Record of Observation or Review of Teaching Practice

Session/artefact to be observed/reviewed: Unit 3 Project briefing and workshop, Stage 1, BA Graphic Communication Design, Central Saint Martins

Size of student group: 30

Observer: James Hopkins

Observee: Stephen Barrett

##### *Note: This record is solely for exchanging developmental feedback between colleagues. Its reflective aspect informs PgCert and Fellowship assessment, but it is not an official evaluation of teaching and is not intended for other internal or legal applications such as probation or disciplinary action.*

Part OneObservee to complete in brief and send to observer prior to the observation or review:

What is the context of this session/artefact within the curriculum?

Briefing session and workshop for unit 3, Stage 1 (first year students), BA Graphic Communication Design. In Unit 3 the students rotate through the five GCD Practices: Typography, Lens, Computation, Contexts and Print Production. This is the first session of the Typography rotation (three sessions in total). In this session I will be co-teaching with a colleague (Clare Skeets, who is new and so I’ll be leading the session). We will present the brief and there is a workshop looking at typography and publications, students are given a range of publications to analyse and think about how they’ve been designed in relation to content and how they are meant to be read.

How long have you been working with this group and in what capacity?

– I have worked with the Stage 1 students since the beginning of the academic year.

What are the intended or expected learning outcomes?

These are the learning outcomes for the unit:

Learning Outcomes: Upon successful completion of this unit you will be able to demonstrate to an appropriate level

1: Explore, and apply an awareness of technical, historical and contemporary contexts of Graphic Communication Design. (AC Knowledge)

2: Share your understanding of the expanded landscape of Graphic Communication Design by consolidating a range of outcomes and written reflections in the form of a publication (AC Communication)

3: Use writing to review, investigate and reflect on the development of your Graphic Communication Design practice (AC Realisation) AC = Assessment Criteria (see www.arts.ac.uk/study-at-ual/academic-regulations/courseregulations/assessment)

What are the anticipated outputs (anything students will make/do)?

– Over the course of the three sessions (and time in between), the students design a cover and sample of inside spreads for a paperback of short stories (content is supplied)

– They are looking at two aspects of typography: for looking at (the cover) and for reading (the text pages)

– In this first session (approx 1.5 hours), the students will analyse a range of examples of text design in the form of different publications, and feedback to the group

Are there potential difficulties or specific areas of concern?

N?A

How will students be informed of the observation/review?

– At the start of the session

What would you particularly like feedback on?

Organisation, communication, workshop strategies, ???

How will feedback be exchanged?

– via written notes, emailed after the session

## Part Two

### Observer to note down observations, suggestions and questions:

Stephen Observation Notes

* A very different learning environment to the workshop - more of a formal setting but feels very open.
* Stephen & his colleague worked collaboratively discussing how to approach at the start of the session.
* Room - nice and open - big windows, could be useful to have examples of graphics works on the walls, or maybe past student work - I find in my role showing examples of processes / successful works helps inflame students' imaginations of what's possible. Is this room a shared space which hinders this?
* Screen at the front was very clear to see for students to follow along on their own device and really useful when there’s a technical issue with Moodle. I was sat at the back of the room and could hear very clearly - Stephen has a very clear town and calm voice.
* I thought the use of the books as physical props instead of just what was on the screen added another dimension to the learning, for example showing different parts and how they relate to the brief. I found this very helpful personally - softening the barrier of the physical and digital.
* Stephen made sure to ask students if they have any questions after a longer period of talking about the project - and gave positive verbal feedback to their questions, “good question.” “that’s a good point etc” - students felt very comfortable asking. Also clarifying if his responses had answered their question and making sure all questions were answered, which felt very reassuring.
* Stephen asking questions while talking about the brief felt like it kept students engaged with what he was saying during longer periods of talking.
* Good movement around the space and interaction with students, sitting down with them and joining the discussions/being engaged. The way the tables were set up in smaller groups allowed a flow around the room and with two members of staff a table never felt left out for long periods. How would this work with a larger group if not all students could get one on one contact time?
* The lesson felt like it was in 3 parts, presentation, small group discussions and a larger discussion - felt very fluid between the three parts. I liked the larger discussion at the end but wondered if quieter students might have felt more comfortable speaking out if the layout of the room was set up as one large table as the barrier of speaking in front of a larger group would have been broken? I saw the poster of the table layouts on the wall so perhaps this already happens on different days?
* Felt clear about how students should prepare for the next session and again asked students for any final questions. Really enjoyed the session overall, I felt it was a really interesting experience observing a different working environment.

## Part Three

### Observee to reflect on the observer’s comments and describe how they will act on the feedback exchanged:

*Could be useful to have examples of graphics works on the walls, or maybe past student work - I find in my role showing examples of processes / successful works helps inflame students' imaginations of what's possible. Is this room a shared space which hinders this?*

Great idea, and something I definitely echo and endorse as a teaching strategy and have employed at past institutions. As you hinted at, this is a shared space and the studios are used by multiple classes and staff so we can’t use walls as permanent displays. We sometimes leave work from previous classes up, as this does help encourage a culture of “ambient learning”. We also have window galleries dividing the staff offices and the studio spaces, which we often use to display student work and objects from commercial practice of from the museum and study collection. The open-access spaces themselves have a mix of student/graduate work displayed as well as various signs and architectural lettering. But I agree, more of a culture of work in the studios would be conducive to learning.

Great to read that you picked up on the use of both physical and screen-based examples used in teaching. We see the benefits of this approach and I’m very interested in object-based learning as a way for students to appreciate design, materials, typographic detail etc.

*How would discussions and feedback work with a larger group if not all students could get one on one contact time?*

Classes are usually c.30 students, and are usually organised around the basis that if students require more involved tutor feedback then there are either two tutors, one tutor + a Graduate Teaching Assistant, or classes are smaller: 15 students per tutor. We can’t really provide one-to-one feedback for every student in these sessions (especially if there is one tutor to 30 students), but the course provides one-to-one tutorials and students can sign up for additional support if needed.

*I liked the larger discussion at the end but wondered if quieter students might have felt more comfortable speaking out if the layout of the room was set up as one large table as the barrier of speaking in front of a larger group would have been broken?*

Not quite sure if I understand this comment fully as we did (from my memory and usually do) create one large table at the front of the class for the discussion at the end. Not sure what your suggestion is for breaking the barrier of speaking in front of a large group, as this would and does exist with one big table.