

Record of Observation or Review of Teaching Practice

Session/artefact to be observed/reviewed: Graphic Design Graduate Diploma Research and Developing a Proposal workshop

Size of student group: Variable, up to about 20

Observer: Elliott Hall

Observee: Sidney Hope

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 Research and Developing a Proposal workshop is an Academic Support workshop. As Academic Support is additional to the taught courses it is always optional and not part of the course curriculum. However, the workshops are suggested by course tutors so it is with their knowledge of what students need that the workshops are arranged. For instance, the new Unit brief (which will have been introduced to the students in advance of the session that day) requires the students to develop a proposal. So my session takes those instructions from the 'Locate' brief and bases activities on them (I've sent this brief to you with this document).

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

I have met this group twice this academic year, once in an 'Introduction to Academic Support' workshop, and another time when me and Academic Support Lecturer Charlene Dobson supported students Graduate Diploma Graphic Design and Graduate Diploma Textile Design students in a research seminar with a guest lecturer (9/11/23). The course duration is one year so I met a different group of students last year.

What are the intended or expected learning outcomes?

- Identify appropriate research practices for academic study
- Conduct searches for research sources with relevant key words
- Identify the key components of a design proposal
- Practice drafting aspects of a proposal by reflecting on past projects
- Share strategies for working on proposals with your peers

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

Students will perform a number of library searches for research sources, so they should have a list of some relevant research sources by the end of the session. Students will respond to a series of prompts based on the requirements for the 'Locate' proposal that are detailed in the brief. They will be practicing what they need to do when they create the proposal itself, so will have notes that they can take with them that should inform their proposal writing.

Are there potential difficulties or specific areas of concern?

English is an additional language for most of the international students on the course and I witnessed some students struggle to comprehend tasks in one introductory session with this group (this is common with Graduate Diplomas overall as there is a high international student intake).

How will students be informed of the observation/review?

I have already emailed the students and mentioned that there will be an observation. I will reiterate this verbally at the start of the session, ensuring students know it is me who is being

observed. I think having two lecturers in the room observing me could feel quite formal so I want them to feel they can relax into the activities.

What would you particularly like feedback on?

I hope to engage all students in the session and to manage the differences in language level. I am asking students to do proposal-developing activities at a point when they will only have been briefed on the project that morning so I am hoping they will be able to engage with the activities that I have set for them in a way that will prepare them for creating their own proposals.

How will feedback be exchanged?

I imagine Elliott and Lindsay will send me their reports and reflections on my teaching in written form.

Part Two

Observer to note down observations, suggestions and questions:

1. **Pre-Prepared and Resourceful:** Sidney, your foresight in distributing teaching materials before the session commenced was impressive. The activity sheets and guides not only supported the session's structure but also provided a tangible reference for students, which is a hallmark of your thoughtful preparation. While the use of handouts seemed very beneficial - ensuring that they are clearly numbered to match the presentation slides could prevent students from losing their place. Additionally, emphasizing the availability of the information on handouts might reduce the need for students to take photos of the screen, allowing them to be more present during the session. I found that a lot of students seemed unaware, especially those at the back of the room, that the hand-outs were directly related to the slides. The students and I, may have missed you introduce this aspect – but again having these resources at all seemed very useful especially towards the end where it became more integrated aspect of the activity (i.e filling in the areas).

Your efforts to make the session accessible by providing these sheets with the text for slides for those with language difficulties was a really great idea. This not only catered to a diverse classroom but also demonstrated a strong commitment to inclusivity.

2. **Dynamic Structure and Engagement:** The session's design, which incorporated group tasks and moving between discussions, was dynamic and interactive. Your approach in revisiting groups to reinforce the task at hand showcased your dedication to ensuring that students remained on track, which undoubtedly kept the energy high and the students engaged.

I found the session to be quite text-heavy, which risks losing students' attention – especially those with language difficulties. Breaking up the text with visual aids, interactive elements, or physical activities could help maintain high levels of engagement throughout the session.

Some students appeared to be challenged by the transition from paper to digital resources, particularly with the library search - I personally found myself struggling to work out how they were supposed to find the library search and noticed multiple students start struggling to find this, with one student seeming to be going to the link

on the board for the image reference by accident. I realised after a little while I that the information was within the blue block of text - stating to search for the library on google. Perhaps a step-by-step walk-through, either live or via a pre-recorded video, might provide the necessary scaffolding for all students to feel confident in navigating these tools.

Alternatively simplifying the process of accessing the excellent resources you provide, perhaps through QR codes or shortened links, could make a significant difference in how quickly students can engage with the material. That being said your willingness to circle back to groups who may not have grasped the task initially exemplified a responsive and adaptive teaching style. Your hands-on approach and the alternative suggestions you provided are evidence of a personalised teaching method.

- 3. Facilitating Student Interaction:** You seemed to create a comfortable atmosphere that encouraged student interaction. Your equal attention to different groups and your open invitation for questions made the learning environment more interactive and supportive. One thing I did pick up on was that some groups really got the task and some needed a little more guidance which again seemed covered by your approach of going round. I felt like there were some great opportunities after the individual tasks to get students from different groups more engaged – asking if anyone had questions was great. Students seemed apprehensive to ask questions and believe that perhaps integrating a segment for collective reflection after group activities could greatly enhance the learning experience. It would allow students to benefit from each other's insights and give a sense of shared learning, which seemed to be a missed opportunity in what was otherwise a very active session.
- 4. Opportunities for Student Feedback:** Lastly as previously mentioned actively soliciting student feedback on their findings and providing immediate reflections could be beneficial. This practice could not only validate their efforts but also provide a platform for peer learning as other students would be able to see an example of perhaps what a good list of keywords could be for their chosen topics. A greater encouragement for students to share their findings could foster a more confident and participatory classroom. Perhaps a structured approach, such as a show of hands, could elicit more active contributions from the students.

It was clear your relaxed demeanour and the ease with which you interacted with students created a positive learning environment. It was evident that your session created a great set of outcomes through the range of pre-designed activities and was a testament to a well-conducted session. With slight adjustments in clarity and student participation, your sessions could become even more enriching and effective than they already are. It was a pleasure getting to see you work and how you managed to keep everyone on task.

Part Three

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

Thank you to Elliott for his feedback. I agree that I could number the pages of the handouts and could have clarified early on the availability of the handouts and that they contained the

slides - as they would be delivered - so that students with English as a second language could have used them to translate with their phone apps.

I appreciate Elliott commenting that the session was dynamic and interactive. As he said, I did move between different students throughout the session ensuring they understood the tasks – there are significant language barriers in this group of students so ensuring students understood each activity was key. I agree that breaking up the text with visual aids, interactive elements, or physical activities could help maintain high levels of engagement throughout the session. My approach to teaching is often discursive in nature – my focus is on students learning from each other by interaction but this is harder for students with language barriers. I felt that the session was successful in that students often collaborated with each other to do each activity, which I was pleased about.

I agree that either a step-by-step walk-through, either live or via a pre-recorded video to find the library catalogue search page, or simply a QR code would have been a good approach. I did say during the session to use a Google search but a QR code would have been easier. It is true that me visiting students regularly to check how they were doing resolved gaps in their interpretation of the session. I could focus more on ensuring there are less of those gaps in interpretation as well as continuing to support students with their progress.

I appreciate Elliott's comment that I gave equal attention to different groups and gave an open invitation for questions which made the learning environment more interactive and supportive. It was my intention to support each table of students closely and I only moved on to the next activity when I felt each pair or group had made enough progress. When Elliott says that some students needed a little more guidance to comprehend each task this is, I think, an understatement – some needed a lot more help and once each activity was delivered they needed my help to get started. Whether my activities could have been simpler or more accessible is a question I always consider when developing new learning resources and workshops. I agree with Elliott that perhaps integrating a segment for collective reflection after group activities could greatly enhance the learning experience. I think overall there were too many activities (even though I was trying to go through all the criteria expected of their 'Locate' proposal); less activities with more chance for collective reflection would have been better. I agree that greater encouragement for students to share their findings could foster a more confident and participatory classroom.

I appreciate Elliott saying that I created a positive learning environment – that was my intention. Elliott's feedback is very useful in developing my approach to teaching to make it more engaging and collaborative.
