

Teacherless observation: Using technology to transform the observation process

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Observation of teaching is fundamental for a holistic approach to teacher evaluation. The evaluation of teaching across the higher education sector, by government led quality and compliance agencies, has been an area of interest since the 1990s. However, tertiary education is still one of the most casualised sectors in Australia (Kift, 2002) therefore trying to schedule two teachers into the same room is often the greatest challenge. This pilot project, at one pathway College in Western Australia, focused on using Zoom to enable teacherless observation to overcome this challenge. Zoom is a cloud based, communications software that combines video conferencing, online meetings, chat and mobile collaboration. Using Zoom to enable teacherless observation was an innovative use of the software at the College. The project was piloted using the existing observation process but instead of trying to schedule a teacher into the class to observe, a camera connected to Zoom was set up. The project identified a variety of positive outcomes such as enabling significantly more in-depth self- reflection, more targeted discussions around in-class practice, the creation of a record of practice for quality and compliance purposes as well as the means to showcase the learning experience in a College classroom to future students. The results of the project were so overwhelmingly positive that the use of Zoom will be embedded into a whole of College teacher observation process to commence in 2019.

Kift, S. (2002). Assuring Quality in the Casualisation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment: Towards Best Practice for the First Year Experience. *6th Pacific Rim First Year in Higher Education Conference 2002: Changing Agendas - Te Ao Hurihuri*, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand, 8th to 10th of July, 2002.