# Record of Observation or Review of Teaching Practice

Session/artefact to be observed/reviewed:

Size of student group:

Observer:

Observee:

##### 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?

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

What are the intended or expected learning outcomes?

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

Are there potential difficulties or specific areas of concern?

How will students be informed of the observation/review?

What would you particularly like feedback on?

How will feedback be exchanged?

## Part Two

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

**A pedagogy of imagination**

Carlotta looks at the mannequin wearing the work of the student, checking out the details of the material, the shaping, the making. The student feels confident in her interaction and relationship with Carlotta, discussing and sharing her process, her thinking, her sense of how this garment will develop.

The back-and-forth dynamic is rich with explicit, tacit, and shared shorthand thinking-communication. A lot of this shared shorthand-thinking and conceptualisation is done with hands: if this interaction was about a traditional academic essay there would be linear written feedback; if it was digital work changes and pedagogic interventions could be made instantaneously in another saved version of the work. How feedback happens in a working studio is more complex, and how it is articulated by student and Carlotta is much more multi-dimensional.

It is complex and multi-dimensional in the sense that there is so much more information, more layers and ‘future-moments’ of garment-construction that are being analysed and communicated. There are many moving parts in this teaching moment, there is discussion around: the mannequin; the materials used; the imaginary future human body that will be wearing this and how it feels, its comfort; processes of construction; the ongoing-vision of the student which is made tangible through the work-in-progress and her signals and clues of what it will become. Carlotta is deciphering all this information and simultaneously co-creating this information, making sense of it all with her student at the same time.

And often at the heart of this dynamic, what creates an imaginary space for this, is ‘the hand’.

Carlotta and student are continuously using their hands to demonstrate, explain and teach other how something has been made or what might be done next with the material, the student mimicking the cutting and sticking of the material with her hands. Because there is so much shorthand design information being transmitted by the student, Carlottta’s focussed, listening-silences are as much a part of this conversation as the words – especially as the student often has quite long questions with many sub-clauses and parts. In here eyeline, Carlotta also becomes aware of the interest of another, different student in this garment who offers some thoughts, and Carlotta draws her into the tutorial: “do you have anything you can suggest?” Carlotta rounds-up the teaching encounter with positive affirmation and guidance for next steps.

The second student in the class has a variety of different surfaces and materials to discuss her work with. There is a mannequin but there is also a display of work on the desk where pattern is laid out. The student shows her plan to Carlotta, and Carlotta has a question is about the latex material and it’s stretching. Their discussion evolves from the students paper pattern, and the student mimics with with her hands the act of zipping up the garment. Again there is lots of shorthand using visual hand signals in their communications.

The student constantly checks-in with Carlotta, questioning about booking rooms for production, asking questions about the timing and the schedule, and asks with a little concern, about her scheme of work. Carlotta reassures her that she has developed a good strategy for making and completing the brief. “I have another question” she says to Carlotta, taking out the deconstructed corset pattern from a suitcase. She shows the material, pointing, showing where it fits and aligns with the paper pattern, showing the pin tucks, stretching the material, saying, “it works in my head!”

Carlotta’s pedagogy at this moment involves predicting with her hands how to work with the pattern: “It is important to tell production in good detail what it is you are asking them to do.” That conversation with production is another skill Carlotta introduces the student to. Carlotta then checks in with the overall progress of the student, a status update, “you have started work on everything and have finished one of the elements.” They also discuss the different kinds of agents that can be used for pressing… “Instead of hairspray there is specific starch for pressing.”

Then there is a discussion around boning the garment. Carlotta says “you are ahead of me here!” She points and handles the material, the latex mannequin, discusses issues of comfort around boning, “You need some cushioning”. They discuss the challenges of working with rubber as a material, and the student says, “I got it on the mannequin with a bit of talc and effort!”

Carlotta turns the mannequin around to look at the red bows on the back, feels the wire underneath the cup. The student then takes some material out of her bag to show how she made the cup. She explains the making process, shows the boning process with hands flat on the table. Carlotta is doing a lot of interpreting around how this material behaves, the student takes out another deconstructed pattern, explaining the shape that will emerge in the making. The student also is engaged imagining how this piece will emerge: “I’m trying to visualise which way the material is pulling. There are lots of questions!” Carlotta is also mindful with the student of keeping an eye on issues of waste and sustainability in the production process. She makes an analogy with surgeons, reminding the student that, “you cover the parts that are not being glued.” This care for materials and sustainability highlights more generally the pedagogy of care that Carlotta creates in the teaching space.

#imagination #materials #empathy

[Post-script: I have never imagined ever being interested in fashion contour, but Carlotta’s teaching, and the practice of her students, made me imagine a universe where I was a fashion contour student.]

FYI

Orr, S., & Shreeve, A. (2017) ‘Teaching practices for creative practitioners’, *Art and design pedagogy in higher education: Knowledge, values and ambiguity in the creative curriculum*. Taylor and Francis Group

Wilson, F. R. (2010) *The hand: How its use shapes the brain, language, and human culture*. Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group.

## Part Three

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