Effective action planning is crucial if observation is to have an impact on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, the learner experience and outcomes for learners. . Action planning has to link to the overall purpose of observation within the context of the organisation. Action planning is one of the most important steps yet is often rushed, yet done well has the potential to be powerful

Some questions to consider when action planning:
- Who owns the action plan?
- Who writes it? (if you write the action plan for the observee, who then owns it?)
- Is the action plan learner and learning focused?
- How is it going to be used? Who else sees it?
- How is any support or further development going to be arranged?
- How are agreed actions that involve others going to be communicated?
- How is it going to be monitored and reviewed?
- How will you know when actions have been completed?
- How and when is the impact of actions going to be evaluated and reviewed? (learner centred)
- What happens when actions required are apparently outside the influence/control of those completing the action plan such as timetabling, resources etc.?
- What happens when the action affect a team such as assessment scheduling etc.?
- What happens if actions taken do not have the desired impact?

Collaboration, Choice and Change

One approach to support effective action planning is that of Collaboration, Choice and Change:

Collaboration: It can be very empowering for the observee if they work with the observer as part of a team,and both observer and observee have shared responsibility for the outcomes of the observation.

Choice: The actions that are most likely to be carried out and have impact are those that the observee selects themselves. They need to be able to choose what they will do and how and when they will do it to achieve the intended outcomes. The observer can make use of learner centred dialogue to help them to explore potential choices. Whilst the observee can also offer ideas and suggestions, it is important to recognise that these may not be the best ones for the observee at this time.

Change: It is often difficult for people to change what they do,even if they have accepted that they need to do so. By collaborating with them, and offering choice and support, the observee is more likely to engage with the change process. If the observee takes ownership and can see the benefits of making these changes, then actions are more likely to happen.

Change Talk:

Some questions that may support the action planning process and use collaboration and choice to lead to positive change:

Purpose questions:

- What are you trying to achieve
- What do you want to work on? (why that? – how will that help learning?)
- What is the most important thing for you? (priority)

Outcome questions

- What will be the benefits of doing this? For you? For your learners
- What will be better/different?
- What will that lead to?
- What do you hope to achieve?
- What do you want the outcome to be?

Strategy (how) questions

- How might/could/will you do that?
- What do you think you should do?
- What would be the best way to approach/tackle this?
- What options are available to you?
- What are you most comfortable with?
- What else might you try? And then what?
- What could you do if it failed? (fall back plan)
- What resources will you need?
- Where will that come from? When will you do this?
- What else could you try
- What might you do next?
- Do you know anyone else who has done something like this? What did they do? Was it successful?
- What ideas might members of your team have?

Questions to help plan evaluation and review proceses

- How will you know if this has worked for you?
- How will you know your outcomes have been met?
- How will you gauge your success
- How will you know if you have made the difference you want?

Other considerations:

- Agree targets that are SMART
- Short, medium and long term targets
- Opportunities for 'quick wins'
- Prioritise what will have the most impact