взаємостереження у професійному становленні та розвитку американських та британських викладачів вищої школи"

У статті взаємовідвідування і взаємостереження розглядається як ефективна форма професійного розвитку і становлення викладачів вищої школи. Як приклад наводиться досвід США та Великої Британії. При визначенні поняття «професійний розвиток» аналізуються праці американських і британських педагогів, які вживають різні дефініції: «професійний розвиток», «кар'єрний розвиток», «підвищення кваліфікації» тощо.

Значається, що професійний розвиток зазвичай розглядається як процес, що спрямований на підвищення кваліфікації шляхом формального або неформального навчання. Професійний розвиток

має бути пов'язаний із потребами самої особистості та відповідати ситуації, що склалася в суспільстві та освіті.

Автори підкреслюють, що взаємоспостереження та взаємооцінювання як форми професійного розвитку викладачів вищої школи все частіше використовуються в закладах вищої освіти США та Великої Британії, отримуючи підтримку від організацій, що займаються питаннями підвищення якості навчання та викладання у вищій школі

У роботі наголошується, що взаємоспостереження – це не контроль чи критичне оцінювання викладацької діяльності педагогів. Воно розглядається саме як система підтримки та засіб професійного розвитку професорсько-викладацького складу.

Проаналізовані переваги взаємоспостереження як для тих викладачів, які є спостерігачами, так і для тих, заняття яких відвідують.

Автори зазначають, що виділяють формуюче (розвиваюче) та підсумкове (для вирішення кадрових питань) взаємоспостереження.

У процесі взаємоспостереження можна виділити три етапи: підготовчий (інструктаж), спостереження як таке, або відвідування заняття, і заключний (зворотній зв'язок та аналіз). У статті детально аналізуються всі зазначені етапи, підкреслюється важливість кожного з них. Особливо виділяється зворотний зв'язок, без якого неможливо досягти ефективності взаємовідвідування.

Як приклад наводяться рекомендації щодо відвідування, спостереження й аналізу заняття в процесі взаємовідвідування університету Кіле та Центру ефективного навчання та викладання університету штату Північна Кароліна.

Ключові слова: взаємовідвідування, взаємоспостереження, взаємооцінювання, викладач вищої школи, професійний розвиток, зворотній зв'язок, США, Велика Британія.

Introduction. The main driving force of professional development is the individual's desire to integrate into the social context on the basis of identification with social groups and institutions. In different cultural, historical and biographical conditions, this aspiration is manifested in orientations towards different professional spheres characterised by different tools of labour (horizontal orientation) and different qualification levels, which are determined by the volume and quality of general and vocational education.

Analysis of recent studies and publications. American and British teachers broadly understand professional development as personal development in the context of performing professional roles [10, p. 11]. A. Glatthorn defines professional development of teachers as professional growth achieved by a teacher as a result of systematic deepening of their own experience [2, p. 41]. At this stage of the development of pedagogical thought in English-speaking countries, in particular the UK and the USA, the term «professional development» is used, which is broader than the concept of «career development», which means growth, promotion of a teacher in his/her career, obtaining a higher position, and «staff development», which means the organisation of formal courses and programmes for teacher development [2, p. 41]. Professional development includes both formal forms (e.g., attending seminars, courses, mentoring, etc.) and informal forms (studying literature on learning and teaching, informal communication with colleagues,

etc.) [10, p. 11]. It is also important to note that professional development covers all cycles of a teacher's professional formation – from training within a master's or doctoral programme to self-education [4; 11, p. 13-14].

Thus, professional development is usually seen as a process aimed at improving skills through formal or informal learning. Professional development should be linked to the needs of the individual and be relevant to the current situation in society and education.

Among the various ways of professional development of higher education teachers in the United States and the United Kingdom, peer observations are of great importance. This form of in-service training contributes to the development of teachers' professional skills and allows them to constructively exchange experience with colleagues. It is useful for both young and experienced teachers. Novice teachers gain experience in the process of attending classes, while experienced colleagues, on the one hand, can identify the strong and weak points of a novice teacher's work, and on the other hand, learn something useful and interesting for themselves.

It should be noted that in American and British pedagogy, the terms «peer observation» and «peer review» are used to define this concept, and less often – «peer evaluation».

Peer observation and peer evaluation as a form of professional development for higher education teachers are increasingly used in higher education institutions in the United States and the

United Kingdom, receiving support from organisations that promote the quality of learning and teaching in higher education (e.g., the Higher Education Academy, the Association for Professional and Educational Development of Faculty, the Center for Continuing Education, the Association of American Colleges and Universities, etc.).

The aim of this article is to analyse the concepts of peer observation and peer review as the forms of professional development of higher education teachers in the USA and Great Britain.

Presentation of the main material. Peer observation is a way for faculty members to exchange ideas about learning, teaching and student assessment. It is a support system that encourages faculty to discuss their teaching with colleagues and learn from each other's experiences [5].

In the context of the Teaching and Learning in Higher Education programme, the main purpose of peer observation is primarily to improve teaching, not to evaluate it. Ideally, colleagues should exchange the roles of observer and observed. This allows for a more constructive discussion of teaching [8].

Observations bring benefits to both parties – the teacher who observes and the teacher whose work is being observed. British and American educators name the following benefits:

- observation of how a colleague approaches a pedagogical situation can help in understanding how to act in a similar situation in your own teaching;
- it may prompt you to change or adjust your own teaching approaches;
- observation provides an opportunity to discuss alternative approaches to teaching or to look at a situation from a new angle;
- observation provides an opportunity for novice teachers to receive feedback from more experienced colleagues;
- the academic staff always strives to improve their teaching activities, to apply new approaches, technologies, methods and tools in their classes. As a rule, this is discussed at meetings of various levels, conferences, and forums. Peer observation and peer review provide an opportunity to see in practice how a particular technology works;
- when observing other faculties, you can find new forms of work with students;
- peer observation helps to get to know the teaching activities of your colleagues;
- peer observation helps to understand how colleagues evaluate their own teaching activities;

- through peer observation, professional vocabulary is expanded;

- peer observation provides an opportunity to establish the correspondence and contradictions between the goals that a teacher strives for and daily teaching activities;

- peer review provides an opportunity to test and evaluate teaching strategies that have not been used in their own teaching practice;

- peer observation provides an opportunity to analyse one's own teaching activities in the context of feedback from colleagues [1].

Each higher education institution has its own scheme of peer review and observation, some of which are entirely focused on supporting and improving teaching, while others focus on career outcomes. However, there are common features that underpin the process of peer observation.

As a rule, there are three stages in the process of peer observation: preparatory (briefing), observation as such, or attending a class, and final (feedback and analysis).

It is important to prepare for visiting your colleague's class. It is necessary to clearly state the purpose. British teachers identify two main areas that are subject to observation – the professional level of the teacher and the learning activities of students. But in practice, these areas are inseparable [9].

All types of classes (seminars, workshops, labs) are subject to observation, but most often in US and UK universities, lectures are observed.

On the preceding day of the class to be observed, colleagues discuss the purpose and details of the observation. This approach, firstly, contributes to the effectiveness of the observation, and secondly, makes the visit correct and collegial.

The issues discussed at the preliminary meeting can be of the following kind:

- When do you want your colleague's visit to take place?
- Where do you want him/her to sit?
- How will you explain your colleague's presence in the classroom to the students?
- What kind of activity will be observed?
- Is there a specific area of activity you would like to demonstrate to your colleague?
- Will the observer be an active participant or not?
- Explain what is the purpose, objective of the activity to be observed?
- Is there any information about the group of students that you would like to share with your colleague?

- Is the colleague allowed to ask students about their impressions of the lesson or to rely only on their own observation?

- How will the lesson be recorded?

- When will there be a meeting to discuss and analyse the lesson?

- What type of feedback would you like to receive from your colleague? [5; 9].

The objectives of the preliminary meeting for the teacher who is an observer are as follows:

1) to get to know your colleague better, if you do not know each other well enough;

2) to get more information about the class you are going to observe: time, place, type of class, content, goals and objectives;

3) to get information about the students with whom the teacher will work in the class;

4) to find out what results the teacher expects from the class and what feedback and analysis he/she would like to receive;

5) to find out what the colleague would like you to observe: students' activities or his/her activities;

6) to analyse your own teaching activity and try to predict what you can get from the visited class to improve it [6, p. 14].

It is interesting to explain to students the presence of an external lecturer in the classroom. If it is a lecture with a large number of students, then, as a rule, no explanation is required. If the group of students is small, British teachers recommend explaining to students whether the external lecturer is interested in teaching or student learning, and also encouraging them to behave as usual and not to hold back on asking questions and giving answers.

Usually, before attending a lesson, the teachers involved in the process fill out a special form that reflects all the points discussed.

During the observation, you should take notes or otherwise record what you see. This will be useful when discussing the class. Each university or college has an observation form that is filled in by the observer. Although the forms vary, there are common points that an observer should pay attention to when attending a class, including

- how effectively the class started, how clearly the teacher explained the objectives of the class, how he/she combined them with the educational material already known to the students;

- questioning, namely the manner of asking questions, how students answer the questions, the teacher's reaction and comments on students' answers;

- students' attention: how it is achieved, for how long, what actions the teacher takes when students' attention is weakened;

- teacher's speech: voice, pronunciation, vocabulary, style;

- dealing with students' mistakes: whether and how the teacher corrects mistakes, how students who make mistakes feel, whether the teacher tries to encourage such students;

- students' activities in the classroom: types and forms of work, predominant activities, how instruction is conducted before a particular activity, whether each activity is analysed;

- student motivation;

- students' cooperation: how students interact with each other, whether mutual explanation and mutual evaluation are used in the class;

- resources used in the class;

- time management, ability to plan activities correctly, taking into account their duration;

- effectiveness of summing up the results

[6, p. 18].

Therefore, the best option is to meet not immediately after the class or in a few days, but in 1-2 hours. On the one hand, there is time to think about and analyse the lesson, and on the other hand, all the events are still clearly imprinted in the participants' memory.

Sometimes it is common practice to send an analysis of a class by post or email. However, the most effective way to present an analysis is face-to-face, especially when the main purpose of observing a class is professional development. In this case, both tone of voice and eye contact play a role, and there is an opportunity to ask clarifying questions to both the observer and the teacher whose class is being discussed, to explain what was meant in a particular situation, etc.

Of course, it is important to cover the entire lesson in the process of analysis, but some points require more attention and careful consideration, for example, if the observer noticed a mistake in the teaching methodology or the teacher's uncertainty about a particular issue, or if colleagues have different views on the use of a particular method, etc. It is this kind of discussion that contributes to professional development and improvement of teaching activities.

Feedback will only be effective and efficient if it is based on trust and mutual respect. British educators believe that the best approach is to create an atmosphere where participants try to find constructive ways to solve problems and respect each other. As in any case, the beginning of the conversation is important. It is always recommended to start with positive aspects,

something that really caught the attention. Also, the constructiveness of the conversation is influenced not only by the content, but also by the style of expression and the relevance of the situation. Keele University professors provide recommendations to the observer on how to analyse their colleague's class:

- Be specific – generalisations do not help;
- Be realistic – focus your comments on what your colleague can change or influence;
- Be aware of your colleague's intentions when commenting on the class;
- Try not to be judgemental, evaluate actions, not personalities;
- Balance between positive and negative comments [8].

Similar recommendations are offered for the teacher whose class is being visited. It is important to be open to criticism and comments and ready to improve your own teaching practice. In particular, recommendations may include the following:

- be honest;
- monitor your reactions;
- listen more than talk, try to avoid a defensive position;
- do not leave anything in a colleague's comment unclear to yourself [7].

The concept of peer observation is related to the concept of peer review. This concept refers to the evaluation of teaching activities by colleagues. The components of the evaluation may include not only class observation, but also teaching materials, student assessment, portfolios, teacher self-assessment, etc.

There are two types of peer evaluation: formative (developmental) and summative (for personnel issues).

Formative assessment provides information to teachers that they can use to improve their teaching. This information is intended for the teacher's own use, rather than for public discussion and scrutiny. As a result, formative assessment is less formal. It is seen as a way of effective professional development throughout the career. Experts in this type of evaluation can be colleagues with any experience and holding any position.

In the process of summative evaluation, information is required to resolve a personnel issue related to the career development of a teacher, contract extension, appointment to the staff or for a mandatory analysis of the activities of a teacher who works on a permanent basis. As a result, the information collected becomes part of the documentation required by the personnel committee. The experts of the summative evaluation may be teachers who hold either an

identical or higher ranked position and are usually members of the personnel committee (commission) [3].

In the context of professional development of higher education teachers, formative assessment deserves more attention. Colleagues are considered to be the best experts, given the fact that they are involved in the same type of activity and have a good understanding of the curriculum and content of the discipline. As noted earlier, different aspects of the activity are subject to assessment. The American educator Peter Seldin provides a list that gives a general idea:

1. The content of the syllabus.
2. The relevance of the objectives of the course and the teaching materials.
3. Compliance of teaching methods with the specifics of the course.
4. Compliance of technologies for assessing students' knowledge, skills and abilities.
5. The structure of the course.
6. Student achievements based on exam results, projects, presentations and reports.
7. Interest in teaching.
8. Textbooks, additional material, methodological developments, etc. [3].

In order to cover the above aspects, two approaches to the selection of the object of evaluation should be applied – evaluation of teaching materials and evaluation of the class.

The Center for Effective Teaching and Learning at North Carolina State University provides general guidelines for visiting and observing a colleague's class for formative assessment:

- 1) experts should receive prior instructions on how to evaluate a colleague's class;
- 2) one lesson cannot be an indicator of the quality of teaching and pedagogical skills of the teacher;
- 3) at the preliminary meeting, it is important to obtain information about the students, the purpose of the lesson, and the specifics of the course;
- 4) in the process of observation, it is necessary to use different techniques of recording what they see;
- 5) observers should try to be as invisible as possible [3].

Formative observation can focus on one or more aspects of teaching (e.g. questioning techniques, time management, use of certain methods, etc.), depending on what the teacher wants to improve in his/her work.

American educators emphasise not only the importance of discussing the lesson with a

colleague, but also the need for their own reflection on the lesson (and this method of professional development can be used not only after a lesson observed by a colleague, but also any other). R. Killen suggests answering the following questions to yourself:

1. Did the lesson go as planned? If not, why not?
2. Was the reaction of the students predictable?
3. Did you feel confident and enthusiastic during the class? Why?
4. Do you think that the students learnt everything you had planned? On what basis did you make this conclusion?
5. What did you do to encourage students to actively participate in the learning process?

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6. What did you learn about teaching from this activity?

7. What did you learn about student learning from this session?

8. What tasks do you set for yourself to improve your teaching? Are they realistic?

9. If you were to teach the same class tomorrow, would you change anything? What would you change? Why? [3]

Conclusion. Thus, peer observation and peer evaluation are effective forms of professional development for higher education teachers. They are quite often used in universities and colleges in the USA and the UK. In order to achieve results, the processes of peer observation, peer review and peer evaluation should be structured and meet certain requirements for each stage.

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