Journal of Academic Language & Learning
Vol. 6, No. 3, 2012, A16-A35. ISSN 1835-5196

AALL
Association for Academic Language and Learning

Individual consultations: Towards a 360-degree evaluation process

Lynn Berry, Garry Collins, Peter Copeman, Rowena Harper, Linda Li and Sue Prentice

Academic Skills Centre, University of Canberra, Canberra ACT 2601, Australia

Email: lynn.berry@canberra.edu.au, garry.collins@canberra.edu.au, peter.copeman@canberra.edu.au, rowena.harper@canberra.edu.au, linda.li@canberra.edu.au and sue.prentice@canberra.edu.au

(Received 12 April 2012; Published online 3 August 2012)

In an era of increasing accountability in higher education, it is critical that academic language and learning (ALL) centres examine the efficacy of their one-to-one teaching in a rigorous and reliable way. The diversity of the ALL context, however, is such that a single set of evaluation instruments is unlikely to be appropriate for every centre. Stevenson and Kokkinn's (2009) framework is useful here: rather than suggesting a particular methodology or instrument for evaluating one-to-one teaching, the authors instead propose a theoretical framework, a set of considerations relevant for ALL staff when selecting or designing evaluations. This paper reports on the attempt of one ALL centre – the Academic Skills Centre (ASC) at the University of Canberra – to improve its evaluation of one-to-one teaching using Stevenson and Kokkinn's (2009) framework. Working through its recommended steps, the ASC developed a 360° approach which sought to triangulate feedback gained from three instruments: peer-observations of teaching, self-reflection, and student questionnaires. This therefore incorporated not only student perspectives on teaching, but also those of the academic advisors and their peers. After implementing those instruments, it was found that while student questionnaires remained limited in their capacity to provide useful feedback on teaching, the combination of guided self-reflection and peer observation facilitated significant learning about one-to-one teaching practice, and developed staff teaching strategies. A thorough consideration of Stevenson and Kokkinn's (2009) four "steps" also produced an evaluation cycle that was multi-faceted and versatile, and able to achieve a range of both internal and external purposes.

Key Words: one-to-one teaching, evaluation.

1. Introduction

The increasing need for Academic Language and Learning (ALL) centres to convincingly justify their one-to-one teaching has been widely noted in the literature (Chanock 2007; Huijser, Kimmins, & Galligan, 2008; Stevenson & Kokkinn, 2009; Wilson, Collins, & Couchman, 2011; Woodward-Kron, 2007). The dominant logic of economic rationalism frames individual consultations, or ICs, as a costly use of staff time, while curriculum-embedded approaches to ALL development are framed as a more sustainable response to systemic shifts in student preparedness brought about by widening participation (Percy, James, Stirling, & Walker, 2004). Despite the benefits of curriculum-embedded approaches, the growing self-consciousness around ICs is unfortunate, given their value. Not only are they consistently viewed positively by students who participate in them (Wilson et al., 2011), but they are also valuable for informing other ALL teaching (Huijser et al., 2008), in that problems that "come to light" during ICs are

often representative of common student issues, the support of which can then be designed into "generic" and curriculum-embedded classes (Chanock, 2007, p. A-2).

While there is consensus in the ALL community about the need to better evaluate ICs, there is little consensus about the best instruments to use. In part, this is because the contexts for ALL work vary dramatically across the sector. ALL staff across Australia are a mix of general, professional and academic staff, with some centres classifying their staff consistently, and other centres comprising staff with different classifications (Barthel, 2011). This is likely to result in differing performance expectations and differing understandings of what might rightly be evaluated in teaching. Moreover, ALL centres are located at a range of positions within organisational structures: some are centrally positioned while others are faculty- or discipline-based; some report directly to senior managers, such as Deputy Vice-Chancellors, while others sit under multiple layers within a reporting line; some only have responsibility "upwards", while others also have responsibility "outwards" (to faculties for example). This means that the points of accountability for any ALL centre are likely to be multiple, complex, and unique. Evaluation will therefore be approached differently by each ALL centre.

Given this context, Stevenson and Kokkinn's (2009) paper represents an important contribution to the discussion on evaluating ICs. Rather than suggesting a particular methodology or instrument, the authors instead propose a theoretical framework, a set of considerations relevant for ALL staff when selecting or designing evaluations. They suggest evaluation should be considered in four "steps": purpose, focus, participants and method. Firstly, examining purpose requires that staff clarify what they intend to achieve with an evaluation, which is usually one or more of the following: accountability (which assesses "efficiency and outcomes" of teaching), knowledge (which seeks to understand how teaching works), and development (which seeks to improve teaching). Secondly, staff need to identify the focus of the evaluation, or the content that will be evaluated, which might be the context of the IC, teaching practices used, student experience or a combination of these. Thirdly, participants need to be decided upon, which means determining who will be evaluated and who will conduct the evaluation; for example students, practitioners, colleagues or managers. Finally, methods are determined, which may include questionnaires, student data, focus groups, case studies, analysis of recorded/videoed sessions, or peer review.

This paper reports on the experiences of one ALL centre – the Academic Skills Centre (ASC) at the University of Canberra – in redesigning its evaluation of ICs using Stevenson and Kokkinn's (2009) framework. We took an action research approach (Rapoport, 1970), in that we aimed to improve our practice of evaluating ICs while simultaneously building a deep understanding of what we did and how we did it. This was in part to enable us to make continual improvements to our evaluation of ICs in the future (as is typical of an action research "cycle"), and in part to share our experience and learning with other ALL practitioners.

Cherry's (1999, p. xiii-xiv) description of action research as having three "strands" is helpful for understanding our intent. The action strand makes a change in the real world, in our case, a change to our practice of evaluating ICs using Stevenson and Kokkinn's (2009) framework. Working through their recommended steps, the ASC decided upon a 360° approach which sought to triangulate information gained from three instruments: peer-observations of teaching, self-reflection, and student questionnaires. The knowledge strand (Cherry, 1999, p. xiv) creates new insights into the change, which may build "collective wisdom about how and why things and people work" (p. xiv). In the ASC, the aim was to become more conscious of why we might evaluate ICs – our purpose – and also of how we might do that more effectively. The learning strand is about giving people (individuals and groups) the capacity to undertake similar (or more complex) actions in the future. We felt that our team – by participating in the reflecting and evaluating inherent in action research – would develop the ability to keep refining and strengthening our evaluation of ICs. But staff also felt that reporting on our experiences would provide valuable learning for other ALL centres seeking to design (or re-design) their own evaluations.

When evaluating the success of our action research project, we could have assessed one or more of the following: firstly, how useful Stevenson and Kokkinn's (2009) framework was for redesigning our evaluation of ICs; secondly, how effective each of the three instruments were in evaluating ICs, and thirdly, whether the quality of ICs has actually improved as a result of the new evaluation instruments. The last of these is a very important issue, but one that the team is not yet in a position to answer. However, this paper will address the first two. It will first briefly outline the ASC context and the considerations that took place around each of Stevenson and Kokkinn's (2009) four "steps". It will then detail the ASC's rationale for its new evaluations, discussing each of the instruments developed. Finally, it will report on and discuss the implementation of these instruments, and illustrate the extent to which the new evaluation instruments helped meet the "purpose" for evaluation, as identified by our application of Stevenson and Kokkinn (2009).

2. Contextual considerations: Working through Stevenson and Kokkinn's (2009) four steps

The ASC is staffed by six full-time and four part-time learning advisors, all of whom are research-active academics and half of whom have come to the ALL profession in the last two to three years. The centre supports all 13,000 students at the University with a combination of curriculum-embedded teaching, Peer Assisted Learning Sessions (elsewhere known as Peer Assisted Study Sessions), workshops, ICs and online learning resources. Under the direction of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), it also leads a number of broad initiatives related to English Language Policy, Orientation and Transition, Retention, and support of "at-risk" students. The ASC also has written agreements with the University's six Faculties about the types and levels of service it provides to students and staff, so the unit has a strong service focus and explicit accountabilities. ICs comprise roughly 40% of staff activity.

The existing evaluation cycle for ICs was relatively simple. Once or twice per year, a month was selected during which every student who attended an IC was given a short questionnaire based on three Likert-scale items and two questions prompting open responses. The benefit of this method was that because the questionnaire was simple, response rates were very good. In addition, student feedback was extremely positive, allowing the centre to demonstrate it was successfully pursuing a service ethic.

There were a number of criticisms of this evaluation system, however. One was that it provided little usable feedback for advisors; the questionnaires identified the advisors who conducted an IC, but not the specific IC itself, leaving advisors guessing as to which ICs particular student comments and ratings related to. A second criticism was that the system relied solely on student feedback which had no corroboration from other sources. While staff were encouraged by students feeling "satisfied" with their teaching, they felt this was not a reliable indicator of teaching quality, at least on its own. These criticisms of student questionnaires have been reinforced in the literature (Harris, 2011). A third criticism was that the system did not help staff in the centre develop a shared understanding of the *nature* of IC work, particularly important given the staffing changes that had occurred in the centre during the previous four years.

What emerged, then, was a tension: between the need to have data that could be used *externally* to demonstrate good performance, and the need to develop and support staff *internally*. Stevenson and Kokkinn's (2009) first step – purpose – therefore proved to be particularly important for the ASC in reviewing its IC evaluations. Given the service context, it was crucial that any evaluation generate reportable data that demonstrated our effectiveness to a range of "stakeholders". Given the relative newness of many staff to the centre and to ALL, it was also agreed that the evaluations should help to develop a collective understanding of how ICs *work* at the University of Canberra, while also building teaching skills and self-awareness in the advisors. This meant that the purpose of the evaluations was threefold, incorporating Stevenson and Kokkinn's (2009) "accountability", "knowledge" and "development".

When considering the second step in Stevenson and Kokkinn's (2009) framework – focus – it was agreed that both the advisors' conduct of ICs *and* the student experience of ICs should be evaluated. This meant evaluating both the advisors' teaching and student management skills, and also "the degree to which the learner engaged with or enjoyed the learning ... [and] the learner's ability to use the learning beyond the specific circumstances in which the learning occurred" (Stevenson & Kokkinn, 2009, p. A-39). The team's consideration of participants, Stevenson and Kokkinn's (2009) third step, proceeded logically from this. To obtain the students' experience of ICs, students would need to remain in the ASC's evaluation cycle as important participants. When it came to the *teaching* of ICs, however, it was agreed that the student perspective could not alone provide adequate information. If the purpose was indeed to build knowledge and develop skills amongst advisors (in addition to collecting data), the perspective of the advisors was agreed to be a crucial part of evaluation.

Having developed a shared set of goals and understandings within the centre about what we wanted to achieve in conducting evaluations of ICs, the discussion of methods became relatively straightforward. The need to report externally necessitated the use of instruments that were recognised and understood outside the ALL context. The rather specialised work involved in an IC, however, required methods that drew on and disseminated the knowledge of experienced ALL staff. And the isolated context in which ICs are typically conducted required methods that supported the development of individuals' capacity to continually self-assess against collective and individual criteria.

In terms of selecting the appropriate instruments, common evaluation practices from across the sector (not only those from the ALL field) were surveyed for instruments which could also fulfil this set of requirements. Three instruments were chosen: peer observations of teaching, self-reflection, and student questionnaires. The intention was to assess, understand, and improve the quality of ICs by drawing together information from the perspectives of the key participants in ICs and to undertake the data collection simultaneously. This process makes it possible to juxtapose the peer observations with the self-reflections and the student questionnaires, thus enabling the IC teaching to undergo a 360^{o} evaluation from the perspectives of a fellow advisor observing it, the advisor conducting it, and the student involved (see Figure 1). Rather than generating three "free-floating" or disconnected sources of information, the aim was to have them intersect, enabling information from one source to inform, inflect and enhance information from the others (see Figure 1). The rationale for selecting these particular instruments, an outline of their structure, and details about their implementation are discussed in more detail below.

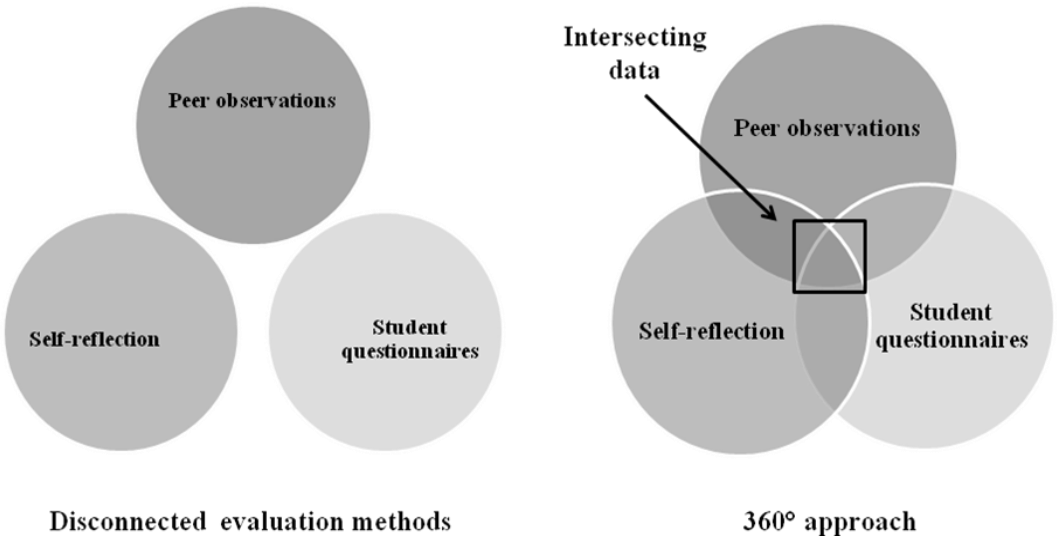

Figure 1. The integration of data sources in a 360° approach.

3. Peer observation

Peer observation of teaching has become increasingly common in university settings over the last two decades, both in Australia and overseas (Harris, Farrell, Bell, Devlin, & James, 2008; Keig & Waggoner, n.d; Bovill, 2011). It can be used to address three broad purposes: evaluation of staff, development of staff, and collaboration amongst staff (Gosling, 2002), making it a potentially versatile way to enhance teaching. As a result, peer observation has been used in a wide range of contexts (Peel, 2005), such as training new teaching staff (Bell & Mladenovic, 2008), assessing teaching (Blackmore, 2005), applying for promotion (Crisp, et al., 2009) and professional development (Bell, 2002; Clifford & McCormack, 2003).

The versatility of peer observation was the main reason it was selected as one of the ASC's evaluation methods, allowing the staff in the centre to simultaneously meet accountability demands and internal needs for building knowledge and developing staff. As some staff were initially very uncomfortable with the concept of being observed, a collaborative approach to peer observation (Lomas & Nicholls, 2005) was favoured as the overarching model, described by Bell (2002, p. 4) as, "where one or more academics work together to find ways to improve teaching and where what is observed and discussed is generally based on the goals and concerns of the person observed". Staff worked collectively, through a series of lengthy discussions, to answer three broad questions: *what* will be observed, *who* will do the observing, and *how* will the process work. By ensuring all staff had opportunities to voice concerns and provide genuine input into shaping the observations, the centre tried to ensure adherence to suggestions in the literature that it be a "supportive and constructive, practical, collegial activity" (Bell, 2002, p. 7) in which staff are actively involved in setting the ground rules for observer and observed (Clifford & McCormack, 2003).

To determine *what* would be observed, staff discussed the centre's collective mission and values, and also the values of each staff member involved. The most common values included supporting students to become independent learners, and assisting all students to reach their academic potential. A list of criteria was developed (see Appendix A) which covered elements discussed by Keig and Waggoner (n.d.) as being relevant for peer observations, including physical factors such as room layout and body language, the procedures used by the teacher, the language used by teacher and student in their respective roles, and how the session relates to other educational contexts. The criteria were accompanied by a four point rating scale – yes, somewhat, no and not applicable – allowing the observer to rate the degree to which the criteria were met. There was also an open comment section.

Although this record sheet was used to maintain consistency in the process, *how* it was to be deployed was discussed at length. The overarching principle was that observations were not to be thought of as objective judgements about a colleague's teaching. Rather, they were intended to be respectful dialogues between the observer and advisor. Observers and advisors were invited to *exchange* perceptions about the goals, strategies and outcomes of an IC, thereby working to co-create an interpretation of the session. Taking cues from the literature, it was agreed that discussions avoid judgmental and negative language (ProDAIT, 2006), focus on professional development (Harris et al., 2008) and build shared understandings of IC work. Amongst the team, the process became known as peer "exchange" rather than peer "review", "evaluation" or "observation".

Of the 10 staff working in the centre, seven participated in the peer exchanges. Given that one of these people was also the Director of the centre, it raised questions for some staff about the dynamics of power that may be at play if the Director was assigned to observe an IC. Though the developmental principle of *exchange* had been agreed upon, some staff were worried that the emphasis may shift toward *assessment*. An administrative officer therefore took on the role of allocating staff to peer observations, and staff were provided with a choice about *who* might conduct observations of their IC teaching: either staff could be randomly assigned observations, or they could elect not to be observed by certain colleagues. All staff ultimately elected to have peer observations randomly assigned, suggesting they had confidence in the process to be supportive and collegial.

The importance of maintaining confidentiality in peer observations has been emphasised by Gosling (2002). To that end, observers' records were discussed and shared in full with the advisors, but kept confidential from other staff, including the Director. When collating the data for research and reporting purposes, the open comments were removed from the rated criteria to avoid the potential for staff to be inadvertently identified. Only the de-identified rated criteria were shared amongst all staff to form an overall picture of the centre's performance. Ultimately, many of the open comments were shared with the whole team during group discussions (and many of these are cited in this paper), but only by the advisors who had been observed, and only if it was their choice to do so.

4. Self-reflection

The second part of the ASC's renewed evaluation system is self-reflection. As observed earlier, the isolated context in which most ICs are conducted makes it important for advisors to develop the skills to reflect on their own teaching and improve independently. What is more, an important value discussed in the centre was the need to be responsive to the academic development needs of the individual student/learner and adapt what we do and how we do it to that particular person. In that case, the "quality" of an IC is often not entirely assessable according to a standard set of criteria, but must ultimately be based on the professional judgement of the advisor. Self-reflection was therefore chosen to build the capacity for self-development in the advisors.

Self-reflection is indicative of a continuous search for knowledge and understanding; it is central to the personal and professional development and improvement of effective educators (Kane, Sandretto, & Heath, 2004; Larrivee, 2000). In practice, it involves teachers observing, analysing, and evaluating their own teaching practice. It also entails teachers examining their personal beliefs and assumptions about teaching and learning, and relating their practice to broader institutional and national contexts. Among the numerous frameworks developed to explain and evaluate reflective practice, of particular relevance to this study is the seminal work of Schön (1983; 1987). In developing the notion of reflective practice, Schön linked reflection to action. He described two types of reflection: reflection-in-action (during the experience) and reflection-on-action (after the experience). Reflection-in-action captures the thoughts and feelings associated with actions while doing them; reflection-on-action re-examines and re-evaluates the experience after it happens. Both kinds of reflection aim at learning and development to inform and enhance teaching practice.

The dialogic aspect of reflection was also particularly important for the ASC. Viewing reflection as social engagement, Brockbank and McGill (2007) assert that reflection is realised through reflective dialogues not only with the self but also with others. The process of dialogue can lead to challenging one's existing beliefs and assumptions; it is a vehicle for gaining new perspectives and development. Acknowledging the potential of dialogic reflection allowed ASC staff to integrate self-reflections with the peer observations discussed above. Discussions about an observed IC therefore incorporated elements of peer observation and exchange and also self-reflection. Through this intersection of methods, staff used dialogues with their peers to enhance their own self-reflection by deepening or increasing the number of insights gained. A model of this integration is proposed below.

Larrivee's (2008) reflective practice assessment tool provided a useful framework for analysing our self-reflection. This framework categorises reflection at three levels: surface reflection, pedagogical reflection and critical reflection. Surface reflection is mainly descriptive, addressing technical concerns, and focusing on the strategies and methods used, such as what works and what does not. Pedagogical (practical) reflection moves beyond the means to consider the ends; it connects theory with practice, with a focus on educational goals and the theoretical principles underpinning our approaches. At a deeper level, critical reflection involves deep examination of our personal and professional beliefs, values, assumptions and expectations, and how these may impact on students and their learning. It connects personal practice with the larger social and political contexts of education. In gradually deepening their

understanding of practice, as well as broadening the context of their understanding, teachers can be said to undertake "a personal awareness discovery process" (Larrivee, 2000, p. 294) when they undertake reflection.

Adapting the models from Schön (1983; 1987), BrockBank and McGill (2007) and Larrivee (2008), the staff developed a model of self-reflection (see Figure 2). It combines Schön's (1983; 1987) concepts of reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action with Brockbank and McGill's (2007) reflective dialogues that typically occur after the experience (Schön's reflection-on-action), which at this point interact with Larrivee's levels of reflection. This model shows that people reflect both while they are teaching and also after they have completed teaching, and that they may do this via dialogue with themselves and/or dialogue with others. At any point, the reflective dialogue may occur at the three levels – surface, pedagogical or critical – which then informs future actions.

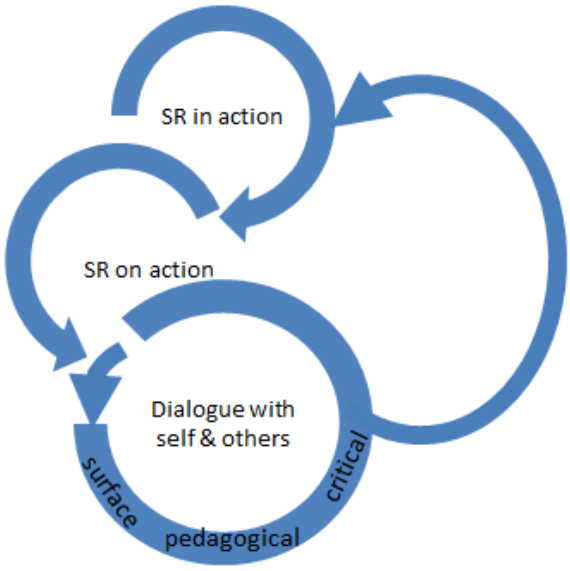

Figure 2. The self-reflection process showing the three levels of reflection that may occur in dialogue. Adapted from BrockBank and McGill (2007), Schön (1983; 1987) and Larrivee (2008).

To facilitate self-reflection, the team designed an instrument closely linked to that used for peer observation (see Appendix B). The first element was a set of 15 criteria accompanied by a four point rating scale: successful, not sure, unsuccessful, not applicable. The criteria addressed different aspects of conducting an IC and were aligned with Larrivee's (2008) levels of reflection. A second element allowed for an overall rating of the consultation that ranged along a continuum from very successful to very unsuccessful. The final element was a free writing section where the advisors were encouraged to reflect on their teaching using open comments.

The collaborative approach to peer observation was expanded to encompass dialogic reflection. Evidence from research on reflective practice in higher education demonstrates that self-reflection is an effective means for learning as well as for personal and professional development (Brockbank & McGill, 2007; Bell, Mladenovic, & Segara, 2010; Kahn et al., 2008). However, where self-reflection is used in performance evaluations and for others to *re-*view, then the benefits of personal discovery may not be realised. As Yip (2006) points out, conditions can be destructive to self-reflection, particularly where an imbalance of power exists which has the potential to threaten a professional's identity. In dialogic reflection between colleagues, Brockbank and McGill (2007, p. 67) warn against "holding forth didactically", a form of dialogue often "characterised by one party claiming to be expert in interaction with other(s) who may not be", which is "unlikely to lead to some new understanding". As with the

ASC's peer observations, staff had to ensure that they upheld the team's intentions to *exchange* ideas rather than judge one another's teaching.

5. Student questionnaire

The third part of the ASC's renewed evaluation system was an updated student questionnaire. As discussed earlier, previous versions of the questionnaire provided staff with little in the way of constructive feedback, reinforcing others' experiences that student measurements of their experiences of learning do not often guide practitioners toward meaningful improvements (Barrie, 2001; Chalmers, 2011; Ramsden, 2003; Prosser, 2005). The old questionnaire comprised three questions inviting responses on a four-point Likert-scale: strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. Two open response questions followed, the first asking "in what ways did the consultation meet, or not meet your needs?", and the second asking for any other comments. The structure of the first question required students to craft a single answer that simultaneously reported on their prior expectations, perceptions of outcomes and assessment of teaching quality. Most students would provide only a few words that addressed just one facet of the question (typically, outcomes).

In considering improvements to this instrument, the one-off nature of ICs was considered. Choinski and Emmanuel (2006, p. 148) argue that as teachers of such "one shot" classes we "re at a disadvantage ... because of our very limited contact with students, our need to focus all of our time and effort on instruction, and the very wide variety ..." of topics covered. Following Chizmar and Ostrosky (1998), their solution is to deploy the "one-minute paper" (OMP), a reflective method requiring students to answer one or two questions at the end of a class, along the lines of "What is the most significant thing you learned today?" The OMP has been shown to consolidate student learning in the class via critical reflection, as well as provide teachers with a snapshot of student understanding of the class content, and therefore some measure of the effectiveness of their teaching (Bean, Drenk, & Lee, 1982; Stead, 2005). As noted by the Centre for the Enhancement of Learning, Teaching and Scholarship (2004), a disadvantage of the OMP is if teachers fail to respond to the comments collected, it can result in student unwillingness to participate in future OMPs.

The openness of the OMP contrasts with a common feature of student evaluation questionnaires: the use of Likert scales. The general reliability of these scales to rate attitudes of survey respondents is widely supported by research, especially as a means to "identify groups of attitudinal statements that have similar response patterns and that could therefore represent underlying attitudinal dimensions" (Brace, 2004, p. 87). The literature is divided, however, on the desirability or otherwise of a neutral-response option; its presence allows an option for respondents who are genuinely unsure of their attitude, but may also permit avoidance of the issue, while its absence may force undecided respondents - especially those generally anxious to please – to take sides. These factors may produce some distortions in the results (Garland, 1991).

Staff redesigned the questionnaire (see Appendix C) to more explicitly capture each of the following: (1) what students hoped to achieve in the IC, (2) what they actually achieved, and (3) their perceptions of teaching quality. The first section is completed *before* the IC and consists of an open prompt, "[t]he main thing I hope to learn more about in this consultation is …", followed by a list of 10 issues that commonly arise in ICs which students are invited to place a tick next to if relevant. These include how to answer an assignment question, grammar, and referencing. Taking cues from the OMP's attempt to prompt reflection, the second section is completed after the IC and asks about the students' learning, firstly with an open prompt, "[t]he most important thing I learned in this consultation was …", and then with six Likert-scale questions designed both to promote further reflection and to elicit direct opinions about interactions with the advisor. A "neutral" option was added to the rating scale in the expectation that this might, in conjunction with the additional questions, provide a more nuanced understanding of students' attitudes to our ICs. It should be noted that the time taken to complete the questionnaire did not impinge on the students' consultation time. The first part was

completed while they were waiting (as most students arrive 5-10 minutes early), and the last part was completed after the scheduled finishing time as students were leaving through the front office.

6. Integrating the three instruments: The 360° approach

A four week period was chosen in which to implement the new evaluation system. All students who had an IC during this period would be given the questionnaire. In total, 332 questionnaires were offered to students, with 155 returns (approximately a 50% response rate). Of these, 22 were not fully completed leaving 133 useable returns (40%). During the same period, it was intended that staff participants have at least three of their ICs observed, each by a different colleague. The total number of observations scheduled was 29, although only 17 were carried out due to students not showing up for appointments. For every IC that was to be observed, pre- and post-observation discussions were scheduled, along with time for self-reflection between the IC and the follow-up discussion. At the pre-observation discussions, advisors would have the opportunity to discuss with observers their goals for the upcoming session, and also provide any necessary context for interpreting the strategies used with the student. This was an important part of letting advisors set the ground rules, as discussed above. After the IC, advisors used the self-reflection instrument to guide their reflective practice, while observers also reflected on the sessions and made any necessary amendments or additions to the peer observation records. It was agreed that the post-observation discussions should commence with a conversation about the advisors' reflections on the sessions, and could be facilitated by questions from observers, such as, "was that a fairly typical session?"; "how do you think it went?"; "what worked well, and what would you have done differently?". These questions are consistent with those recommended by Brockbank and McGill (2007).

The team intended to triangulate data from the observed ICs by looking at how advisors' self reflections aligned with their peers' observations and with the students' evaluations. However, this would have meant identifying the questionnaires completed by those students who participated in observed ICs, thereby removing the anonymity of the student questionnaires. Because this formed part of an action research project, ethics approval was required to do this, and while the team is confident that gaining approval is achievable, it was not possible in the timeframe available for this project. This meant that the resulting research design could not fully incorporate all three perspectives as intended (see Figure 3). To obtain ethics approval in time to undertake the evaluation, a compromised design was required for this iteration, which aligned the peer observation and self-reflection components, but did not correlate those directly with student questionnaire data.

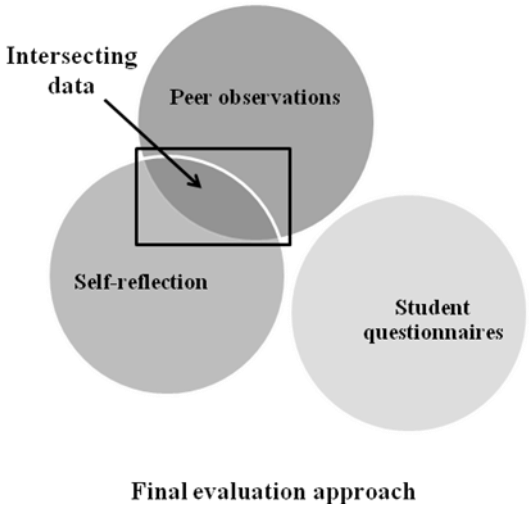

Figure 3. The resulting evaluation design, which did not directly incorporate student questionnaire data.

7. Results and discussion

7.1. Peer observations

Despite some initial reservations amongst staff about participating in peer observations, these observations resulted in significant learning at both an individual and team level about the dynamics of ICs and improving teaching practice and student learning outcomes. For example, one of the ASC's core values (mentioned earlier) is supporting students to become independent learners, and the team consider it to be an important indicator of quality (though one that is notoriously difficult to measure). Many staff reported learning new techniques for achieving this via the peer observations. For example, one staff member observed another consistently asking students to verbalise their task, their method of responding to it, their problems, and their plan for after the session. In prompting students to take a more active (speaking) role in ICs, the advisor demonstrated a method for encouraging students to take ownership of their own learning. In another observation, the advisor asked the student to consider each criterion in the marking rubric and pinpoint the areas in his paper where he felt they had been addressed. The student was able to identify where he had met the criteria and where he had fallen short and now had a process to apply in future assignments. The observer had not done this so explicitly with a student before, but now does it on a regular basis. These outcomes indicate that in meeting the team's purposes of staff development and building knowledge of IC practice, peer observations were very successful.

The collaborative model used was integral to this success, but – as is common in action-learning projects – staff were learning to implement this model on the run. As one staff member noted, he had to keep reminding himself to approach the peer observations with an open mind and actively resist the urge to judge another advisor's practice according to his own methods. This comment, however, also indicates the extent of staff members' self-reflection and the commitment of staff to the model chosen. As one participant noted, the learning that took place was due to the "generosity" of the staff involved, not only in allowing themselves to be observed but also in their preparation, in giving their time to the process, and in the sensitive task of observing and giving feedback and sharing experience and wisdom.

All this meant that the intention for the peer observations to function as respectful dialogues rather than objective or evaluative "judgments" was, in the main, fulfilled. The observations were the catalyst of valuable conversations on teaching practice during the pre- and post-observation dialogues, as well as more informally. This contributed not only to the professional development of staff, but also to building the collective knowledge of the team and strengthening the team's collegiality. In terms of knowledge, it allowed the centre to bring the often cloistered practice of ICs into the open by staging formalised discussions about the nature of IC work. In particular, advisors highlighted the value of acting as an observer, regarding it as an experience which offered insights and ideas which could enhance their own teaching.

The set of criteria on the peer observation record proved to be both helpful and limiting. On the one hand, it standardised the process and generated discussion on facets of ICs that we all agreed were important. It also provided important quantitative data on teaching quality across the centre that helped ASC meet one facet of its purpose: accountability. On the other hand, the "checklist" format encouraged staff to scrutinise the criteria, and not necessarily examine facets of the IC that emerged "between the lines". While the open comment section was useful for providing the advisor with much needed contextual and explanatory notes, due to privacy issues, other advisors were privy only to the rated criteria, devoid of contextualising narratives. In one case in particular, various contextual factors had resulted in a fairly ordinary performance on the rated criteria, despite both observer and advisor agreeing that the IC had been conducted very well. Furthermore, there was some uncertainty about the ratings used. The word "somewhat" was disliked by some participants for having negative connotations, but proved useful for others to generate discussion. There was some concern, too, over insufficient use of the "not applicable" column. These concerns about the extent to which the quantitative data might be representative of our IC teaching will be considered when we revisit and refine these instruments in future iterations of the action-research cycle.

The process of peer observation could be improved by ensuring that staff are well trained in conducting observations. It was noted by some participants that after doing two observations, they had a clearer sense of the task, which led to a more "objective" interpretation of the sessions. In addition, modelling ways of giving constructive feedback would have helped build confidence in all participants that the process would be supportive and developmental. The context of the evaluation should also be carefully considered. Given the typical site of an IC – an advisor's office measuring approximately 3 x 3 metres – the observer was required to sit very close to the advisor and student, who were both seated at a small table. Though the students all gave permission, the observer could not be "invisible", and staff reported being continually aware they were being observed.

A final consideration for any centre considering peer observation was the considerable time it took. Overall, each observed IC would involve two staff for pre- and post-IC discussions (a total of 60 minutes per staff member), the IC itself (around 50-60 minutes) and reflection time (30 minutes per staff member). Each observed IC therefore consumed five hours of staff time. With 17 conducted, a total of 85 hours was spent conducting the peer observations. Nevertheless, the learning that took place led staff to conclude it was a valuable use of staff time, particularly considering they will only be scheduled once per year.

7.2. Self-reflection

As with peer observation, self-reflection resulted in significant learning for staff, though results were a little more mixed. One staff member reported that in reflecting on the reasons for using a particular teaching methodology with a particular student, it helped him better understand his own pedagogy and practice, both of which often operate on a subconscious or instinctive level. Another staff member learned that there are no "right" practices, but rather, practices that "work" at a particular time for particular students. One staff member reported learning so much through self-reflection that she has dedicated a notebook to the process, and has integrated the practice into her weekly work.

The main criticisms of self-reflection related to the instrument used, particularly the list of criteria. Some viewed it positively, as a helpful reminder of the typical structure of an IC and of what we do as advisors. However, some staff argued that they "reflect what we are supposed to do in our job anyway by default and so seem to be superficial". This was supported by another comment that the instrument "required assessing ourselves against a set of fairly crude and standardised criteria which didn't capture the subtleties or particularities of a session." It seemed that the instrument focused on *what* we do in teaching, but did not – and arguably could not – cover the complexities of *how* we teach.

It was evident that the main benefits of self-reflection emerged from its intersection with peer observation, in that conversations with colleagues helped staff unpack their reasons for using certain strategies, identify alternative strategies, and connect more deeply with the pedagogic principles underpinning their practice. Though one staff member commented that the overlap between the self-reflection and peer observation instruments unhelpfully replicated criteria, others saw this as an advantage in that it prompted the different types and levels of reflection identified in the model discussed earlier. For instance, one person commented that the usefulness of self-reflection stemmed from observing another as this enabled reflection on what she would do in that situation:

> I'm not sure I can apply "reflection" to my own teaching in a sort of vacuum. When I do this, I am only evaluating how I fell short of my own tried and tested approaches ... I feel I need to see alternative approaches in practice so I have points of comparison.

Another staff member reported that learning emerged from examining the discrepancies between his own ratings of his IC teaching and those of the observer. When it came to listening to the student, he rated himself higher than the observer did:

> at least once I didn't listen to the response to a question and asked again later. From experience I know this can be frustrating, so I must be more mindful of the need to speak or ask questions.

He noted that he then made more effort in subsequent ICs to apply listening techniques. This example highlights the benefits in self-reflection of peer observation feedback; it can promote deeper reflection and identify areas for possible improvement.

It should be noted that the dialogic reflection prompted by the peer observations was not always an entirely positive experience for advisors and responses were sometimes defensive. For example, one staff member offered the following in reflecting on how defensiveness manifested for her:

> I used all the extenuating circumstances of the consultation to forgive myself for what I knew deep down was not the standard that I expect of myself ... The truth is that I was disappointed in my own performance and agreed with most of the observer's comments during the debrief which was good.

In this case, the student arrived 10 minutes early and was only able to stay for 20 minutes rather than the scheduled 50, so requested an early start. The advisor was just finishing her pre-consultation discussion with the observer, so was not quite ready, but her instinct was to accommodate the student. Then, during the observed consultation, she found that the requirements of the assignment as detailed in the unit outline were unclear. While trying to decide what to advise the student, she was also mindful that the student was particularly anxious and under a lot of parental pressure to be a high achiever. The advisor was meanwhile also acutely conscious of being observed, and felt pressured herself to perform well in a challenging situation.

The Likert-scale ratings seemed to be the main cause for this kind of defensiveness. They quantify and evaluate teaching, whereas the broader discussion engendered more genuinely open and mutual engagement and reflection. One person commented that:

> although the checklist is useful as a reminder of aspects of teaching that we should always keep in mind, there is pressure on the observer to tick all the boxes ... the process has the potential to impose a measure of uniformity and standardisation that may compromise/inhibit our ability as teachers to respond to the needs of students on an individual basis.

Participants also noted difficulties using the three point scale, and some suggested that if it was necessary to collect quantitative data, a five point Likert scale would be better.

It was notable that staff perspectives on their own teaching changed over time. This is indicative of the movement through the dimensions or stages of reflection (Brockbank & McGill, 2007; Larrivee, 2008), being more descriptive at first and then moving toward more insightful or critical reflection. While the self-reflection tool itself did not immediately prompt reflection at a critical level, the peer observation discussions and subsequent further reflection helped facilitate this. Clear goals also developed through self-reflection, for example, to listen more to students, to better encourage active learning, to better assess and address student needs, and to develop strategies for explaining certain concepts. It appeared that self-reflection was ultimately important for consolidating what was learned in ICs and peer observations, and also clarifying what needs to be learned or developed in the future. In this regard, it certainly helped the centre meet its purpose for self-reflection, which was to support staff in learning about and improving IC practice.

7.3. Student questionnaire

Staff generally felt that the revised questionnaire was an improvement on the previous one because it encouraged students to reflect more explicitly on their learning in the ICs, though obtaining further evidence of this would be useful. There was still, unfortunately, limited information available to help advisors reflect on and improve the quality of their teaching. The revised questionnaire did, however, provide more fine-grained responses which reassured us that students generally value our help, and helped us meet institutional quality assurance

requirements. Thus, there was a general consensus that the revised questionnaire was an improvement on the previous one, in the sense that it was better able to encourage student reflection and capture student expectations and IC outcomes.

On the student questionnaires, most students articulated a clear, single-purpose expectation (what they hoped to achieve) in the first section, and in the tick-box section, an average of four options were ticked. The top four options overall were:

- Checking structure and/or task completion of all/part of draft assignment (110 responses)
- Checking the flow, consistency and quality of writing (105 responses)
- Grammar (100)
- Understanding an assignment question and what I have to do to answer it (90).

Expectations around referencing followed with 75 responses and then 64 responses for "what is needed for different kinds of assignments". General academic skills and strategies for reading and conducting literature research were the least popular of the specific student requirements.

In the second section, completed after the IC, around 40% of respondents reported that the most important thing learned was what they had hoped to achieve in their pre-IC response. For another 40%, the post-IC responses indicated that less had been covered than they had anticipated. For example, a student might write "essay structure and grammar" before the session, but only "structure" afterwards. This may have been due to the wording of the question, which asked them to nominate the most important thing learned. Of the remaining 20%, half indicated that they had not only got what they came for, but more, while the other half described learning something quite different from what they expected.

As in previous years, the responses for all the Likert-type items were overwhelmingly positive, with only around 4% on the "disagree" side, and above 80% on the "agree" side. The "neutral" option attracted as few as five and as many as twenty responses, depending on the question. The number of neutrals was generally higher for questions that could be interpreted as more student-directed, such as "with what I learnt in this consultation, I will be better able to do the task I sought advice about" than for more clearly advisor-directed ones like "the ASC lecturer was easy to understand and talk to". This may be because students are less confident in assessing their own learning than an advisor's teaching. It should be noted, however, that there is a degree of potential ambiguity, not anticipated, in some of the questions. For example, the statement "better able to do the task in the future" could refer to either the advisor's teaching or the student's learning, or both. The large majority of the "other comments" open responses were also positive. There were a few suggesting that more and/or longer consultations be made available, and one seeking to have the same advisor available at each consultation.

Despite these problems, the responses did quantify something we already knew: only some of the time do we directly advise our students exactly according to their primary expectations. The rest of the time we identify, negotiate and focus on the most problematic subset of their expected learning, on another aspect of the presented work that we see as needing more help than that identified by the student, or we deal with the student's request and still have time to work on other problematic aspects. The strong positive responses on the scaling questions suggest that the students are not unhappy with this. In any case, the proliferation of ticked boxes in the supplementary pre-session item suggests that while students can articulate a *primary* purpose for seeking a consultation, they also hope for a general academic skills scrutiny of the work at the same time, somewhat like going to a doctor for a specific ailment but having a general check-up while there.

The post-session responses did not, by themselves, reveal any particular evidence of student reflection on the session's learning, but in conjunction with the student-directed prompts, such as, "I will be better able to do similar tasks in the future", it may be reasonable to infer that reflection on the learning occurred, especially given the relatively high number of neutral responses for these prompts. Or, the neutral responses may express uncertainty as to students' own capacities, notwithstanding their learning from the consultation. The post-session responses generally did not, however, provide a diagnostic means for advisors to check the effectiveness

of their teaching via the students' understanding of the session's content. This is probably because the full value of what students learn in the session may not be immediately apparent, but only revealed over time. For instance, students may not have left feeling confident they could apply their newly learned skills; in particular, if students are working on their English language, improvement requires a longer period of time, which the students may realise.

8. Conclusion

The methodical application of Stevenson and Kokkinn's (2009) framework allowed ASC staff to clarify the centre's purpose for evaluating ICs, which we decided was threefold: accountability – reporting on performance measures externally; knowledge – developing a collective understanding of principles and practices underpinning IC teaching; and development – supporting staff in learning techniques for improving their teaching in ICs. The framework also allowed us to identify an appropriate method for achieving this purpose, which ultimately involved the use of three instruments: peer observations of teaching, self-reflection, and a student questionnaire. The quantitative data from the peer observations and data from the student questionnaires allowed us to address the issue of accountability by providing two independent sources of information that suggested our IC teaching is very good. Staff were pleased, also, that they no longer had to rely solely on student feedback to inform their teaching; they now have feedback from colleagues that both affirms their good work and gives them practical and informed advice about what to improve and how to improve it. Self-reflection, particularly when combined with peer observations in dialogic reflection, helped the centre to both develop collective knowledge about ICs and support staff, particularly new staff, in developing their practice.

In the next iteration of this evaluation system, a number of things will be refined. In the peer observations, staff feel it is important for the qualitative commentary to remain linked to the ratings sheet – at least for sharing with staff within the centre. This is crucial for contextualising the ratings given and for providing the full picture of an observed IC. For the self-reflection component, some staff feel that having a better understanding of the self-reflection literature might help them understand what self-reflection feels like in practice. Sharing key readings in the lead up to the next evaluation cycle, and discussing them at team meetings may assist staff in getting more out of their self-reflection time. Also, it is likely that the team will try to capitalise more on the observed power of dialogic self-reflection. In the student questionnaire, the wording of some of the questions will be revisited to minimise ambiguity as much as possible. And ethics approval will be sought to triangulate all three instruments and gain the full 360° view of ICs that was intended at the outset.

The team initially set out to use Stevenson and Kokkinn's (2009) framework to redesign the ASC's evaluation system. While the team expected to redesign existing instruments and perhaps develop new ones, it perhaps underestimated how a thorough consideration of purpose could lead to a more multi-faceted and versatile evaluation system that met a range of both internal and external needs. The use of the Stevenson and Kokkinn (2009) framework enabled this insight, and we would recommend the use of it to any centre considering its evaluation processes. While the project fell short of the goal to gain a full 360° view of ICs through triangulating the three methods, the addition of self-reflection and peer observation to the evaluation system was highly valuable for developing a clearer understanding of IC practice among the team, and sharing and developing teaching strategies. Integration of student questionnaire data is planned for the next cycle if ethics approval is gained.

It was evident that the sharing of strategies, or peer exchange, enhanced the effectiveness of self-reflection. The depth of team members' self-reflection deepened over time, but particularly after observing or being observed, thus moving beyond surface to more critical reflection. Design and use of both instruments could have been improved, however, with more preparation, training and practice. For staff to be open to development, and to be willing to contribute sensitively-delivered feedback to their peers, the activity had to be framed as collegial and

supportive. By and large, this was achieved, with the following staff comment broadly indicative of staff responses:

> I had a positive feeling of the whole process as I found this exercise made my everyday work more interesting. It was a good learning exercise. My reflection on my own practice and my observation of colleagues' teaching helped to stimulate my thinking of what makes best practice in our work. Critically examining my own approaches and incorporating feedback from colleagues was a great way to improve my teaching effectiveness.

Crucial for facilitating this degree of learning and development in staff was the collaborative model of peer observation – our "peer exchange". Discussions are underway with ALL staff at other universities to participate in future exchanges, which would not only enable the cross-institutional sharing of strategies, but also provide benchmarking information.

Given the isolated way in which ALL staff frequently work, it is important – for new staff in particular – that constructive and collegial ways are found to bring IC practice into the open. A collectively developed evaluation system which encompasses both staff and student feedback, and engages *all* staff in discussions about why and how a centre might best evaluate its IC practice, has for this centre proven to be one way of working towards this goal.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Kate Wilson, Harriet Searcy, Coralie McCormack and the JALL reviewers for their insightful comments on drafts of this paper. We would also like to acknowledge our colleagues Emmaline Lear (as associate researcher), Sharon Gibson, (for scheduling the peer exchanges, managing the student questionnaire distribution, and manually transferring student feedback from the questionnaire into spreadsheets and graphs), Jo Caffery, Ros Byrne and all the participating students for their contribution to this project.

References

Barrie, S. (2001). Reflections on student evaluation of teaching: Alignment and congruence in a changing context. In E. Santhanam (Ed.). *Student feedback on teaching: Reflections and projections*. Refereed Proceedings of Teaching Evaluation Forum 28-29th August 2000 (pp. 1-16). Perth: University of Western Australia.

Barthel, A. (2011). *Table 1b – ALL staff:student ratio, Association for Academic Language and Learning*. Retrieved June 3, 2012, from the Association for Academic Language and Learning website: http://www.aall.org.au/sites/default/files/table1b-ALLstaffStudratio2011-3.pdf

Bean, J., Drenk, D., & Lee, F. (1982). Microtheme strategies for developing cognitive skills. In C. Griffin (Ed.). *Teaching writing in all disciplines: New directions for teaching and learning 12* (pp. 27-38). New York: Jossey-Bass.

Bell, A., & Mladenovic, R. (2008). The benefits of peer observation of teaching for tutor development. *Higher Education, 55*(6), 735-752. doi: 10.1007/s10734-007-9093-1

Bell, A., Mladenovic, R., & Segara, R. (2010). Supporting the reflective practice of tutors: What do tutors reflect on? *Teaching in Higher Education, 15*(1), 57-70.

Bell, M. (2002). *Peer Observation of Teaching in Australia*. Retrieved June 4, 2012, from The Higher Education Academy website: http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/resource_database/id28_Peer_Observation_of_Teaching_in_Australia

Blackmore, J.A. (2005). A critical evaluation of peer review via teaching observation within higher education. *International Journal of Educational Management, 19*(3), 218-232.

Bovill, C. (2011). *Peer Observation of Teaching Guidelines*. Retrieved May 29, 2012, from the University of Glasgow Academic Development Unit website: www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_205277_en.pdf

Brace, I. (2004). *Questionnaire design: How to plan, structure and write survey material for effective market research.* London: Kogan Page.

Brockbank, A., & McGill, I. (2007). *Facilitating reflective learning in higher education* (2nd Ed.). Maidenhead: Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press.

Centre for the Enhancement of Learning, Teaching & Scholarship (CELTS). (2004). *Evaluating your teaching, Book 3: The lens of our students*. Canberra, Australia: CELTS, University of Canberra.

Chalmers, D. (2011). Student feedback in the Australian national and university context. In C. Sid, & P. Mertova (Eds.). *Student feedback: The cornerstone to an effective quality assurance system in higher education* (pp. 81-97). Oxford: Chandos Publishing.

Chanock, K. (2007). Valuing individual consultations as input into other modes of teaching. *Journal of Academic Language and Learning*, *1(*1), A1-A9.

Cherry, N. (1999). *Action research: A pathway to action, knowledge and learning*. Melbourne: RMIT University Press.

Chizmar, J.F., & Ostrosky, A.L. (1998). The one-minute paper: Some empirical findings. *Journal of Economic Education, 21*(2), 147-159.

Choinski, E., & Emmanuel, M. (2006). The one-minute paper and the one-hour class: Outcomes assessment for one-shot library instruction. *Reference Services Review 34*(1), 148-155.

Clifford, V., & McCormack, C. (2003). *Evaluating your teaching, Book 4: The lens of our colleagues*. Canberra: CELTS, University of Canberra.

Crisp, G., Sadler, R., Krause, K., Buckridge, M., Wills, S., Brown, C., et al. (2009). *Peer Review of Teaching for Promotion Purposes: A project to develop and implement a pilot program of Peer Review of Teaching at four Australian Universities. Final Project Report.* Retrieved June 6, 2012, from the University of Adelaide website: http://www.adelaide.edu.au/clpd/peerreview/

Garland, R. (1991). The mid-point on a rating scale: Is it desirable? *Marketing Bulletin, 2,* 66-70.

Gosling, D. (2002). *Models of peer observation of teaching*. Retrieved June 4, 2012, from The Higher Education Academy website: http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/resource_database/id200_Models_of_Peer_Observation_of_Teaching

Harris, K., Farrell, K., Bell, M., Devlin, M., & James, R. (2008). *Peer Review of Teaching in Australian Higher Education: A handbook to support institutions in developing and embedding effective policies and practices*. Retrieved June 1, 2012, from the Centre for the Study of Higher Education website: http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/research/teaching/peer_review.html

Harris, T. (2011). *Policy on the Evaluation of Teaching and Papers: Guidelines for the Review, Evaluation and Continuous Improvement of Teaching and Papers*. Retrieved June 2, 2012, from the University of Waikato website: www.waikato.ac.nz/tdu/pdf/booklets/15_Appraisals.pdf

Huijser, H., Kimmins, L., & Galligan, L. (2008). Evaluating individual teaching on the road to embedding academic skills. *Journal of Academic Language & Learning, 2*(1), A23-A38.

Kahn, P., Young, R., Grace, S., Pilkington, R., Rush, L., Tomkinson, B., & Wills, I. (2008). Theory and legitimacy in professional education: A practitioner review of reflective processes within programmes for new academic staff. *International Journal for Academic Development, 13*(3), 161-173.

Kane, R., Sandretto, S., & Heath, C. (2004). An investigation into excellent tertiary teaching, emphasising reflective practice. *Higher Education, 47*, 283-310.

Keig, L., & Waggoner, M.D. (n.d.) *Collaborative peer review: The role of faculty in improving college teaching*. Retrieved April 11, 2012, from The National Teaching and Learning Forum website: http://www.ntlf.com/html/lib/bib/94-2dig.htm.

Larrivee, B. (2000). Transforming teaching practice: Becoming the critically reflective teacher. *Reflective Practice, 1*(3), 293-307.

Larrivee, B. (2008). Development of a tool to assess teachers' level of reflective practice. *Reflective Practice, 9*(3), 341-360.

Lomas, L., & Nicholls, G. (2005). Enhancing teaching quality through peer review of teaching. *Quality in Higher Education, 11*(2), 137-149.

Peel, D. (2005). Peer observation as a transformatory tool? *Teaching in Higher Education, 10*(4), 489-504.

Percy, A., James, B., Stirling, J., & Walker, R. (2004). Learning advising practice and reform: A perspective from the University of Wollongong, Australia. *Journal for Educational Reform, 9*(4), 22-38. Retrieved May 28, 2012, from http://ro.uow.edu.au/asdpapers/138

ProDAIT. (2006). *How to do Peer Observation*. Retrieved April 11, 2012, from the Professional Development for Academics Involved in Teaching website: http://www.prodait.org/approaches/doing_observation/

Prosser, M. (2005). Why we shouldn't use student surveys of teaching as satisfaction ratings. *The Higher Education Academy*. Retrieved May 26, 2012, from The Higher Education Academy website: http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/teachingandresearch/why_we_shouldnt_use_student_surveys_of_teaching_as_satisfaction_ratings

Ramsden, P. (2003). *Learning to teach in higher education* (2nd ed.). London & New York: RoutledgeFalmer.

Rapoport, R.N. (1970). Three dilemmas of action research. *Human Relations, 23*, 499–513.

Schön, D.A. (1983). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. New York: Basic Books.

Schön, D.A. (1987). *Educating the reflective practitioner.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Stead, D. (2005). A review of the one-minute paper. *Active Learning in Higher Education, 6*(2), 118-131.

Stevenson, M.D., & Kokkinn, B.A. (2009). Evaluating one-to-one sessions of academic language and learning. *Journal of Academic Language & Learning, 3*(2), A36-A50.

Wilson, K., Li, L., Collins, G., & Couchman, J. (2011). Co-constructing academic literacy: Examining teacher-student discourse in a one-to-one consultation. *Journal of Academic Language & Learning, 5*(1), A139-A153.

Woodward-Kron, R., & Jamieson, H. (2007). Tensions in the writing support consultation: Negotiating meanings in unfamiliar territory. In C. Gitsaki (Ed.). *Language and languages: Global and local tensions* (pp. 40-60). Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Yip, K. (2006). Self-reflection in reflective practice: A note of caution. *British Journal of Social Work, 36*, 777-788.

Appendix A. Peer observation record

Feedback from Peer Review for ..... Observer..... Date .....

Aspect of consultation	Yes	Some-what	No	*See overleaf	N/a
A good ***rapport*** was established					
Adviser listened to ***what the student wanted*** to achieve					
Adviser prompted the student to reflect on ***existing/previously-used strategies***					
Adviser checked ***student understanding of unit, assignment and marker requirements***					
The ***purpose of the ASC*** and relevant ***adviser goals*** were made clear					
An ***agreed-upon goal*** was set, which took into account: • previous ICs; the student's present goals; the student's long-term needs (global problems, unit requirements etc.); the purpose of the ASC					
Adviser required the ***student to participate*** actively in achieving the goals					
Weaknesses and strengths in the students' work were discussed					
A range of ***resources*** were used, when needed					
Counselling needs beyond those stated were attended to					
Adviser's ***body language*** was used appropriately throughout					
Adviser *used a* ***teaching strategy*** appropriate for the student's 'task maturity' (Higgs 1998)					
Adviser encouraged the student to make ***choices and decisions*** about their work					
Adviser ***adapted*** to the student, changing strategies when needed					
Adviser encouraged the student to ***practice*** newly-learned skills					
Adviser focussed on ***learning*** rather than editing/ correcting/ fixing					
Adviser made sure the end of the session was ***positive***					
Adviser encouraged the student to ***summarise the outcomes*** at the end of the session					
Adviser helped the student ***develop a clear plan of action***					

Comments

Appendix B. Self-reflection record

Self reflection form for individual consultations

		1	2	3	n/a
1	I made sure that the student understood our role as academic skills advisors.				
2	I listened to what the student wanted to achieve in the session.				
3	We negotiated the focus for the session.				
4	We examined the specific requirements of the assignment.				
5	I made reasonable efforts to establish a good rapport with the student throughout the session.				
6	We discussed both the strengths and weaknesses of the student's work.				
7	I encouraged the student to participate actively.				
8	I modified my approach if it did not seem to be effective.				
9	General as well as specific aspects of the work were covered in the session.				
10	The session focused on learning rather than fixing problems.				
11	I made reasonable attempts to ensure the student was learning throughout the session.				
12	We discussed strategies for developing the student's academic learning.				
13	I made the student aware of other support resources.				
14	At the end of the session, we summarised the achieved outcomes.				
15	I provided encouragement and emotional support to the student as appropriate.				

Key: 1 = successful; 2 = not sure 3 = unsuccessful.

Overall rating: very successful, successful, neutral, unsuccessful, very unsuccessful.

Reflection:

Appendix C. Student questionnaire

Evaluation of Individual Consultation

ASC Academic Skills Centre

This questionnaire is designed to help both you and the ASC academic staff reflect constructively on our consultations so that together we can maximise their effectiveness as learning opportunities. Your responses are anonymous and confidential.

Please fill in this page (questions 1-5) BEFORE the consultation.

1. My student status is (*tick one in each row*): ☐ domestic ☐ international

☐ undergraduate ☐ honours ☐ postgrad. coursework ☐ postgrad. research

2. Length of consultation (*tick one*): ☐ one hour ☐ half hour ☐ drop-in

3. The main thing I hope to learn more about in this consultation is:

_____

_____

4. *Please tick all categories below that match your answer to question 3.*

☐ general academic skills (e.g. time management, lecture note-taking, study planning, exam preparation, working in groups, etc.)
☐ understanding an assignment question and what I have to do to answer it
☐ academic reading/literature research strategies
☐ what is needed for different kinds of assignments (e.g. essays, reports, case studies, annotated bibliographies, literature reviews, reflective journals, research proposals, theses, etc.)
☐ checking the structure and/or task completion of all or part of my draft assignment
☐ checking the flow, consistency and quality of my writing
☐ grammar
☐ referencing
☐ lecturer requirement for resubmission of assignment already marked
☐ other (*please specify*)

_____

_____

5. Name of the ASC lecturer advising me _____

Please fill in this page (questions 6-12) AFTER the consultation.

6. The most important thing I learned from the consultation was:

_____

_____

_____

7. With what I learnt in this consultation, I will be better able to do the task I sought advice about (*circle one*).

Strongly Agree *Agree* *Neutral* *Disagree* *Strongly Disagree*

8. With what I learnt in this consultation, I will be better able to do similar tasks in the future (*circle one*).

Strongly Agree *Agree* *Neutral* *Disagree* *Strongly Disagree*

9. The ASC lecturer helped me identify and address my learning needs (*circle one*).

Strongly Agree *Agree* *Neutral* *Disagree* *Strongly Disagree*

10. The ASC lecturer was easy to understand and talk to (*circle one*).

Strongly Agree *Agree* *Neutral* *Disagree* *Strongly Disagree*

11. I am likely to recommend ASC consultations to other students (*circle one*).

Strongly Agree *Agree* *Neutral* *Disagree* *Strongly Disagree*

12. Other suggestions or comments:

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for participating in this evaluation.
PLEASE RETURN THE COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE TO THE RECEPTION DESK AS YOU LEAVE.