

Attitudes of teachers of English in higher education towards peer observation of teaching

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This paper aims at investigating the attitudes of a group of teachers of English in higher education in Sri Lanka towards peer observation of teaching (PO). Simultaneously, it highlights the significance of practising PO as a method of teacher evaluation and assessment when teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) at tertiary level. Thus, the prime objective of this study is to point out PO as an important concept of TESL at higher education institutes. Moreover, this study contributes positively towards changing the preconceived perceptions towards peer observation of teaching by discussing the impact of peer observation towards enhancing English Language Teaching (ELT). To achieve all these objectives, a survey was conducted with a group of fifty teachers of English from several universities and higher education institutes in Sri Lanka. Also, they have been following a Post Graduate Diploma on TESL at a leading state university in Sri Lanka. Both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered from the participants from questionnaires and informal interviews. Accordingly, majority was found to prefer PO as its feedback is constructive and supportive. Furthermore, most accept that PO promotes cooperation and teamwork among the colleagues making them to reflect on themselves to be more innovative in ELT. Thus, the majority considers PO as an effective method of observation that expands the professional development in TESL. On the contrary, a few participants consider PO to be inconvenient and embarrassing when they get observed by their peers while teaching in the classroom. In conclusion, the study recommends PO to be an effective teaching strategy that facilitates both the observed and the observer to achieve professional development while the learners too benefit from it.

Keywords - peer observation of teaching, teaching English as a Second Language, higher education institutes