

Record of Observation or Review of Teaching Practice

Session/artefact to be observed/reviewed: Unit 3: Collaborative Session – D&AD New Blood Option

Size of student group: 35

Observer: Max Ferguson

Observee: Rachel Louise Brown

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 One

Observee 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?

The session you will be observing is a 3 hour (2-5pm with short break) of collaborative group presentations exploring two ideas they wish to develop for the D&AD New Blood Awards – an industry devised competition for students and recent graduates who wish to break into the advertising industry. The students have each selected – from 7 potential briefs – their favourite in ascending order and from their selections, we have created groups, ensuring diversity across the course representation within each (MAP, MACP, MAPJD). All students have their 1st, 2nd or 3rd choice. In this session the groups have been together for one week (having 1 previous 3 hour session together where we brainstormed each brief). Since the previous session they have been asked to come up with two ideas that they wish to develop. In the session you will observe, they are to present the two ideas and we will select which has the most potential for development – both as an entry into the D&AD New Blood Awards and to garner a physical output for an exhibition at Copeland Gallery at the end of the unit.

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

This is the 2nd week the students have been together in the D&AD option. They were placed in their specific D&AD New Blood brief groups the week prior and have had dedicated Unit 3 time to work on 2 'idea seed's' for presentation during this session.

What are the intended or expected learning outcomes?

Following the student's group presentations, they will be quizzed on their two ideas and provided feedback by a small panel – myself, Will Lakin (an AL) and Rosie Wadey (VP) who is an industry professional and founder of Companion - a successful photo agency representing artists at the cutting edge of commercial and editorial image making. It is up to the small panel to choose which idea they feel has the most potential to be developed, with Rosie being head judge.

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

The presentations are to be spoken (the format of which the student's will have decided) but they are able to present a PDF – explaining the ideas - if they wish. Following the panels selection of idea 1 or 2, they will spend the next week refining and developing the idea considering each person's role within the ideation + output creation & a viable timeline. They will then return and present a more refined treatment (inspired by a talk by Rosie Wadey in which she shared examples – during their first week together) and we will give final feedback before they go and start making.

Are there potential difficulties or specific areas of concern?

This unit is always the most difficult and often the most transformative. The students struggle with working with people who they often do not know, in such an intensive way, across a short period of time. They tend to fight to get their voices heard, ignoring other, or feel ignored. There is lots of pastoral care along the way. I am concerned that some groups will have failed to come up with two ideas that they collectively own as a group. If they come with two ideas that are directly from two people within the group, this pits them against one another. The concern is also that personalities will not have gelled. We can often tell in this session which groups will require greater support.

How will students be informed of the observation/review?

They have been informed in the previous session and will be reminded today.

What would you particularly like feedback on?

My engagement with the students and my colleagues. Anything else you notice / would like to share. Thank you for giving us this time!

How will feedback be exchanged?

Written

Part Two

Observer to note down observations, suggestions and questions:

The classroom was set up as an industry panel, with three staff members seated at a table facing a screen. Students, working in groups of 5-6, presented collaborative responses to an industry brief. Each staff member secretly voted for their favourite idea. If a majority was reached, the group proceeded with that concept; if there was a split, one judge cast the deciding vote.

Early on, a fire alarm disrupted the lesson within the first five minutes. Rachel calmly and efficiently evacuated the class, and when they returned, she seamlessly resumed the session without losing momentum. Additionally, I observed her offering one-on-one encouragement to students before their presentations, helping to build confidence.

A running order was displayed on the screen, which initially caused some unease among the students. Sensing this, Rachel allowed them to swap positions, creating a more comfortable environment for everyone. She also selected a different song for each pitch, fostering a fun and relaxed atmosphere, which occasionally became slightly chaotic. This chaos added to the excitement, rather than being negative though.

When one group received a particularly challenging question from a staff member, Rachel took the time to explain why it was important and how it could be approached. Her response helped clarify the issue and guide the students' thinking.

Throughout the session, Rachel consistently reinforced professional language and expectations. The class was smooth, engaging, and well-organized, contributing to the professional tone of the session.

Having primarily taught at the BA level, I was impressed by the high standard at which this class was conducted. When one group suggested filming a luxury watch campaign in "some council houses," Rachel swiftly redirected the conversation to ethics, facilitating a thoughtful discussion among the students.

One of the texts for this unit, *Signature Pedagogies in Art & Design* by Orr & Shreeve (2017), explores the role of the studio in education, emphasizing how it mirrors professional creative environments by fostering social learning, experimentation, and tutor feedback. This essay came to mind throughout the session, particularly in considering the hierarchies within art education. Both Rachel and I clearly enjoy teaching professional practice—an area often overlooked by other tutors. Today, the classroom wasn't a studio but a boardroom, an office, a meeting room, or an agency. Rachel created a professional space that was also fun and allowed room for failure—an essential balance in preparing students for industry.

If I had to describe the teaching experience concisely it would be: Encouraging. Exciting. Professional. Thank you for welcoming me into your space. I learned so much.

Part Three

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

Thank you, Max, for your thoughtful and insightful feedback. I truly appreciate the time and consideration you have given, particularly your engagement with the session's context and how it mirrored industry practices - effectively transforming the classroom environment.

I am also grateful for your recommendation of the Orr and Shreeve text. As a result, I plan to read and reflect on it for a forthcoming blog post. Given our extensive professional experience in the industry, I believe we bring a unique perspective that enhances our students' learning experience and employability by integrating real-world relevance into our teaching practice.

It is a shame the fire alarm disrupted our session early on, but I appreciate your comments. I am also going to consider removing the implementation of a running order and having a speaker, to make the 'walk out' music more professional, or indeed, allowing the students to pick their own in advance.
