# Record of Observation or Review of Teaching Practice

Session/artefact to be observed/reviewed: 28th Feb, Y3 BA Fashion Design Technology Womenswear, Sample room session

Size of student group: 16 students

Observer: Lorraine Brobby

Observee: Annie Mackinnon

##### *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 currently in the process of designing and making their Y3 main collections. At this point in the project they should have a rough idea for their line-up and will be at a toiling and prototyping stage. This sample room session will follow their first ‘Toile Review’ of the project, where they will present their work on a model in front of the tutors and a small group of students.

In this sample room session the students will explore specific pattern cutting techniques and methods relevant to their work in pairs and small groups, to both learn about new 3D approaches, and to work through any technical challenges together.

The session will be split into two tasks:

* Task 1: Factory - Looking at each other’s technical drawings or tech specs and role playing as a factory to see how well communication of finishings, material and construction comes across.
* Task 2: ‘Edit and Apply’ - Students put into small groups based on similarities in their 3D approaches to look at specific pattern cutting books and resources. They are asked to reflect on how to apply these methods within their own work, and discuss any technical difficulties they are encountering.

Whilst the students get on with the tasks, I will circulate and have 1:1 tutorials.

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

I started teaching this group in September at the beginning of their Pre-Collection Unit. Their Main Collection unit started upon return from Winter Break. Each group has one design tutor, and one sample room tutor. I am this group’s sample room tutor, so I primarily focus on physical making, draping and sampling, as opposed to design tutors who will focus on illustration, brand identity, mood boards and communication.

What are the intended or expected learning outcomes?

The set learning outcomes are to:

* Understand and communicate through working drawings
* Apply experimental cutting techniques to develop garments in 3D
* Make decisions through product development

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

Patterns, drapes, new samples to help develop their pattern cutting.

Are there potential difficulties or specific areas of concern?

As deadlines for fittings and crits become closer some students stop turning up to the organised class sessions. I sometimes worry that the students feel annoyed when they have to engage in group classes when they would rather be getting on with their individual projects.

With this group in particular there is sometimes a divide between the two home students who always answer questions and the international students who sit on the back table. I am trying to encourage them to mix up the groups more often so they can see each others’ work and learn from each other but often the students stick to their usual circles.

How will students be informed of the observation/review?

I will explain to the students on the day of the session.

What would you particularly like feedback on?

#### If I am communicating expectations clearly

#### If I able to demonstrate pattern cutting techniques coherently

#### How to improve student engagement and keep conversations open and natural

#### Areas to improve access needs for students who may require them

* How will feedback be exchanged?

Written notes

## Part Two

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

The session was engaging and well-organised, with clear objectives communicated at the outset. I want to praise you for the effort you've put into creating specific materials to support their learning and your active customised support for each of your students.

Throughout the session, your continuous check-ins with the students ensured that they were comfortable with the session's structure, fostering an environment where they felt encouraged to share further thoughts. Your openness set a positive tone for the session.

Blending students from both classrooms during Task 1: Factory, encouraged active participation and reflection while keeping the task details, timings, and questions on screen helped maintain focus during peer discussions.

You demonstrated flexibility with instructional approaches, recognising that some of your students may have varying access needs that require tailored support and accommodation. Meaning you appeared responsive to the individual needs of quieter students and tailored your support through encouragement and demonstration. I could see how some students who prefer to work independently began to open up more and ask for help and references when you went over to check on their progression.

The balance between peer activities and independent periods was well-maintained, contributing to an effective learning experience.

The selection of resource books in technical language, design approaches, and range plans during Task 2: Edit and Apply, offered students a comprehensive toolkit for exploration and inspiration. Accompanying it with summaries and explanations worked greatly in helping students better grasp the materials they can use to feel more confident in approaching the task.

As for suggestions:

· Providing demonstrations or examples to the wider group before pairing them off could enhance understanding and confidence.

While I couldn’t witness the entirety of the session and perhaps this occurred after my departure, one suggestion I have would be to offer demonstrations/examples to the wider group before setting them off to in pairs. It would have been helpful to see perhaps an example of an approach to factory tasks and details to consider.

· Diversifying resources by including online alternatives like QR codes or links to tutorials would cater to different learning styles and preferences.

· Checking in with students before moving on to the next task would allow for feedback and reflection on the previous activity, ensuring any lingering questions or concerns are addressed.

Overall, your methods contributed to a positive learning atmosphere.

## Part Three

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

I found the session quite chaotic as an hour before it started, I was informed by the unit lead that we would be blending two classes together, and only planned what pattern cutting approaches we would each demonstrate to students whilst within the session. Additionally throughout the afternoon several students had to leave to either model or take part in an external competition tutorial alongside the other group tutor, so this caused some disruption. I’m really pleased Lorraine felt the session was engaging and supportive as the afternoon was a prime example of having to adapt on my feet to changes.

In Task 1 of the session, the students were asked to look at each others’ technical drawings, and role play a hand-over to a factory or seamstress. I agree with Lorraine’s recommendation that this task could be improved with a more detailed demonstration. There was a working drawing displayed on the screen, so for future I will go over the questions set for the task, in response to the slide. When I circulated to see how students were getting on with this task, many did not have a drawing ready with them—they were meant to have prepped this in their design session in the morning. So that everyone had something to discuss, I gave these students printed out examples of technical drawings so they could see how to clearly label different fabric swatches, trims and manufacturing instructions.

I also agree with Lorraine that I could have checked in with the students before we moved onto the second task. I’ve noticed that when facilitating group work I usually move on when I can sense or hear the students wrapping up their conversations.

In response to the recommendation of diversifying resources, on the Womenswear Moodle page there are many video instructions, digital resources and recommendations of exhibitions, archives, and vintage/secondhand shops which the students can access. Since moving to the East Bank campus, we are trying to encourage the students to make the most out of the library services now the Fashion studios are finally within the same building. Additionally, many of the instructional texts on pattern cutting are not available digitally.

I do however think that I could do with developing more physical samples when explaining specific technical instructions. This would be particularly useful for ESL students, and in this particular group 14/16 have English as a second language. I often have to drawn what I mean, or show a Google image search when I’m trying to explain things like dart manipulation, seam finishings, fastenings. It is especially hard when students are working with experimental materials and non-conventional approaches—-sometimes there is limited vocabulary for things so abstract. Since I am on an AL contract I don’t have much time for developing resources, but I think I could begin to save images, or samples from my industry freelance work to start building up a collection. Additionally, I think having a set of 1/2 scale womenswear blocks so I can very quickly mock up what I mean could be helpful for future sessions.

Another thing I’d like to take into consideration for future is the primary focus on “physical” making within most sample room lesson plans. I have one student who is primarily working with digital fashion, so the questions of “task 1: Factory” did not apply to her work. I found another digital student from the other class and paired them together, and asked them to discuss how well they communicate their concepts through digital instead of communicating construction. As digital fashion tools and approaches are becoming more popular, in sample room classes, we need greater flexibility to adapt to this way of working, so I will start considering variations of tasks for those working digitally.

In every sample room session plan, there are some closing slides with information for following weeks and self-directed study instructions. Due to the nature of the building (none of the irons in the teaching rooms work, the students don’t have the correct bobbins/ bobbin cases for the sewing machines in the room, table space for pattern cutting is tight), students often flow between the open-access studio and the classroom. As deadlines are closer and students need machine access, these limitations combined with the very loose structure of 1:1 tutorials means that often we don’t get round to the closing slides because not everyone is present. I want to discuss with the unit lead the possibility of either explaining any key information at the beginning of the session when everyone is there, or ensuring students are up to date with Moodle when I see them 1:1.