



Observing... but how and why?

# Quick Overview

We talk...

Literature

Brief description of models

- Towson
- UB and Elsewhere

Strengths and Weaknesses

You talk...

Individual reflection

Small group discussion

Report out and discussion of the whole


# Literature

Houlihan & Click, 2012 - Instructors **want** feedback


Alabi & Weare, 2014 - The best literature review I could find

(There is more in the education world)

Elements of successful observation efforts:

- Trust and Confidentiality
  - Communication
  - Focus
  - Time
  - Acceptance
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# Observation at Towson

- Focuses on formative assessment for first three years to allow time for adjustment to instruction
  - Librarians choose observers and whether to include observations in official reviews
  - Critical feedback is encouraged; professional development included strategies for constructive criticism
  - At least two reviews from the first five years must be included in permanent status dossier
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# Observation at Towson

- Pilot program began in the summer of 2015 and continued through spring 2016
- Pilot group contained librarians from a variety of backgrounds; used a collaborative process of idea generation
- Participants choose from a pool of librarians with permanent status
- Instruction reflections and peer observations are included in annual reviews beginning in fall 2016



# Some other models...

## UB - Library Internal

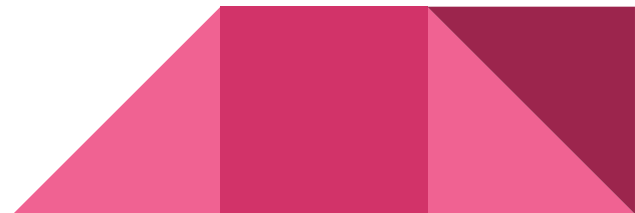
- Similar to Towson in form, but different in scope and purpose
- Adapted from materials at SUNY

## UB - Library External

- Rounds

## ACRL-MD's Observation Network

- Informal and ad hoc



# Instructional Rounds in Education - City, Elmore...

- Creation of a network
  - Multiple observation sessions
  - Insiders vs Outsiders
- Problem based, Inquiry focused
  - Focus on learning and learning behaviors
  - Open ended questions
- Observation, without judgement
  - Focus on description of tasks or behaviors
  - Quotes!
- Debriefing and systemic improvement
  - Compare observations, then analyze




# Mike's life as an example

The problem: In a exercise concluding the semester, students output is of inconsistent depth. How are students managing their time?

What was observed and concluded?

- “Leaders” are not always leading discussions
- Students complete earlier tasks, but not later tasks
- Instructor visits all groups which furthers work, but they lose focus when he is not present
- Some students were not familiar with sources being used

What did I do?

- Increased time
  - Modified structure and instructions
  - Better prepared students through modeling
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# Strengths and Weaknesses, Real and Perceived

Reflection

Portfolio Building

Motivation

Time Constraints

Clarity of Objectives

Focus

# Questions for Reflection and Discussion

How might you adapt or improve these observation programs for your individual institutional situation?

What problems with one-shots could you potentially address through a observation programs?

How can we overcome barriers to create sustainable programs that provide regular, constructive feedback?



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# Final Thoughts and Reflections!