Effective teaching, learning and assessment
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This assignment is a reflection on and critical evaluation of my experience of planning and delivering (A1-A4) a forty five minute microteach. It includes an academic critique of the contemporary pedagogies I chose and of the cross-cutting enhancement themes I attempted to embed, in terms of their effect, impact and appropriateness to the lesson, learning objectives and learners(A4). Appropriate targets for professional development and improvement as a teacher are proposed throughout and finalised in the conclusion(A5).

The planning phase (A1) of this lesson was particularly difficult and time-consuming. When considering which contemporary teaching strategies to use I gravitated towards using a class discussion activity as the ability to defend a critical position is a vital skill for an art practitioner to develop (Artquest, 2014) (Addison, 2010, p57)(A4). I will begin, therefore, by reflecting on my experience of planning for a discussion activity as it is pertinent both to my current teaching practice and to my future as a teacher.

In my previous reflective essay I identified the strategy of using a generative topic to motivate students at the beginning of a lesson (Saavedra and Opfer,2012) (A4, A5). A discussion activity centred around a generative topic seemed like an appropriate way of achieving this. I invested a significant amount of time considering how to introduce and facilitate a discussion about a variety of hot topics that I felt would be relevant in some capacity to everyone. However, I became overwhelmed by the breadth and depth of the potential subject matter and lost my nerve. I admit that this is partly due to a fear of revealing my own ignorance to the learners. I was also worried about the time needed to conduct such a discussion. I was blindly stuck on the idea of using the discussion activity as a motivational lead-in to some other, more practical or creative activity whereas in retrospect I realise that the discussion activity could have been the main event, taking up the whole forty five minutes. With regard to my fear about appearing ignorant in front of the learners, my teaching practice has since taught me that it is very difficult to be knowledgeable about every issue that learners are exploring in Art and Design. The advice given to me by my mentor was to be honest with learners about gaps in your knowledge. This approach is backed up by Burgess (2010, pp71-80) who discusses the necessity of mutual respect in the development of a discursive environment and the need for teachers to recognise students as 'both subject to and agents of learning'(A4, A5).

I put aside my desire to try out a discussion activity and instead designed(A1) a lesson around a zine-making activity. This was inspired by a project that I had observed on my teaching placement. It addressed my previous concerns about motivating students as I could allow the learners to make zines about themselves or about something that interests them. I chose to begin the lesson with a simple question to assess learners' current knowledge of the subject. This would be followed by a student-directed, time-limited, information gathering activity called a Scavenger Hunt (Scavenger Hunt) whereby learners would work individually within a team to answer a set of questions using the internet on their devices (or a book if they didn't have their device). After a quick feedback session(A3) the learners would be given a demonstration of how to make an 8-page 'zine' from one piece of paper. They would then be given the task of making their own zine using materials provided. To end the lesson the learners would both provide and respond to feedback concerning each other's zines(A3).

The main issue that arose from my teaching was *timing*. Firstly, I tried to squeeze too much into the lesson. Secondly, I miscalculated timings both in my lesson plan and during the lesson. Thirdly, I failed to choose teaching strategies appropriate to the limited time available. All of these issues can be attributed partially to a misguided prioritisation of assignment criteria over learner experience and practicality. Nevertheless, as timing was such an issue for me I have dedicated a significant part of this essay to identifying time-related problems and proposing solutions or alternatives(A5).

I was advised by one of my peers after the lesson to use the timer on my phone to make sure I was keeping to time. I had of course considered this but chose not to because I know I find it difficult to make time calculations when nervous. I also didn't want to be fiddling with my phone during the lesson. Instead I decided to trust my estimations of the timings that I had included in my lesson plan. I had rehearsed the lesson a few times through and believed that if I kept the pace up, it would fall just within 45 minutes. However, at some point during the Scavenger Hunt activity I discovered that I was already ten minutes over time. I had to make the split decision both to cut five minutes from my zine-making task and to allow the lesson to run on for an extra 5 minutes. I was not prepared to completely cut out the already-too-short 5 minute feedback activity at the end as I deemed it too important both in terms of formative assessment and my own learning(A3). I have studied my lesson plan to try to understand how I lost ten minutes so early in my lesson.

I believe that I did not sufficiently account for the time it took to introduce the Scavenger Hunt activity and for the learners to get started on it. In order to embed team working skills into the activity I had adapted it so that it would involve the nomination of a team leader and the allocation of questions to individuals. My introduction plus the time it took for the group to allocate a team leader and for the team leader to allocate questions to her team took at least five minutes. These are 5 minutes that I didn't account for in my plan. This lesson has taught me that handing responsibility over to learners to organise themselves takes time and as such needs to be accounted for in the lesson plan. Also, in retrospect, I should have adapted the number of questions to the number of learners present so that each learner had only one question to find an answer to. As it was, three of the students were allocated two questions and two of these students were subject to significant learning barriers. Adapting the number of questions would have made the activity fairer, easier and

therefore potentially shorter(V1, V2, K3). The feedback session also revealed to me some unintentional ambiguity in some of my questions, highlighting the need to think more carefully in future when planning information-gathering activities. I rushed the learners through their five-minute feedback to the Scavenger Hunt activity but by doing so I undermined the effectiveness of the activity. According to Jones, Smith and Royster (year unknown), the Scavenger Hunt activity can be 'socially engaging and cognitively challenging' but only if it is 'carefully structured with learning objectives and follow-up classroom discussions'. I feel that by worrying too much about the team-working element I lost the potentially rich benefits of using the Scavenger Hunt activity carefully (K2, K4, V3).

On reflection, given the short length of the lesson and the time needed for the zine-making activity, I should have left out the Scavenger Hunt activity. Instead I could have turned the initial question ('Can anyone tell me what a zine is?') into a very short 'Think, Pair, Share' exercise – a cooperative learning strategy - to engage the learners in thinking, listening, sharing and articulation of their ideas. This exercise also provides a great opportunity for formative assessment (Katapano) (A3,K2, K5). In future I will be adopting Doug Lemov's 'taking the shortest path' idea which is about 'selecting, streamlining and where necessary, eliminating activities' so that learners can approach learning objectives and milestones as directly as possible (Mccrea, p61) (A1, A4, A5, K2, K3, K4, V3).

Following the Scavenger Hunt activity I demonstrated how to make an 8-page zine from one piece of paper until all learners had understood. The clarity of my instructions was reflected in the peer feedback. I then introduced the zine-making activity and let the learners get on with it whilst walking around the room engaging with and formatively assessing individuals. The zine-making activity follows the 'constructive', student-directed model. I acted as a facilitator, engaging the learners in the processes of experiential learning. The learners were able to engage directly with the art, experiment, take risks and play, within a supportive environment (Pringle, 2009)(A2, A4, K2, K3).

Initially, learners seemed flummoxed when asked to make their zines about something of interest to them; something they were passionate about. However, after encouraging them to just start they began to enjoy themselves. By the end, one learner was particularly excited about the potential of zines in relation to her passion for football. One of the great things about this activity is that is crosses the boundary into real life (K1, V2, V4). Inspired learners can use this simple medium to have a direct impact on the public. Later in this essay I explore the benefits, in terms of employability, of teaching strategies that involve learners interacting with the real world. As I have previously mentioned, I made the decision to cut the zine-making activity from 20 minutes to fifteen minutes. Because of this, I felt obliged to repeatedly hurry-up the learners and in retrospect, this may have created an unnecessary anxiety, especially for those who were working very slowly(A4). After fifteen minutes only two students had managed to put something on every page of their zine plus the poster at the back. Two others had almost completed it, one had a few empty pages and one student had worked so slowly and with such uncertainty that she was no-where near finishing (V2). Some examples of student work can be found in the Appendix. If I was to run this activity in future I would give the zine-making activity a minimum of 30 minutes. This would allow learners to relax into it and for me to give them more space to enjoy it without the time pressure (K2, A4).

The last activity of the lesson was the peer feedback which I facilitated and which I hurried through as quickly as I could(A3, K2, K3, K5, V1). Peer feedback in an art context is called 'group critique' and is not strictly bound to learning objectives; it is simply a chance for learners to experience the reactions of other learners to their work and to gain constructive feedback as well as articulating responses to any questions or challenges. The five minutes that I had allocated to peer feedback in my lesson plan was nowhere near long enough. Even ten minutes would have been tight if we had done it properly. Fifteen minutes would have been a more sensible estimate and would have allowed for learners to think more carefully before presenting their feedback concerning their own zine as well as the zines of others. This would, of course, not have been practical in a 45 minute lesson unless, of course, I had been able to introduce the learners to the idea of zines in a previous lesson and so avoided the need for an introduction. In summary, a complete zine-making workshop was a bad choice for a 45 minute lesson. A one hour time-frame would have been more suitable but would still only be possible with a number of simplifications to the lesson plan (A1, A4, A5, K2).

When planning lessons in future I will not cram them full of activities but instead build in time for meaningful plenaries during which students can reflect upon what they have learnt. Invariably, lessons that consist almost entirely of activities, with no time for reflection, are not conducive to advancing student learning (Butt, p77). (A1, A4, A5, K2).

For the microteach it was necessary to embed a cross-cutting enhancement theme. I opted to focus on employability and I also brought in entrepreneurship and sustainability in the form of ethical thinking(V4). I adapted the Scavenger Hunt activity so that it would be a team activity and I talked to the students, while they were hunting for information, about the importance of being able to work to a tight deadline. When delivering the main task: the zine project, I spoke about entrepreneurship and how it didn't necessarily have to be commercial; that it could just be about adding something to society that might improve the human experience of one individual. In the final feedback I asked learners to think carefully before giving feedback to others – I was overtly encouraging them to be ethical in their thinking (V4, V2, V1).

On reflection I don't think that any of my attempts to embed the cross-cutting themes were effective. My adaptation of the Scavenger Hunt activity to include teamwork was disastrous not only in terms of timing but also in terms of its effectiveness. Ultimately, there was no teamwork to speak of – just a reluctant team leader and a situation whereby I had unintentionally excluded myself from intervening. I have no means of knowing if learners took on board my talk about teamwork, time management and ethical thinking. I didn't build into the lesson any assessment of learners' awareness of having used employability skills as there wasn't sufficient time in the lesson and I did not want it to overshadow the main content. I notice the teachers on my placement referring quite frequently, in their conversation with learners, to *sustainability* and issues surrounding future employment but to me it feels a bit like lip service. Students do engage with these things but not with any real depth of feeling or drive other than to satisfy the teachers(K3).

Regardless of cross cutting enhancement themes, Fine Art students develop a variety of transferable skills that directly relate to the working environment (Harbour (2005, 127). This is supported by the QAA Subject Benchmark Statement: Art and Design (2017) which lists the range of skills as including 'personal innovation, risk-taking, independent enquiry, effective communication, negotiation, interpersonal, management, presentation, organisational, self-management, critical engagement, team working, social, communication, and research skills'. The problem, according to Harbour (2005, 126-132) is that this information is not adequately transferred to the students themselves. They need help identifying these invaluable skills and direction in how they can successfully mobilize them to impress prospective employers (V3, V4, K3). This lends credit to the idea of verbally reminding students of how their activities link up to the skills listed above. But importantly, as far as my own learning is concerned, there is no need to *force* cross-cutting enhancement themes into lessons as they are already embedded. Harbour (2005) highlights a selection of Art and Design programmes who have taken a practical approach to educating their students about employability, sustainability and entrepreneurship. These programmes create links with local creative industries and organisations and in doing so, provide opportunities for their students to take part in collaborative projects, residencies, work experience, placements and part-time work. These partnerships, according to Burgess (2010) enable learners to 'extend their education beyond the classroom and engage with local and global discourses and practices, as they are represented not by the curriculum but within a professional field'(V4, V3, V1, K3, K2, K1, A4). Such teaching strategies also, crucially, expand the horizons of the students as to potential audiences for their work. I would argue, given the evidence outlined, that in terms of Fine Art education, real-world opportunities and applications are the most useful means of embedding cross-cutting enhancement themes (V3, V4). In my own experience, sross-school or cross-subject collaboration is another way of encouraging the language of cross-cutting enhancement themes to permeate the college/university environment(V4).

Going forwards then, I will be adopting the *lean lesson* planning ideas set out by Mccrea (2015) and I will be incorporating plenty of time for frequent plenaries into my lessons (A1, K2, K3). I recognize that I am being quite hard on myself regarding my failures in this microteach and from my limited teaching experience I have found that with each iteration of a lesson, it gets easier and smoother as each lesson is adjusted in response to the previous. I have already begun my research into how to effectively facilitate group discussion (A5) and will begin to look for opportunities to try this out during my placement. Discussion is, in fact, a key element of the creative process and therefore should take place organically as well as through dedicated discussion activities. Finally, I have learnt that forcing cross-cutting themes into a lesson plan is not an effective strategy and is not even necessary. In HE Art and Design the best ways to embed cross cutting themes relating to employment and professionalism are through cross-curricular activities and the facilitation of real-world opportunities for learners to engage professionally with local creative organisations. Over time, this kind of engagement, will have the effect of modifying the language used in FE/HE Art and Design programmes to reflect cross-cutting themes. This development can be supported by teachers simultaneously familiarising students in the relevant language and building cross-cutting enhancement themes into formative and summative assessment (A1, A3, A4, K2, K3, V4).

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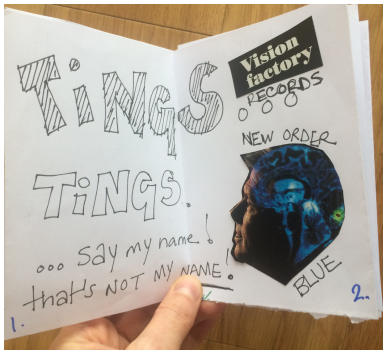
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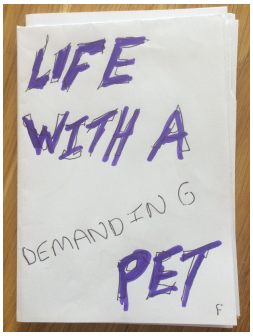
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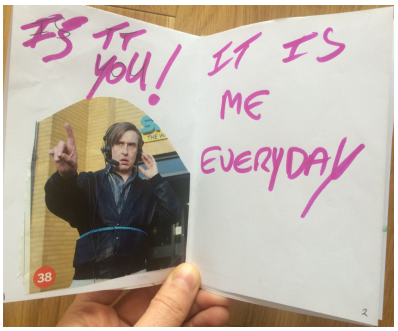
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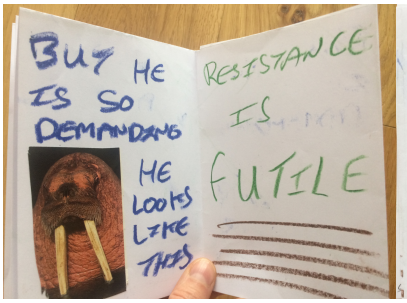
APPENDIX

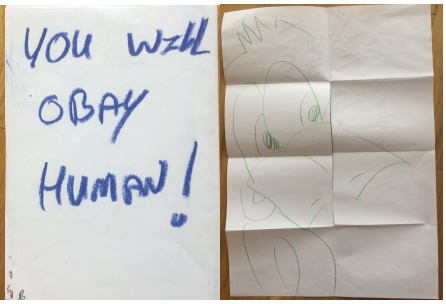

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that's NOT MY NAME.
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1.
2.


LIFE WITH A
DEMANDING
PET


IS IT YOU!
IT IS ME EVERYDAY
38


BUT HE IS SO DEMANDING
HE LOOKS LIKE THIS
RESISTANCE IS FUTILE


YOU WILL OBAY HUMAN!


I LOVE FASION


Be Colorful
STAND OUT