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Assignment**

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This essay will critically evaluate three teaching practices of trainee lecturers—Az, Sam and Chelsea—after observing and participating in their thirty-minute microteach sessions. The text will analyse trainee lecturers' adherence to teaching theories and professional standards, and how effective they were in employing said theories and standards. This analysis will include their style of delivery, lesson planning and overall demeanour in leading the classroom.

All three sessions included a practical creative activity for the seven students in class, assuming no prior knowledge on behalf of the learners. Two activities included physical art-making while one trainee lecturer led an entirely digital workshop. The three sessions used Powerpoint presentations as structuring and delivery devices, and combined hands-on learning with theory.

Although all three sessions included a similar approach to teaching and an artistic outcome, the three trainee lecturers employed different pedagogical approaches in carrying out the lessons. This essay will, therefore, examine the three trainee lecturers' preparedness, teaching strategies, pedagogical modalities used, leadership and effect on learning outcomes. This text will also offer alternative approaches and views on how the lesson content was structured.

Az's Session

Az conducted a lesson on chiaroscuro but did not provide a definition for the technique. Az could have taken a constructivist approach by starting the session with a question if any of the learners knew what chiaroscuro was so to identify 'what the student[s] currently [believed]' and 'whether it [was] correct or incorrect' (Reece and Walker, 2007, p. 89) so that she could steer the learners towards the definition. Instead her approach appeared closely aligned with a cognitivist pathway 'based on the principle that learning accrues through exposure to logically presented information' and based on the fact that 'such logic comes from the subject itself' (Reece and Walker, 2007, p. 95) which Az

attempted by showing artworks by Caravaggio. This was to illustrate the use of chiaroscuro. However, without explaining the reason for using the technique, apart from saying this technique made her own artwork 'better', Az left it up to the learners to define the parameters of the quality she was referring to with 'better'. Had she used words such as 'more realistic' or 'three-dimensional', that would have established the criteria of improvement to which she was refereeing.

Instead Az showed side-by-side copies of a Caravaggio painting in colour and in black and white while describing tonal values in both but without a clear definition the examples were not effective. In addition, the learner might have been confused by fragments of analysis of other paintings and rules for what makes an artwork good while still grappling with the key objective of the lesson.

The practical exercise improved the session because Az brought examples of different shading techniques and explained that through darker and lighter shading artists achieve the illusion of depth and three-dimensionality. Az employed the model of a workshop by giving learners 'an opportunity to develop practical skills and link the theory with practice' (Reece and Walker, 2007, p. 124) even though the theory presented in the beginning had not been sufficient.

In the practical workshop, Az engaged Kolb's experiential learning cycle. Learners gained concrete experience by having students attempt shading with a pencil, reflect on their approach to various types of shading, then determine what and how pencil shading works within a drawing and test through active experimentation in the final exercise (Reece and Walker, 2007, p. 92).

Activist and pragmatist learners would have been able to immerse themselves into the exercise, while the theorists and reflectors would have likely struggled with the practical session due to the lack of definitions in the first half of Az's microteach.

Given that five out of seven learners in the class were not artistically-inclined, Az achieved the objectives she had set out at the beginning of the session as all seven learners managed to use chiaroscuro in their drawings. Az gave immediate feedback as the learners displayed their drawings which 'is beneficial as the work [was] still fresh in the

mind of the student[s]' (Reece and Walker, 2007, p. 368). Granted that, it was difficult to assess whether the objective of the lesson had been achieved, since Az had set out to improve learners' drawing skills without providing a metric that defines 'better' or 'improved'—this could have been corrected with the terms 'more three-dimensional'.

Sam's Session

The objective of Sam's session was to teach learners how to use Canva in order to make a poster for an event.

In her Powerpoint presentation, Sam provided the learners with clear examples of a successful and an unsuccessful poster, engaging them in conversation right from the start. The presentation, however, would have benefited from some colour theory and visual composition principles so to explain why certain colour combinations, fonts or layouts were more eye-catching and show how 'ideas are related to other ideas' and how 'individual facts acquire meaning by being subsumed into broader, principled structures' (Avis, Fisher and Thompson, 2010, p. 89) of marketing, viewer captivity and aesthetics. In addition, Sam could have shown a greater number of her own posters or perhaps included iconic posters so to establish a baseline of what works particularly well in a wider variety of posters.

Sam's approach seemed to align more closely with Bruner's discovery learning. Bruner believed that 'mastery of the fundamental ideas of a field involves not only the grasping of general principles, but also the development... toward the possibility of solving problems on one's own' (Avis, Fisher and Thompson, 2010, p. 90) which was achieved by having learners immerse into creating posters of our own after the brief presentation. However, the limited theoretical foundation may have restricted the depth of learning.

Some learners did not have Canva accounts and thus had to create them before starting on their tasks, and Sam had allocated enough time for that. One student struggled

with IT but Sam overcame that by 'treating all learners... equally and fairly, ensuring all have an equal opportunity to be heard' (Educators Wales, 2026) and the student was able to complete the task with Sam's help.

At the end of the session the learners shared their posters with each other but the session would have benefitted from the posters being shown on the white board instead so that every learner could see other learners' work clearly and at the same time. That would have allowed for a more successful overall assessment of the activity instead of learners briefly glancing at each other's work at the end of the session. In addition, Sam could have chosen to critique certain posters so to explain why certain choices worked and other did not. This would have helped 'the student[s] to understand how their current performance compares with good performance' and 'how to close the gap between current and good performance' (Avis, Fisher and Thompson, 2010, p. 171) which is crucial to giving informative feedback.

While Sam's Powerpoint presentation and overall delivery were structured more clearly, it lacked theoretical backing like Az's session. It could be argued that Az overcame the lack of clear definitions through the practical session during which she completed Kolb's experiential learning cycle and provided feedback in the end. By comparison, learners were left in the incomplete reflective stage of Kolb's reflective cycle. While there was no time for the active experimentation component, students reviewing their work and receiving feedback would have moved the session closer to the completion of the cycle. Not facilitating time and presentation of everyone's work lacked 'conclusion so that students [could] see/critically analyse others' work/progress' (Reece and Walker, 2007, p. 124) which is a key part of a successful workshop.

Chelsea's Session

Chelsea's session was the last one of the day and because of it the lesson had the potential for low learner engagement. However, Chelsea rearranged the classroom so that the entire group sat around the table rather than in rows. This got the learners out of the

positions in which they had been all day and 'it [was] motivating to have an unexpected event' as 'the interest of the students [was] aroused' (Reece and Walker, 2007, p. 77) as a result of this new seating arrangement.

Chelsea's explanation for both the objectives of the session but also the processes and tools used was easy to follow and she brought in numerous examples of air-dry pieces for learners to experience first hand.

Adherence to 'identifying, preparing, delivering and assessing learning programmes' (Educators Wales, 2026) was exceptional as each learner was provided with a multitude of tools and choices while using air-dry clay. This preparedness showed up as laminated information sheets so that learners could handle them while working with air-dry clay.

She assessed the learners' knowledge of the tools to which she had previously introduced the learners as they were making their clay pieces, thus integrating the formative assessment into the session as the learners were holding the tools they were identifying.

Chelsea empowered the learners by giving them the right amount of ownership over what they were creating out of air-dry clay while within clear boundaries of what they had to achieve during the activity. By showcasing numerous works created using the same technique Chelsea inspired students to think beyond the session and a few learners reported wanting to take up air-dry clay crafting in the future as a result.

While the session was successful overall, Chelsea did not '[ensure] safe... learning environments' (Educators Wales, 2026) by not instructing learners to avoid inhaling dry clay dust which can be harmful. She did offer gloves to learners but could have mentioned that clay can dry out the hands quite drastically.

Implications for My Own Practice

I chose to evaluate these three sessions because they related to my future teaching practice in fine arts and ceramics.

Az's session made me realise the importance of setting out clear definitions at the start of the session and condensing the Powerpoint presentation to the information that is

absolutely necessary for the learners to know. I have the tendency to overload my lectures with information that some might find fascinating but not directly relevant to the subject.

Az used a lot of descriptive adjectives such as 'better' or 'improved' which are highly context-dependent and relative. This made me realise the importance of setting out clear benchmarks against which I judge learners' progress, especially in the area as subjective as art. I can only deliver fair feedback during the session if I establish a clear set of parameters for every student to follow, so that improvement can be measured against a clear baseline.

When showing examples of chiaroscuro in painting Az only had a few small print-outs of the paintings. The paintings should have either appeared on the white board or each learner should have been given their own print-out. I like to use visual aids in my lessons too and this underlined the importance of access to the crucial visual aids. Failing to provide this access might be demotivating to learners.

Sam's session made me realise the importance of sharing learners' outcomes in the class effectively. Had she put up every student's poster up on the white board and critiqued it, the learners would have been able to use the feedback on their posters but also the work of their classmates.

Sam gave learners a lot of space as they were creating their posters while remaining available. I interfered with a learner's progress while teaching a workshop because I wanted to be useful and I saw in real time that my feedback impeded the learner's growth through experimentation. Sam taught me to take a step back while remaining present.

Chelsea's approach to teaching made me realise that no detail is too small when teaching students to work with a new material. When explaining my artwork in the past I caught myself skipping over certain processes, assuming they were obvious, but I learned from Chelsea that learning is about understanding a series of small bits of information. Even though I already knew what she was talking about I appreciated someone mentioning aspects of ceramics I would have regarded as obvious.

I was particularly inspired by Chelsea's preparation such as the laminated sheets which will be very useful to my practice as a sculpture and ceramics lecturer. Chelsea not

mentioning health risks of handling the materials, however, made me realise that explaining these risks to students was imperative.

Conclusions

The three trainee lecturers all had Powerpoint presentations and offered a hands-on activity to the learners immediately after providing examples of possible outcomes from the sessions. Because of all three teachers used a similar format the differences in how clearly information was presented in Chelsea's versus Az's sessions was particularly evident. Sam, however, would have benefited from showing students' work the similarly to how Az did at the end of the session so that the outcomes could be critiqued together. Az excelled at providing learners with incrementally more complex tasks thus building understanding and confidence in real time while Sam took a risk by introducing everyone to a software that might have been too difficult to navigate on a phone screen.

As someone who will be teaching fine arts I have learned about the importance of clear parameters within a context-dependent field such as the arts, the necessity for considered evaluation of progress from the expert teacher and the need for an appropriate amount of theory before a practical activity.

References

Avis, J., Fisher, R. and Thompson, R. (2010) *Teaching in Lifelong Learning*. 1st edn. Maidenhead: Open University Press

Educators Wales (2026) *Professional Standards for Further Education And Work-Based Learning Leaders in Wales*. Available at: <https://educators.wales/leaders-professional-standards> (Accessed: 13 October 2026)

Reece, I. and Walker, S. (2007) *Teaching, training and learning*. 6th edn. Tyne and Wear: Business Education Publishers