

Record of Observation or Review of Teaching Practice

Session/artefact to be observed/reviewed: Group tutorial
Size of student group: 3 menswear students working collaboratively
Observer: Danny Treacy
Observee: Rory Parnell-Mooney

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?

This observation took place at the final group tutorials for the year two menswear collaborative design project, where three menswear design students worked together to design a three-look capsule collection that included textile/craft elements.

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

I have been the menswear year 2 tutor since September 2024, so I have taught these students one previous 10-week project.

What are the intended or expected learning outcomes?

This session was to work through the students' designed collections and make sure they have an appropriate fabric allocated for each garment and whether or not that garment has textile processes included. The session also should field any final submission questions the students have as well as facilitate the viewing of physical portfolio and look book examples.

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

The session is more a final conversation about the design work the students have created in the last 8 weeks and the garments they will now construct in the coming two weeks.

Are there potential difficulties or specific areas of concern?

There are sometimes tensions to be conscious of between menswear students but also between the textile students and the menswear students, it's important to be constructive and motivational at this point in the project rather than too critical of what is presented.

How will students be informed of the observation/review?

They were told verbally before the tutorial took place

What would you particularly like feedback on?

Teaching style, tone of voice, motivational vs critical

How will feedback be exchanged?

Via email/this form

Part Two

Observer to note down observations, suggestions and questions:

Observations: The students were in a group tutorial/presentation setting. The room was organised so that the students all sat around a large table and presented their work in progress. The students were discussing their processes and approaches. Rory conducted the session well, by offering suggestions to the student based on the work presented. Rory was good at gently pushing the students to respond to the reasons why they chose a particular process/method in their design practice. The students often presented textile responses using a particular process, such as crochet, Rory's tone in his responses was encouraging, while he questioned the student's choices and approaches.

Rory was leading and taking notes throughout the session, offering suggestions, to inspire the students. There were also times when the students who were part of the group were offering suggestions to each other. It was good to see that this was an inclusive space, where student suggestions are welcomed.

Rory prompted the students, asking them technical questions, when the students did not know how to resolve a technical issue, Rory would always suggest solutions, and let the students know where in East Bank they could go to work on a specific technical application of their designs. Signposting students is a very important and helpful aspect of student engagement.

Suggestions: There were lots of questions about the student's intentions with their designs, this sometimes resulted in confusion as to the student's intention. Perhaps it would be helpful if all students produced a page of their intentions for their final designs, as research.

Some students were more prepared than others and did present their intentions on laptop screens or on sheets of paper, which was more successful in helping them communicate their intentions for their designs. Perhaps this could have been done to follow on from the presentations that they had previously done before the session started, so that there was a continuation and development of their learning.

Feedback for each student could be timed, for parity, and to successfully manage the timing of the session.

One student utilized a dummy mid-way through the presentation, to bring their design into a more three-dimensional form. It might have been an idea to instruct all students to prepare ahead of the session by presenting their work in progress, perhaps each one using a dummy (if available). Alternatively, it could be engaging for the students to use each other as test models. This did happen part way through the session, spontaneously, perhaps it could be a directive, to encourage each student to be included as inhabiting the looks, as a fitting.

Questions: How are the students recording the tutor feedback, so that it can be acted upon, as a form of scaffolding? The group tutorial was conversational, which is good, but it could have been beneficial for a student to take turns at taking notes from the many suggestions that were offered by Rory as problem solving. Student who are not directly part of the feedback at this time can become quite passive and removed from the discussion, so electing students to take turns in transcribing helpful suggestions during feedback can be a helpful way to keep everyone engaged.

Rory took lots of notes, on a page of A4, that was combined for all the students. How would each student make use of the notes, are they for student use and reference or are they for Rory to track the student's development and progress?

It would be perhaps more helpful if each student received an individual sheet of paper, as opposed to all feedback on one sheet.

Part Three

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

This observation highlighted several strengths in my approach to leading a group tutorial and facilitating student discussions. I am pleased that my efforts in encouraging students to articulate their design decisions were acknowledged. Ensuring that students critically engage with their work and can justify their processes is a key aspect of their development as designers. I aim to create an environment where questioning feels constructive rather than intimidating, and I am encouraged by the feedback that my tone was supportive and inquisitive rather than directive.

The observation noted that the session fostered a collaborative atmosphere, with students actively contributing feedback to one another. This peer-to-peer engagement is something I value highly, as it encourages independent critical thinking and collective learning. I will continue to cultivate this inclusivity by prompting students to engage with each other's work more explicitly. One potential strategy could be to assign students specific roles, such as being responsible for offering a constructive suggestion to a peer before I provide my own feedback.

A suggestion was for students to prepare a written statement of their design intentions prior to the session. I agree that this would help clarify their direction and provide a stronger foundation for discussion. In future sessions, I will implement this by asking students to bring a brief written outline of their design intentions, which can serve as a reference point during the tutorial. This will help eliminate ambiguity and provide a clear starting point for deeper discussions as I do think sometimes things are lost in translation when asking students questions that they have not had time to prepare answers to.

Another point raised was the variation in student preparedness. While some students presented their work digitally or in print, others were less structured in their presentation. To address this, I have been setting clearer expectations before tutorials, encouraging students to bring their work in a format that allows for a more structured and effective critique, it is tricky to then put this preparedness into practice in the tutorial or crit space as you are almost dealing with the hand you have been dealt in terms of what the student brings to the space, there is further reflection to do on this and how to create parity across crits when the work brought to the crit space varies greatly.

Danny's feedback also suggested timing each student's feedback to ensure parity and better session management. While I strive to be flexible and responsive to each student's needs, I recognize the value of structured time allocation. Going forward, I will introduce a timed format for student presentations, ensuring that each student receives a fair share of attention while maintaining fluid discussions, perhaps this could be told to the student before the session, in person and a private timer set so that I know when we are nearing the end of the discussion and can start to bring things to a natural conclusion as I feel students feel great pressure when they can see a ticking clock and 'their' time running out.

Regarding the use of mannequins or live models, the observation noted that students spontaneously utilized a dummy mid-way through the session, which enriched their understanding of form. This is an excellent point, and I plan to integrate this as a standard practice. I will instruct students to prepare by presenting their work in progress on a mannequin or by using a peer as a model. This will encourage a more hands-on approach to their design process and help them consider the three-dimensionality of their work from an earlier stage.

A significant area for development is how students record and act upon feedback. While I took general notes during the session, the observation highlighted that students who were not receiving direct feedback at that moment might become passive. To address this, I will introduce a system where students take turns transcribing key feedback points. This could be in the form of a shared document or a rotating note-taker system, ensuring that all students remain engaged, and that feedback is documented for future reference.

Additionally, the feedback suggested that providing individual feedback sheets for each student could be more effective than compiling notes on a single page. I see the value in this approach, as it would offer students a clearer reference for their own progress. Moving forward, I will ensure that each student receives a personalized feedback summary, either digitally or on paper, to aid their development and self-reflection.

Overall, this observation has provided valuable insights into how I can refine my teaching approach within the tutorial space. While I am pleased with the collaborative and inclusive environment fostered during the session, I recognize the need for clearer preparation guidelines, structured timing, and improved feedback documentation. By implementing these changes, I aim to enhance student engagement, ensure more effective learning outcomes, and further develop my own practice as an educator. I look forward to incorporating these strategies into future sessions and evaluating their impact on student learning and participation.