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# Overview



- Background and Focus
- Location
- Key literature
- Methodology
- Findings



# Background and Focus

- Carey Philpott Partner Research Fund via the Carnegie School of Education at Leeds Beckett University, England
- Researcher in Residence



# Location



## Context

Doncaster

The Rose  
Learning Trust

Woodfield  
Primary School

Richmond Hill  
Primary Academy



# The project

The Rose Learning Trust.



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## The Project

### Goal

Improve Teaching and Learning

Self-efficacy  
Collaboration  
Confidence

### Strategy

- Performative lesson observation is widely used in schools, purportedly, as a tool through which leaders may improve standards of teaching and learning. However, the high-pressure and judgemental nature often associated with such an approach is largely considered to mitigate any potentially positive outcomes of the observation process.
- This action research aimed to explore whether a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) was able to change a performative lesson observation model to a more effective strategy for teacher growth in confidence and self-esteem thus positively impacting upon teacher practice and self-efficacy.
- The project developed from an original intention to introduce video observation (to support peer and self-observation practices) into a wider approach based upon coaching models. However, soon recognising the necessity of a specific cultural context for this level of self-led development to have an impact, the focus of the study turned towards developing such a culture through a range of professional development vehicles.

## Methodology

- Insider perspectives were sought into the complex, phenomenological arena of teacher development and growth across the research settings.
- A broad literature review contributed to a deepened knowledge of the relationship between observation and teacher development.
- Baseline questionnaire and final questionnaires gathered both qualitative and quantitative data.
- Structured interviews and focus-groups were difficult to negotiate in the busy day-to-day life of a school so 'field notes' acted as a crucial source of evidence throughout.

## What does the literature say?

Although promoted as an opportunity for teacher development, lesson observations are more often associated with performance management practices.

O'Leary (2017)

Teacher coaching in schools takes various forms, but is commonly conceived as a means of providing personalised professional support to teachers through discussion about their practice.

Lefthouse et al (2010)

## Conclusions

- A professional development model focused on developing teacher agency and autonomy can have a positive effect on teachers self-efficacy in improving teaching and learning.
- Such a system develops teacher confidence and self-esteem through being developmental as opposed to judgemental.
- Such practices can only be successful when their purpose/intention is clear and the school's vision and values are aligned with those promoted in the model. The foundations for an ethos of self-efficacy, collaboration and self-led development must be in place before attempting to introduce any bold changes in practice.

### Queries raised by this study:

- Can a 'theory of change' model be developed to demonstrate how to build the small steps of progress for creating a culture of collaboration and self-efficacy for those schools looking to introduce collaborative, non-judgemental practices?
- Are the schools able to develop rigorous systems that ensure they remain sustainably accountable for 'teaching and learning' in their schools with more collaborative, teacher-led practices?

## Beyond Performance Management by Observation

### An Enquiry into Effective Professional Development for Teachers across a MAT

Lead by Jack Sturt and Steve Collins, as part of a project funded by the George Herbert Foundation, Faculty of Leadership Studies, University of Exeter

## Findings

Baseline findings showed that existing practices for lesson observations were:

- To 'check up' and monitor a teacher's performance
- Only sometimes positively impacting upon teaching and learning
- A catalyst for stress and anxiety
- Not reflective of practice as a whole, and thus any potential teacher development was considered superficial
- Only useful when given quality feedback
- Owned and led by the observer as opposed to the observee

Video observation was introduced to staff as a developmental tool to use by themselves or in collaboration with others.

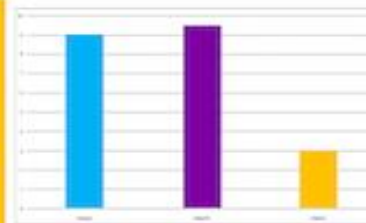
- Introduction of video observation received a disappointing response from most teachers and a reluctance to make use of this.
- In hindsight, it was recognised that this tool should have been presented at a later date as Research Leads began to appreciate that there was important ground work to be done through an initial development of culture and ethos.

**School 1**  
Personal Professional Development gave teachers the choice of a range of tools to identify their own targets (e.g. coaching/collaborative book reviews/VEO) and also held teachers directly responsible for creating an action plan for self-led development.

Staff from all 3 schools received coaching training.

Through a new 'Joint Professional Development' (JPD) MAT wide policy, schools are encouraged to use collaborative book reviews, coaching, peer observation etc as professional development tools. The three schools involved in the project determined their most suitable way forward using a bespoke tailoring of the JPD policy.

**School 2**  
Performative lesson observations were replaced by JPD activities in the school's CPD timetable e.g. half-termly coaching sessions, collaborative book reviews led without SLT input.



How much of an impact does JPD have on developing your quality of teaching and learning? Jan 2018. 10 being VERY GOOD.

**School 3**  
Changes in staffing, including a change of research lead during the course of the project, meant that the JPD policy was not implemented. Only video observation and some coaching training was considered in this setting.

- School 1's comments are positive towards PPD/JPD noting particular appreciation for the autonomy afforded by setting and leading on their own professional development. Teachers in this school note a high belief that this new approach will help to improve both their pedagogy and the outcomes for their students.
- School 2's comments are positive towards JPD, noting for example, that they are motivated to attain their targets as they have complete ownership of them, enjoy the low threat but feel this fuels self-challenge and the impact of collaborative, teacher-led practices (coaching / collaborative book reviews) are beginning to demonstrate positive impact on teaching and learning - evident through case studies.
- School 3's comments highlight an unclear understanding of the JPD policy and its potential impact. Although video observation is not considered a useful tool, coaching is viewed highly in terms of the developmental opportunities it offers teaching in this setting.

# Questions

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