THE SCHOLARSHIP FRAMEWORK

HE Collaborative Peer Observation

Explanation and Process

'Scholarly activity undertaken in a college-based context will not necessarily involve original research, or lead to the production of new knowledge or the publication of academic journals but it does mean more than professional development. Enhancing the research abilities of college staff is likely to have a positive impact on their teaching and helps to develop a higher education ethos among staff and students.' (QAA, 2015: 34)

This resource provides a process of how staff are able to undertake peer observation collaboratively as a scholarly activity. For many in college HE, 'research-focussed HEness' (Lea and Simmons, 2012; 187) is problematic due to 'contractual and culture issues within FE which do not appear to sit well with the requirements of creating an HE learning environment' (Harwood and Harwood, 2004; 163). However, this resource encourages scholarship at many levels.

There needs to be a dedicated lead (organiser) in this process which in itself is deemed to be a scholarly activity and while links to indicative readings are provided, the organiser could facilitate a workshop to enable staff to contribute to a reading list that is more pertinent to the institute. Also provided is an example of readings supporting digital literacy, which have been included to demonstrate a themed approach to peer observation.

Working in college HE leaves little time for scholarship so undertaking the readings prior to the observation process is an excellent way of engaging with scholarship, as is the reflective process that has been built into this resource once observations are complete.

Following a cycle of observations and reflective feedback, further themes will be identified through staff recognition of their developmental needs which can be picked up through professional development or fed through to the next observation cycle.

If using the supporting documents, the organiser needs to populate documents 1, 5 & 6 with contact details.

The SmartArt graphic below provides a visual representation of the process:

| Identify peer to both observe you and for you to observe. | Stage 1. Observer and observee undertake indicative readings. | Stage 2. Observee completes documentation and sends to observer. | Stage 3. To be populated by observer and completed during observation. | Stage 4. Complete cycle of observation on each other and each fill in reflection forms (4a & 4b). | Return appropriate documents to organiser. |