# Record of Observation or Review of Teaching Practice

Session/artefact to be observed/reviewed: Fabric and texture manipulation. 6/3/24

Size of student group: 18

Observer: Rujana Rebernjak

Observee: Carlotta Ghigi

##### 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?**

The students are working towards an industry brief for brand Coco De Mer. The studio sessions at this time of term are aimed at building their technical skills to support them in delivering the brief.

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

I have been working with the group about every other week since September. Before that I only met them a couple of times in year 1.

**What are the intended or expected learning outcomes?**

Students are expected to experiment with manipulating fabrics and spur their creativity with materials. They can experience a new way of designing by making, and build material to show in their sketchbook at the end of the unit.

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

Possibly some technique to be used in their final outcome. Definitely materials to be used in their sketchbook (photographs). This session is about experimentation and the outcome isn’t strictly defined.

**Are there potential difficulties or specific areas of concern?**

Students are low in confidence because they have recently received their block 1 results, which where mostly not good. The session should be more fun than usual and hopefully promote engagement, however there is an issue with attendance.

**How will students be informed of the observation/review?**

I sent them an email before the session and will introduce the observer at the beginning of the session.

**What would you particularly like feedback on?**

Any observation on student engagement, in reaction to the session, would be most appreciated, because as a team we feel this is what is holding them back.

**How will feedback be exchanged?**

I am happy to have a discussion afterwards or exchange forms.

## Part Two

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

The session was well organised with the aims clearly set at the start. Carlotta delivered a 30min presentation outlining the expectations for the session, what students should be working on and how this relates to the assignment brief. It was very clearly linked to the final submission and learning outcomes, delivered with a clear, focused language. I think this was very well received by students and they recognised what the aims/outcomes of the specific session were, while also being able to place it in the ‘bigger picture’ of the overall unit assignment brief. Slides were uploaded ahead of time and students could refer to them throughout the session if needed, which was very good in terms of accessibility.

The presentation also included images of student work from previous years, which I thought was a really good way of showing the aims of the activity and how it can feed into their project, rather than demonstrating these different approaches through industry-based outcomes. It made it more tangible for students to see what is achievable and how this can be shown in the final submission through either the garment itself or developmental work in the sketchbook. Carlotta did not rely just on technical descriptions but also offered broader explanations of how these techniques can generate meaning/add depth to their projects which was inspirational for students. Carlotta asked questions, making sure everyone understood the task before proceeding to speak to students directly 1-2-1.

There were about 13 students in the session (so a third of the group was missing) which speaks to the low attendance/engagement issue that Carlotta highlighted. It was evident from the interactions with the students that they were at very different stages of their process and approached the activity differently. Some were looking for excuses (or so it seemed to me!) to not be in class by going to get their laptops, materials, etc. from home. Others were well prepared, came to the session ready to start their work. Carlotta was very diligent at reminding them ahead of time (day before) what was needed and also subtly calling out those coming to the session less prepared.

In interacting with individual students, Carlotta was encouraging and inquisitive about their work. She asked to see sketches/moodboards, listened carefully to students’ concepts and offered suggestions for further development. She looked carefully at the materials they brought to the session and gave very specific guidance on how to work with these.

Some students seemed much more hesitant about what they were going to do and how to approach the session. Some seemed very eager to get going, and immediately started placing fabric on their mannequins and experimenting with their garments. Others seemed to struggle with ‘experimentation’ and needed more direction. Perhaps this is where engagement comes into play? Perhaps some students struggle with such open-ended sessions and need to be given a bit more guidance?

This was offered by Carlotta when speaking to them – she clearly suggested certain approaches, but I wonder if some learners need more structured guidance. Perhaps going forward it might be worth to have a kind of worksheet printed out for those students who struggle with self-directed work in the studio. It could give them tips on how to ‘experiment’: maybe some step by step instructions of different techniques or approaches. That way, they would feel less lost about how to get going, and once they start following the instructions, maybe their own ideas would come into play and they could start experimenting more indepedently. By providing the worksheet only to those students who need it, this would also allow the freedom for those students who are more comfortable with that way of learning while gently supporting those who need more support.

One interaction with a student, in particular, stands out. The student seemed to be very engaged and open to discussing their work, but said they struggled with experimentation, process and drawing – jumping to the final garment production too soon (their strong skill was sewing). Carlotta acknowledged the difficulty and said that it was ok to prefer certain parts of the process, but that it was still worth putting their energy into the whole learning journey at this stage. She asked the student to put the activity into wider context, showing how it may be useful as part of the whole unit/assignment brief, which seemed to reassure the student and gave them the energy to start working on the task.

Overall, it was a very positive session for the time I observed it. I think it might be beneficial to break up the session more to support students who struggle with experimentation: perhaps give some more targeted exercises as an introduction to play/experimentation, followed by self-directed development. This way the 3hr session might be designed in a way that supports different learning styles and scaffolds the learning.

## Part Three

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

Thank you, Rujana, for your feedback and recommendations. What you observed was the first of three sessions, as I repeated the same workshop with another two groups in the following days. I also noted how the open nature of the brief left some students feeling lost, and prone to fall back onto what they know: creating garments instead of creating the materials garments should be made of. I obviated to this with the next groups by asking them to focus on the first part of the task (manipulating the materials independently from a garment design) for the first half hour of the workshop, which made some students more comfortable whith this new approach to design. I felt this would be an immediate change that would not diversify the sessions too much between groups, but in future developments for this session I will certainly consider breaking up the workshop into sections, so students are not overwhelmed and can gradually tackle the new skill.

I am glad that you have perceived a positive atmosphere in the room, as the students were “recovering” from a difficult Block 1 set of results, and this means the creative session was successful in getting the students (who attended) more involved with the learning activity. Some had to let their guard down, but most found a way to engage. I completely appreciate the comment about reluctant students making excuses: we allow a certain level of freedom to certain students to ensure that we don’t loose them completely, however we do have to accept the old horse and water adage: the student who went home to collect their materials, later return to class but decided to do other work.

It was very helpful to receive a third party perspective with regards to 1-2-1 interactions, as I try and cater for different characters in the room, to empower each student to make the most of their talents whilst expanding their horizons, but I am at times left with doubt as to whether I ger through to them. Thank you for your input.