Case Study 2: Planning and Teaching for Effective Learning

Meeting & Mirroring Industry in a Static Classroom Context

Background

One of the key aims of MA Commercial Photography is that we 'meet and mirror industry' at every opportunity. We often attempt to mirror industry practice through classroom-based activities such as lectures, guest talks, portfolio reviews, and delivering live project briefs. However, simulating the dynamism of industry within a static classroom can be challenging, especially when sessions rely heavily on PowerPoint and extended periods of passive listening. This can lead to disengagement and inequitable learning experiences, particularly for neurodiverse students or those with English as an additional language.

Evaluation

While the goal is to replicate the dynamism of industry within teaching spaces, traditional lecture-style delivery, especially when reliant on dense slides, can marginalise learners. I have observed how long, passive sessions often lead to fatigue, limited participation and disengagement, particularly for neurodiverse students or those with English as an additional language.

My aim is to ensure learning spaces are as dynamic and malleable as possible, whether in seminars, lectures or group crits. We must engage the senses and encourage interaction to support inclusion and energy in the room.

hooks (1994) critiques the passive "banking model" of education and advocates for engaged pedagogy that positions students as co-creators of knowledge. Similarly, Brookfield (2017) stresses the value of reflecting through multiple lenses to improve practice. These perspectives highlight the need to move beyond static delivery and create active, responsive environments that nurture agency, equity and creativity.

Moving Forwards

To address the challenges outlined, I plan to redesign the delivery methods of our course with a stronger focus on interaction, accessibility, and student agency. In consultation with the Digital Learning team, we will tailor the standardised UAL PowerPoint template to enhance consistency, clarity, and accessibility across sessions. Slides will be carefully structured with simplified language, high-contrast visuals, and a clear layout to minimise cognitive load, aligning with inclusive design principles.

Live subtitles will be enabled wherever possible to support students with processing difficulties, neurodiversity, or English as an additional language. Sessions will also be recorded (where possible and agreed upon by guest lecturers) and made available on Moodle, offering flexibility and a means of review for students who need more time to process or revisit complex ideas.

Building on hooks' (1994) concept of engaged pedagogy, I will continue shifting the classroom dynamic from passive knowledge transfer to collaborative co-construction. Digital tools such as [Mentimeter](#) and [Padlet](#) will be embedded into session delivery, creating opportunities for live feedback, collaborative reflection, and anonymous contributions. These tools help to flatten hierarchies in the classroom and give space to voices that may be less confident in speaking aloud, thus broadening participation and activating the senses.

I will also plan and encourage others to structure sessions around experiential, constructivist learning tasks that mirror professional scenarios. For example, students could role-play as clients or creative directors, collaboratively respond to live briefs, and take part in simulated feedback meetings. These approaches encourage students to apply theory in practice and reflect on their decision-making in real time, supporting deeper, situated learning.

We will integrate regular reflective 'in session' check-ins, such as digital polls, short writing prompts, or open discussions, to gauge student experience and engagement throughout the session. This allows for a responsive, agile approach to teaching and models a culture of reflexivity. As Brookfield (2017) asserts, critically reflective teaching is not a fixed method but a continuous, evolving practice. Through these strategies, I hope to foster spaces that are not only more inclusive and engaging, but also more closely aligned with the dynamic, collaborative nature of industry.

Lastly, I want to explore more radical pedagogical disruptions that challenge the boundaries of the classroom entirely. Inspired by Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) concept of rhizomatic learning, where knowledge emerges through unpredictable, networked connections, I plan to pilot a nomadic session in a public or unexpected space such as a gallery, studio or outdoor site. As they note, "a rhizome ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organisations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 7). By collapsing the classroom walls, both physically and pedagogically, I aim to de-centre authority, blur the boundaries between learner and teacher, and activate learning as something embodied, situated and unpredictable.

- Brookfield, S.D., 2017. *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher*. 2nd ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F., 1987. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Translated from French by B. Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- hooks, b., 1994. *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*. New York: Routledge.