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Effective Teaching and Assessment in Higher Education (UNHE7009)

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AI Acknowledgement

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General Teaching Statement

I am a Lecturer in Psychology with several years' experience teaching across all levels, including research-led and theory-based modules. My teaching includes topics such as prejudice, discrimination and social cognition, alongside supervising students across all levels and chairing the Research Ethics Committee. I am undertaking the PGCert as a step in developing my teaching practice in a more structured and reflective way (Schön, 1983; Kennedy, 2014). While I have experience teaching in higher education, this qualification provides an opportunity to critically explore my approaches, strengthen my decision making and ensure that my teaching continues to respond effectively to diverse learner needs and the wider higher education context [V3, A2].

My approach to teaching Psychology is shaped by a belief that learning happens through connection; connection to ideas, to evidence and to each other. When I design teaching sessions, I want students to feel that the material matters and that psychological theory offers tools for understanding real world issues (Biggs & Tang, 2011). As I teach topics such as prejudice and discrimination, my classrooms are places where students are encouraged to think critically, challenge assumptions and consider how psychological research informs social debates and everyday experience (Illeris, 2007). These principles guide how I design and facilitate learning activities in Psychology [A2, V3].

A foundation of my teaching practice is recognising what students bring into the learning environment (Ausubel, 1968). Psychology students often arrive with existing beliefs about behaviour, identity and group processes. I view these not as obstacles, but as meaningful starting points for learning as research consistently demonstrates that learners' prior knowledge and beliefs shape engagement, comprehension and the integration of new concepts (van Kesteren et al., 2018; Bittermann et al., 2023).. For example, in my Level 6 Psychology of Prejudice and Discrimination module, I begin sessions on stereotype activation and stereotype threat by asking students to reflect on occasions where they have observed or experienced stereotyping, before introducing empirical research. This enables

students to connect personal insight with evidence, highlighting where their understanding aligns or conflicts with theory (Bransford et al., 2000) [K1, A2].

Additionally, my teaching is grounded in psychological theory and research, with interactive tasks structured to promote active engagement and learner responsibility (Barkley et al., 2014) [A2]. For instance, in my lecture on subtypes of prejudice, I use a jigsaw activity in which students become 'experts' in a particular subtype before teaching their peers. This approach promotes shared ownership of learning and supports participation from students who may be less confident contributing in whole-group discussions (Freeman et al., 2014; Advance HE, 2018) [V1, A2]. I have found that when students feel supported, included and appropriately challenged, discussions become more engaging and deep [A4].

As many of the topics I teach involve sensitive material, such as racism and sexism, I prioritise the creation of learning environments that are respectful and psychologically safe (Edmondson, 1999; Arao & Clemens, 2013). I establish clear discussion norms/boundaries, encourage critique of ideas rather than individuals, and offer multiple modes of participation, including small group discussion and silent reflection. These strategies enable students to engage critically while feeling secure and valued [V1, A4].

An important aspect of my teaching identity is integrating my own research into teaching in ways that are accessible and meaningful [V3]. For example, when teaching gender bias, I incorporate examples from my work on the Gender Harmony Project, which students critique from methodological and ethical perspectives. Similarly, discussions of immigration attitudes draw on my research on threat based messaging, allowing students to see how theory and social discourse interact. Students often report that these examples clarify the research process and reinforce the relevance of empirical evidence. Additionally, students often comment that these examples help them understand how psychologists translate theory into research, and how research, in turn, shapes theory (Healey, 2005; Brew, 2010) [V3, K2, A2].

Reflection is also central to my practice, and I approach it in the same structured way I expect from students (Gibbs, 1988; Brookfield, 2017). Within the Research in Action module, students critically reflect on their development across research competencies, evaluate ethical considerations and identify actionable next steps. I model this process in my own teaching. After sessions, I reflect on what worked, what did not, and why [K3, A5]. For instance, following a session on ambivalent sexism, I saw that students struggled to distinguish between subtypes of sexism during the interactive tasks. Reflecting on this, I recognised a need for clearer scaffolding and more opportunities for knowledge consolidation. In response, during following sessions I introduced earlier questions and scenario based discussion, leading to improved understanding and engagement [K3, A5, V3].

Ultimately, my aim as a Psychology lecturer is not only to teach content, but to support students in becoming thoughtful, ethical and reflective learners. I want students to leave my modules equipped to question assumptions, evaluate evidence critically and engage responsibly with psychological knowledge. When students describe applying classroom insights beyond the university context, it reinforces my commitment to teaching that connects theory, research and lived experience in meaningful ways (Barnett, 2007) [V1, A4].

A reflective report of a teaching intervention cycle: Implementing Standardised, Workbook Based Task Guidance in a Multi Booth Lab Environment

Introduction and Context

This reflection evaluates a teaching intervention implemented within the Level 4 interactive laboratory-based module, 'Exploring Emotion and Communication'. The intervention was designed and implemented as part of a structured teaching cycle informed by action-research principles, with the aim of improving equity of access, instructional clarity, and the quality of student engagement within the constraints of the learning environment. This intervention was developed through a cyclical action-research process, involving the diagnosis of a recurring teaching challenge, implementation of a targeted change, evaluation of its impact through observation and student response, and subsequent refinement of practice informed by that evidence [K3, V2].

This module is delivered within multi-booth psychology laboratories, where students work in small groups using specialised equipment/software that cannot be accessed outside of the lab environment. While this environment provides an authentic experimental experience [A2, K4], it also presents challenges around consistency, pacing, and equitable access to information. The teaching intervention addressed the issue observed across sessions; the reliance on repeated, booth-by-booth verbal task explanations, which resulted in differing instructions, timing inequities between groups, and limited opportunity for higher-order discussion (Ashwin, 2020) [A4, K2].

The intervention replaced ad-hoc verbal instructions with session-specific, standardised workbooks designed to scaffold task engagement, embed reflective thinking, and reallocate my teaching presence from procedural explanation to facilitate troubleshooting and wider discussion [A2, K1, K2]. The intervention was evaluated using Gibbs' reflective cycle, supported by educational theory and

practitioner evidence, to examine its impact on student learning and on my teaching practice.

Gibbs' Stage 1: Description (what happened)

As specified in the programme learning outcomes, Exploring Emotion and Communication prioritises the development of foundational experimental skills, applied observation, and reflective research skills [A2, K1, K2]. The sessions are designed to scaffold beginner undergraduate learners from foundational understanding of research methods/tools (e.g., observation, reaction time paradigms, and physiological recording) to become more confident, evidence informed researchers at later levels of the programme (Reece & Walker, 2007) [A2, A4, K1, K2, K3, V1, V3]. At the start of the academic year, I noticed a recurring pattern during lab-based sessions; as students were dispersed across several booths within the lab space, I was required repeated verbal instructions for each task as I moved between groups, then circulated back to each booth to answer questions and provide support throughout the tasks [A2, K2, K3]. This caused several issues throughout the sessions.

Firstly, instructional inconsistency was identified as a concern. Even when covering the same content, small variations in verbal explanation occurred between groups and across time. Secondly, time inequity was apparent; groups receiving instructions later had less time to engage meaningfully with tasks. Thirdly, a substantial proportion of my teaching time was taken up by procedural clarification, leaving limited opportunity to support understanding, critical questioning, and/or reflection. Additionally, the repeated switching between booths created a high cognitive and logistical load for me as an educator; this reduced the time available for analytic questioning and formative feedback, and increased fatigue, limiting my capacity to engage with students' higher-order thinking and to support learning equitably across groups [V2, K3, A2, A4].

To address this, I designed topic-specific workbooks for each session to replace the initial verbal instructions and to standardise explanations, expectations, and reflective prompts for each activity [A2, K2, K3]. Workbooks are instructional

tools designed to guide students to understand complex ideas, not just practice tasks (Ristevska et al., 2015; Biggs & Tang, 2011; Petty, 2009). Each workbook was designed to include a concise background to the topic and its relevance, a clear statement of purpose and learning outcomes, step by step task procedures (with clickable links to further resources where relevant), questions with different response type (tick boxes, short answers, longer reflections), and embedded spaces for notes, observations and reflections [A2, K1, K2]. The workbooks are available as downloadable and editable documents via Moodle and printed copies on request to support varied access preferences, ensuring parity of engagement at the start of each session [A4, V1].

Gibbs' Stage 2: Feelings (what I thought and felt)

Initially, I felt deeply frustrated that the instructional demands of the environment prevented me from supporting students to think critically about experimental design, ethical reasoning, or methodological limitations [A4, K2, K3]. I also felt uneasy about the equity implications of staggered task starts, which conflicted with my commitment to inclusive practice and respect for individual learners (Hockings, 2010; Lea, 2015; Ashwin, 2020) [V1].

From a learner perspective, I observed signs of frustration due to cognitive overload. When instructions were delivered verbally under time pressure, students frequently requested reinstruction or missed key details, creating further time constraints. These observations align with Cognitive Load Theory (CLT; Sweller, 1988; Paas, Renkl, & Sweller, 2003), which demonstrates that when extraneous demands exceed working-memory capacity, learners are unable to process and retain essential details, leading to reduced task performance and a need for repeated explanations (Biggs & Tang, 2011; de Jong, 2010; Department of Education, 2025) [V2, V3, K1, K2].

Prior to piloting the first workbook, I felt cautiously optimistic. By front loading clear, consistent written guidance, I anticipated freeing my time for specific guidance, formative feedback, and responsive questioning within each lab booth [A2, A4, K2]. Despite recognising the need for change, I felt some apprehension about introducing

workbooks. I was concerned that highly structured written guidance might reduce curiosity, autonomy, or exploratory learning. I was particularly mindful of avoiding a “paint-by-numbers” approach that can stifle autonomy or critical inquiry (Windschitl & Buttemer, 2000), as inquiry-based learning is a key aspect in a module designed to explore psychological processes (Lea, 2015).

However, I was relieved as early piloting of the workbooks quickly shifted my perceptions. Almost immediately, the nature of student questions changed from procedural (“What do we do next?”) to analytical (“Is this observation checklist appropriate given obstructed facial cues in VR?” and “how do we deal with the ethical concerns of exploring stressful emotional states?”) [A4, K1, K3]. This shift suggested that cognitive resources were being redirected from logistical processing to conceptual reasoning, enabling richer learning interactions [V1, V3].

Gibbs’ Stage 3: Evaluation (What was good or bad about the experience?)

What worked well

The immediate benefit of the intervention was the coordination/synchronisation of learning across booths. All groups received the same instructions simultaneously, eliminating timing constraints and ensuring equitable access to information [V1, V2, A1, A2]. Students reported that the consistent structure helped them understand why they are completing the required tasks and how, as each workbook opened with a clear rationale grounded in psychological theory and method, allowing for the purpose and task alignment to produce deeper understanding (Biggs & Tang, 2011) [A4, K1]. For example, in the VR and Physiological Response workbook, student could read a brief explanations of James-Lange and Schachter-Singer theories prior to active engagement with Galvanic Skin Response measures. This enabled students to interpret data within a theoretical framework, rather than treating the task as a technical problem (Biggs & Tang, 2011) [A2, K1]. Additionally, in the Online Research Tools workbook, students could launch demo tasks (e.g., IAT, Stroop, Flanker) directly via links embedded in the workbook, then respond to questions and

prompts to reflect on method strengths/limitations, keeping independent exploration tightly aligned to learning outcomes [A2, K2, K3].

From my perspective, the intervention transformed my teaching role. With procedural demands reduced, I could focus on diagnostic questioning, real-time feedback, and encouraging methodological critique. This shift enhanced both teaching effectiveness and support, as I could respond to misconceptions and guide deeper inquiry rather than reiterating instructions [A2, A4, K1, K2]. While feedback was informal, consistent patterns in student interaction and problem-solving behaviour provided a credible basis for evaluating the impact of the intervention [K3].

What was less successful or still challenging

However, not all elements worked optimally. Some learners initially treated reflective sections as procedural checklists rather than opportunities for critical thinking. This emphasised a broader issue at Level 4, students often lack explicit understanding of reflective practice (Moon, 2004). Research suggests that structured reflection requires modelling and guided examples to be effective (Race, 2020; Radović et al., 2023). In response, I recognised the need to integrate brief “think-aloud” exemplars within sessions to demonstrate reflective thinking [A2, A4, K1, K2, K3].

A second challenge concerned reading density and digital fatigue. While written guidance reduced unnecessary load, some workbooks became text-heavy, risking redundancy effects where excess information inhibits learning (de Jong, 2010; Mayer & Johnson, 2008). Similarly, a minority of learners also reported digital fatigue with electronic copies; digital fatigue involves cognitive and physical exhaustion caused by prolonged engagement with digital devices, leading to declines in attention and working memory (Konukati, 2025) [A1, A2, K3]. Additionally, One aspect I had not considered during the creation of the workbooks was the limited interactive features (via the embedded links) which would be unavailable for the printed versions. For future use of the workbooks, I will preserve these features by including scannable QR codes in addition to the embedded links, allowing the interactive aspects of the online version to be useable when printed [A4, V1].

Gibbs' Stage 4: Evaluation Analysis (Making sense with theory and evidence)

Why standardised written instructions helped

Cognitive Load Theory shows that working memory is limited and learning suffers when we overload with unnecessary demands (e.g., interpreting ad hoc verbal explanations under time pressure; Sweller, 1988). Tools that are designed with instructions that reduce this load frees capacity for germane processing (the mental process we use to process, understand and integrate new information into our existing knowledge; Paas & van Merriënboer, 2020). Therefore, the workbook intentionally uses concise instructions, minimises inessential information and embeds example style guidance. These additions align with CLT classroom guides, emphasising the use of worked examples, split attention avoidance, and modality considerations. Evidence indicates that such design choices improve learning outcomes, perceived task difficulty, and problem solving with minimal guidance [K2]. My perception of improved engagement is grounded in observable changes in student behaviour, particularly increased independence and deeper questioning during practical tasks [V3].

For learners at Level 4, clarity and consistency of task instructions reduce unnecessary cognitive load and support schema acquisition, allowing working memory to be devoted to the core learning problem rather than remembering procedural steps (Paas, Renkl, & Sweller, 2003; Biggs & Tang, 2011) [K1, K2]. In the workbooks, explicit purpose statements and step-by-step procedures were paired with background and “why this matters”, which I observed to promote more purposeful engagement and more conceptually based questions during the session [A2, K1]. The result was a shift from logistics to analytics and critical application [A2, K2].

Why equitable access of resources in the lab layout helped

The multi booth configuration created a structural inequity, as students briefed last had reduced time, which risked lower engagement and fewer opportunities for

practice. By coordinating workbook release and starting sessions with a visible countdown to the first checkpoint, I established synchronous starts and clearer pacing, reducing the reliance on my physical presence for basic direction and improving fairness [A2, V1].

Additionally, Universal Design for Learners recommends multiple means of representation (clear, understandable materials), action/expression (structured spaces for responses), and engagement (relevance, independent, support for persistence). The workbooks implement these checkpoints as students can choose digital or print, adjust pace, access hyperlinks, and record learning in varied formats (ticks, short notes, extended reflections). These design choices reduce barriers and respect learner variability (Lea, 2015) [V1, V2, V3, K4, A1].

Why embedding reflection, questions and student-centred learning helped
In reviewing my practice, I recognised that students often benefited from opportunities to slow down and make their thinking visible; when learners speak, write, or draw their ideas, they deepen their understanding (Race, 2020; Ritchhart & Perkins, 2008). This guided how I designed the workbooks, as each one now opens with brief pre task prompts to help students set their intentions, followed by brief “check in” questions embedded within the activity to encourage thinking about and justifying their decisions and think critically about the task. By placing reflection prompts within the workbook (e.g., “reflect on what you have learned about how psychologists study emotion, why do you think XX carried out the experiment the way that they did “ and “identify one methodological limitation, taking into account the context of when the study was conducted”), students produced a trail of thinking that I could review and feedback on in real time [K3, A3, A4].

Additionally, each workbook with space for students to evaluate their approach and consider what they might adapt in future tasks. Embedding this reflective structure has helped me create a more discussion, even across separate lab booths, and allows students to engage with their learning in a more deliberate and thoughtful way [A1, A2, A4, K3].

Why topic specific tailoring mattered

While creating materials for each session, it was apparent that each workbook required adaptation, depending upon the topic being covered; therefore, each workbook is created to be non-generic and specific to the session. It is aligned with the logic of the session and each is grounded in the specific psychological theory being explored, ensuring the procedure of the session matches the concepts being investigated. For instance, the VR/GSR workbook introduces classic theories of emotion and highlights observable behavioural indicators before students design mini experiments, which makes the observation checklist an applied bridge between theory and real time behaviours [A2, K1]. By contrast, the Online Research Tools workbook, by contrast, links to demo tasks, followed by prompts about congruency effects, task demands, and methodological limitations, encouraging student to showcase critical analysis [A2, K3]. I extended the same logic to the Research Ethics workbook, where students work with brief, task-embedded summaries of the BPS Code of Human Research Ethics (2021) and then interrogate and critique the historical ethics forms (Milgram, Zimbardo, Watson, Bandura) using structured checklists that question issues of autonomy, deception, safeguarding, harm, and right to withdraw. The workbook then asks them to make present-day judgements ("Could this run today?") and to propose ethically sound redesigns that still answer the original research questions [A2, K1, K3; V1, V3].

Across these resources, the purpose of the session, procedural instructions, and reflection is intentionally tight; the background rationales set a theoretical foundation, task turns the theory into practice, and closing prompts (e.g., prediction checks, method critiques, ethical redesigns) consolidate understanding and knowledge. Grounding my teaching in theory is important as it provides a principled foundation for the practical work; basing the sessions on a theoretical lens allows for more critical reflection and purposeful decision-making (Higgs, 2013; Biggs & Tang, 2011). This alignment has also made my in-person guidance and discussion more targeted; I can see where a concept is not landing (e.g., misunderstanding GSR as emotion-specific, or overlooking right-to-withdraw pressures) and intervene with brief, topic-specific probes that move students from doing to thinking about why they are doing it [A4, K2]. This intervention aligns with principles of constructive

alignment, ensuring that learning activities, resources and intended outcomes are tightly coordinated (Biggs & Tang, 2011). It also reflects student-centred approaches, emphasising relevance, autonomy and reflective engagement as drivers of effective adult learning (Knowles et al., 2015; Ashwin, 2020; Race, 2020) [V3, K2, K3].

Gibbs' Stage 5: Conclusion (what else could I have done)

The intervention successfully addressed the core problem of inconsistent instruction and inequitable access, while enhancing the quality of student engagement and my own teaching effectiveness. By standardising task guidance, the intervention enabled a shift from procedural clarification to more meaningful conceptual and methodological discussion, supporting deeper learning. However, the impact of the workbooks could be further strengthened by explicitly teaching students how to use them as learning tools, rather than treating them as procedural scripts (Race, 2020; Ashwin, 2020) [A2, K2].

In particular, introducing an early orientation to model how the workbooks are intended to support reflection, decision-making and theoretical connection may help students, especially learners at Level 4, move beyond surface engagement. Explicit modelling of reflective responses and examples of effective workbook use could support students to better understand the purpose of embedded prompts and reflective sections, rather than viewing them as tasks to be completed. Such an approach would be consistent with inclusive and developmental teaching practices, supporting learner confidence, engagement and autonomy as students transition into research-focused study [V1, V2, K2, A1, A2, A4].

Gibbs' Stage 6: Action Plan (what I will do next)

Action 1: Workbook Orientation

I will introduce the workbooks at the start of weeks 1-3; here I will demonstrate how to skim the purpose/background of the session content, how to navigate the workbook, how to follow the step-by-step task instructions, and sets out the expectations and intended outcome (Avis, 2019) [A2, K1, K2]. I will then fade this scaffolding by week 4 to encourage independence while preserving the same

workbook structure [A4; K1]. Effective scaffolding involves tailoring support to student needs and adjusting and reducing support over time to promote independent working and improved learning outcomes (Van de Pol et al., 2015), whereas productive scaffolding should gradually fade as competence develops (Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976; Van de Pol et al., 2010).

Action 2: Embedded Exit Reflections

I will end each workbook with short end of session reflective prompts linking learning to outcomes and future tasks, strengthening formative feedback loops [A3, K3]. The purpose of these carry-forward questions is to encourage metacognition, allow for further evaluation of the tasks, and to help probe for reasoning (Ashwin, 2020).

Action 3: Accessibility Enhancements:

I will continue to provide both Moodle and print versions, checking that QR/clickable links render correctly in print via short URLs, and I will survey preferences mid-semester to ensure the format remains responsive to learner needs [V1, A4, K4].

Action 4: Checkpoint Timing Prompts

I will integrate pacing markers within each workbook, designed to support coherence across booths without limiting inquiry [K2, A1, A2].

Closing Reflection: What I Learned About My Practice

This teaching intervention cycle has reinforced the importance of intentional learning-environment design as a tool in its own right, rather than viewing teaching effectiveness solely through content delivery. By standardising access to core information and procedural guidance, I was able to create a more equitable starting point for all students, regardless of their physical position within the lab environment. This shift enabled greater consistency, reduced unintended disadvantage, and supported more meaningful engagement with learning activities, particularly in relation to cognitive focus [A1, A2, V1, V2].

A key insight from this process is that structure does not constrain learning when it is purposefully designed. By removing the need to repeatedly clarify instructions, I was able to redirect my teaching presence towards higher-value

interactions, such as diagnostic questioning, formative feedback, and supporting students to articulate and justify methodological decisions. This reallocation of cognitive and temporal resources for both myself and my students resulted in deeper engagement with theoretical reasoning, ethical consideration, and reflective thinking, rather than surface-level task completion [A4, K2, K3].

Through this cycle, I have learned to regard workbooks not as supplementary “handouts,” but as educational tool that enable me to teach more effectively within by reallocating my presence to supporting learning and formative assessment [A4, K2, K3]. When designed with clear purpose, theoretical framing, and embedded reflective prompts, workbooks can operate as scaffolds that support student autonomy while maintaining alignment with learning outcomes and assessment expectations. This has strengthened my confidence in using structured resources not simply to support logistics, but to intentionally shape student thinking and learning [A1, A2, K1, K2, K3].

Critically, this intervention has enhanced my awareness of how teaching design decisions impact student experience and inclusion, particularly in practice-based contexts. Standardising information delivery reduced reliance on informal access to the tutor and helped ensure that support was distributed more equitably across groups. At the same time, the intervention prompted me to reflect on the importance of explicitly teaching students how to engage with structured learning tools, rather than assuming that reflective and self-regulated learning will develop implicitly. This recognition has informed my future planning, particularly in relation to modelling reflective practice and supporting students to move beyond procedural engagement [A1, A2, K3].

Overall, this cycle has strengthened my identity as a reflective and adaptive practitioner, demonstrating how systematic evaluation of teaching practice can lead to tangible improvements in learning quality, inclusivity, and teaching effectiveness. It has emphasised the value of critical reflection not only as a retrospective activity, but as an ongoing process for shaping student-centred teaching [K3, V3].

Microteach Report

This reflective report relates to a ten-minute micro-teaching session. The session focused on introducing the core psychological mechanisms of stereotyping, with the intention of making complex ideas accessible and encouraging active engagement (Biggs & Tang, 2011) [A2]. Prior to delivery, I asked peers to focus their feedback on the clarity of explanation, pacing, and how effectively I supported understanding within the limited time available (Schön, 1983) [K3].

Feedback highlighted several strengths in my approach. In particular, it was commented that the structure of the session was clear and that key concepts were explained in a way that was accessible [V1, V2, A1]. The use of examples to illustrate abstract ideas was seen as effective in supporting understanding, and peers commented positively on my enthusiasm and subject knowledge (Race, 2020) [K1, K2, V3]. This feedback reaffirmed my confidence in my ability to communicate complex material clearly and to establish an engaging learning atmosphere.

Constructive feedback also identified areas for development. Feedback indicated that, due to the short time frame, there were moments where the pace felt rushed, limiting opportunities for clarification. One comment suggested that incorporating a brief check-in question earlier in the session could have supported understanding and allowed me to respond to needs in real time [A3, A4]. Reflecting on this, I recognise the importance of deliberately building in time for feedback, even during time-restricted teaching (Brookfield, 2017) [K3].

Overall, the micro-teach reinforced the value of clarity, structure and responsive teaching. Engaging with feedback has supported critical reflection on my teaching practice and proposes practical strategies for future teaching, particularly with pacing, questioning and support (Kennedy, 2014) [A4].

Teaching Observation Form 1

PGCert tHE- OBSERVATION FORM -PSF 2023

Details of the Observation	
Observee	Dr Katie Sullivan
Practice Advisor / Expert peer observer	Assoc Prof Paul B. Hutchings
Date of the Observation	23/03/26
Campus / Location	SA1 IQ Campus Swansea
Date, Time, Duration	23/03/26 14:00 – 15:00 (60 mins)
Subject Speciality	Experimental Social and Cognitive Psychology
Type of activity	Taught session – practical engagement
This observation will contribute to the participant's portfolio of evidence to satisfy the assessment of the PGCert tHE and should be undertaken by an experienced academic colleague. Observation by a fellow participant on the programme is not permissible as a means of authenticating practice.	

Teaching/Support preparation [A1: Design and plan learning activities/programmes] <i>i.e. Preparation, selection and organisation of content. Choice of teaching/learning methods.</i>
Comments In preparation for the session Dr Sullivan had created a number of materials for use by the students in their practical session. As the module this teaching is associated with (ECPS4012 Exploring Emotion and Communication) combines taught and practical elements within the 30 hours of teaching the segue between the taught lecture (not observed) and the practical element (the focus of this observation) is an important one; students need to understand how the practical work that they are carrying out relates to the taught content, and the materials produced for this session did a good job of this. This type of structure places a large emphasis upon the lecturer to be prepared for their teaching session – a lot of work has to go into the preparation in order for the materials to be available to the students immediately so that they can engage immediately with

the session, and Dr Sullivan had clearly both thought this through and executed the preparations very well.

Teaching [A2: Teach and/or support learning.]

i.e. Beginning class, introduction, continuity with other sessions, students' prior knowledge. Clarity of presentation. Pace. Attitude to the subject matter. Use of appropriate reinforcement. Ending the session – summary, future work etc. Technique and Aids: General apparatus – board, data projector, use of handouts. Was effective communication achieved? Was there good student–teacher rapport? Were the aims/outcomes achieved? Appropriateness of teaching/learning methods.

Comments

This was a practical session that built upon the delivery of content by another member of staff, and I only attended the last few minutes of their session to understand the context of what was being covered; however, it appeared that continuity was good and the students certainly appeared to understand the progression and segue between the sessions.

At the start of the session Dr Sullivan gave clear guidance to the students who were in attendance, provided them with the worksheets that they would be using in their session (they were learning about the use of a specific experimental research tool that is used in many of the research experiments carried out in the exploration of emotion and communication) and throughout the session provided appropriate levels of feedback and reinforcement that were suitable for the session being delivered (not sitting and doing the work with them or for them, but making herself available and, when students had queries or hit problems, guiding them in solving the problems themselves rather than simply providing the answer.

An issue to be raised here, and one that cuts across many of the sections on this document, is that of the nature of the delivery in the facility and how this can impact upon teaching, particularly when students do not uniformly arrive on time. The psychology labs are small and so student groups are often divided into small groups to work. That was the case here and the delivery to the small group in attendance followed what has been described above and was very good. However, one student arrived significantly later than the others and so, quite rightly, the session had already started and the other students were well underway on the tasks. It was good that the worksheets were in place which allowed the student to slot into the group and engage with the work, but it may be worth reflecting upon a) whether this will always be the case (i.e., is it always possible for a student to engage when late or may there be tasks where joining part-way through makes it difficult for them, or the students who were there on time, to engage with the materials?).

Effective Learning Environments [A4:Support and guide learners/V1 Respect individual learners/diverse groups of learners]

i.e General class atmosphere, level of participation, attention, and interest. Student attitude and ability to carry out classwork. Were learning problems identified and overcome? Awareness of individual needs. Attitude to students.

Comments

The attendance rate at the session was approximately 50%. Of those who were there I could clearly see that they were engaged with the session, and Dr Sullivan's engagement and attitude towards them was very good. As commented upon above, the session is designed to almost encourage the encountering of learning problems, and the working through of these problems with tutor guidance is an important part of student development. Dr Sullivan achieved this in a very positive way and I felt that she was both encouraging and engaging in her approach to helping students to understand the issues and solve them under her guidance.

There is, of course, then the question of why some in the class did not attend, and how they will develop the skills that the session is hoping to address. As this session involved the use of specialist equipment only available in the lab environment this may limit students' ability to apply these techniques in the future, and so missing these sessions will undoubtedly hamper their learning. I think this is worth reflecting on; this is not a module that students can simply 'catch up on' by reading about things in their own time. I know from information supplied in an initial session on this module that students are made aware of the practical nature of this module and the importance of these sessions, but it may be worth considering whether additional information encouraging attendance and setting out in advance the learning requirements – it may save the tutor time later on as well when they will undoubtedly be contacted by panicking students who realise that they have missed out on learning that would have assisted them with their summative assessment!

Assessment [A3: Assess and give learners feedback for learning]

i.e Formative/summative assessment examples , Question and answer technique. Other evaluation procedures, class management, instructions to students.

Comments

This session contained a lot of formative elements for what will be the summative assessment (a 3-hour practical assessment creating a study) and I felt that Dr Sullivan engaged the students appropriately in reminding them of the important elements of their learning relating to this assessment, whilst also not making it all about 'learning purely to pass the assessment'.

Core Knowledge • K1 - how learners learn, generally and within specific subjects • K2 - approaches to teaching and/or supporting learning, appropriate for subjects and level of study • K3 - critical evaluation as a basis for effective practice • K4 - appropriate use of digital and/or other technologies, and resources for learning • K5 - requirements for quality assurance and enhancement, and their implications for practice
Comments Dr Sullivan has shown excellent use of available technology and resources to both put this session together in the first place and then to deliver it on the day in what is undoubtedly a challenging teaching environment (small labs). She has designed a session that is appropriate for the level of the students, ensuring that they are both guided and challenged in their learning.
Professional values • V1 Respect for individual learners/ Diverse groups of learners. • V2 Promote engagement and learning and equity of opportunity for all to reach their potential. • V3 Use scholarship, Research or professional learning? All other evidence informed approaches as a basis of effective practice. • V4 Respond to the wider context in which higher education operates, recognising implications for practice. • V5 Collaborate with others to enhance practice.
Comments Dr Sullivan's professionalism in the delivery is also excellent, showing respect but also engaging appropriately with the learners in what is quite an intimate environment. She balances well the availability to the students but also giving them their own space in which to engage with the work, and ensured that she was both cognisant of when students looked as if they may be struggling and responding when direct help was requested.

Examples of good practice:

1. Good preparation of appropriate materials that enabled the practical session to run smoothly and for students to have a good understanding of the tasks required for the session initially.
2. Good rapport and engagement with the students to make them feel comfortable with the requirements of the session and also that they could ask questions and receive support.

Action points:

1. Consider whether a more formalised starting point to the session is required to avoid a laissez-faire start to the session that may not be appropriate for every session.
2. Consider how to either engage students initially to encourage greater attendance or set out how they are able to catch up on information coming from sessions where access to knowledge and learning may be more restricted than for a standard module.

For Observee

Write a short statement to address area of activity [A5]. Describe how this observation will enhance your practice

Observer ..Paul B. Hutchings.....

Date 02/04/26

Overservee ...Katie Sullivan.....

Date 02/04/26

PGCert PARTICIPANTS

On completion of the peer observation reports for each module, compose a short reflective paragraph on your observation experiences for inclusion in your portfolio along with the observation sheets.

Teaching Observation Reflection 1

This reflection focuses on the teaching observation conducted by my Practice Advisor during a practical session for the Level 4 module Exploring Emotion and Communication (ECPS4012). The observation was on a one-hour lab-based session designed to support students' engagement with an experimental research tool, building directly on previous taught content. Reflecting on this observation has provided valuable insight into both the strengths of my current practice and areas for development (Schön, 1983; Brookfield, 2017) [A5, V3].

A key strength identified during the observation was the planning and preparation underpinning the session. The observer commented that the materials provided enabled students to transition smoothly from the earlier lecture content to the applied practical tasks, supporting coherence across sessions [A1]. This feedback affirmed the importance I place on careful session design, particularly in modules that integrate theory and practice. Ensuring that materials are immediately accessible allowed students to engage quickly and confidently with the task, which aligns with my intention to create structured yet active learning environments (Biggs & Tang, 2011; Race, 2014) [A1, A2, K2].

During delivery, the observation commented on my use of guided troubleshooting rather than directive instruction. Rather than solving problems for students, I supported them through questioning and prompts, encouraging independent problem-solving [A2, K1]. This approach reflects my belief that learning in Psychology is fostered through active engagement and supported struggle, particularly in research-focused teaching. The observer's comments reinforced that this balance between availability and autonomy was effective in maintaining engagement while promoting skill development (Vygotsky, 1978; Freeman et al., 2014) [V1].

The observation also drew attention to contextual challenges within lab-based teaching, particularly student attendance and punctuality. While the presence of prepared worksheets enabled a late-arriving student to integrate into the session

with minimal disruption, the observer encouraged reflection on whether this would always be feasible. This prompted me to critically evaluate how session structure can both accommodate late-comers and protect the learning experience of those who arrive on time. Going forward, I intend to establish a more formalised session introduction that clearly frames expectations at the outset to strengthen consistency and clarity (Moon, 2004) [K3, A2]. Another significant area for reflection concerned student absence. The observer flagged that approximately half of the cohort did not attend, raising important questions about access to learning in practice-based modules where resources and experiences cannot be replicated independently. While students are informed early about the practical nature of the module, I recognise the need to reinforce the importance of attendance more explicitly. I plan to make earlier and clearer links between practical sessions and summative assessment expectations and to provide guidance outlining the limits of 'catch-up' learning in lab-based contexts. This proactive communication may help reduce later anxiety and ensure students engage with essential skill-building opportunities (Kahu, 2013) [A4, V1].

Overall, the observation confirmed the effectiveness of my teaching approach while offering constructive prompts for refinement. It reinforced the value of preparation, facilitative teaching and respectful learner support, while also highlighting areas where clearer structure and communication may enhance student engagement. Engaging reflectively with this feedback supports my ongoing professional development and strengthens my ability to respond critically and constructively to the complexities of higher-education teaching practice (Kennedy, 2014; Ashwin et al., 2015) [A5, V3, K3].

Teaching Observation Form 2



PGCert tHE- OBSERVATION FORM -PSF 2023

Details of the Observation	
Observee	Dr Katie Sullivan
Practice Advisor / Expert peer observer	Assoc Prof Paul B. Hutchings
Date of the Observation	25/03/26
Campus / Location	SA1 IQ Campus Swansea
Date, Time, Duration	23/03/26 09:00 – 09:45 (45 mins)
Subject Speciality	Psychology
Type of activity	Taught session – practical module
This observation will contribute to the participant's portfolio of evidence to satisfy the assessment of the PGCert tHE and should be undertaken by an experienced academic colleague. Observation by a fellow participant on the programme is not permissible as a means of authenticating practice.	

Teaching/Support preparation [A1: Design and plan learning activities/programmes] <i>i.e. Preparation, selection and organisation of content. Choice of teaching/learning methods.</i>
Comments The module ECPS5016 Research in Action is a module where students are required to work in small teams to carry out a project, meeting a number of competencies as they develop through the module and ultimately carry out summative assessments related to these competencies. Therefore, teaching on this module is quite dynamic as each group are likely to be at different stages of their project work throughout the module, and the only consistent preparation that can be carried out is at the start of the module when students require baseline information; that appears to have been carried out here although it is not part of the observation at this point in the semester. Preparation is therefore largely through response to the groups' current situations, with feedback required e.g., for ethics submissions, material creation, documentation etc.,

and Dr Sullivan appears to have prepared well to support each group when they begin work in the session on whatever part of the project they are involved with at that time.

Teaching [A2: Teach and/or support learning.]

i.e. Beginning class, introduction, continuity with other sessions, students' prior knowledge. Clarity of presentation. Pace. Attitude to the subject matter. Use of appropriate reinforcement. Ending the session – summary, future work etc. Technique and Aids: General apparatus – board, data projector, use of handouts. Was effective communication achieved? Was there good student–teacher rapport? Were the aims/outcomes achieved? Appropriateness of teaching/learning methods.

Comments

With delivery of this session taking place in the Psychology Labs in SA1 it must be recognised that this is not a traditional teaching environment and it brings with it specific challenges, most notably that each group will be working independently in small labs, sometimes with specialist equipment depending upon their project methodology and stage of the process they are at. Therefore the teaching must be flexible and dynamic to account for this environment and type of module, and Dr Sullivan coped with this extremely well. I counted three (but there may have been more) groups working independently on their projects in different labs, and Dr Sullivan was able to respond to queries, keep an eye on the different groups, and engage with them appropriately across the observation.

An important skill in this type of teaching environment is not to allow one group to monopolise the tutors time during the session to the detriment of other learners, whilst also ensuring that groups that need additional support or who have greater needs feel catered to and not abandoned. Dr Sullivan managed this balance extremely effectively, and I got the sense from the students that they felt well supported and able to push forward on their projects at a suitable pace.

Effective Learning Environments [A4:Support and guide learners/V1 Respect individual learners/diverse groups of learners]

i.e General class atmosphere, level of participation, attention, and interest. Student attitude and ability to carry out classwork. Were learning problems identified and overcome? Awareness of individual needs. Attitude to students.

Comments

As commented on above, I felt the atmosphere and engagement from the students with regard to their learning and the module was extremely positive. I only have one comment here to make, and it may be that this is a part of the module which I simply did not see in this observation – because the students are working independently in their

small groups there is the possibility/potential for students to have no idea about what others are doing and to see this module as being something that their group are doing almost alone. It might be interesting/useful to set aside some time, either at the beginning or end of a session, for each of the groups to feed back to the tutor and the other groups about where they are in the process, any barriers that they may have hit, challenges they have overcome, or solutions to problems that they have found. In this way the teaching can be outsourced to a certain extent to fellow students and they are then also able to learn from each other as a cohort rather than from the tutor or from just their own group.

Assessment [A3: Assess and give learners feedback for learning]

i.e Formative/summative assessment examples , Question and answer technique. Other evaluation procedures, class management, instructions to students.

Comments

It was clear, both in the documentation I reviewed for the module and during the practical session observation itself, that students are clearly aware of how their formative development in the module relates to their summative assessment of competencies.

Core Knowledge

- K1 - how learners learn, generally and within specific subjects
- K2 - approaches to teaching and/or supporting learning, appropriate for subjects and level of study
- K3 - critical evaluation as a basis for effective practice
- K4 - appropriate use of digital and/or other technologies, and resources for learning
- K5 - requirements for quality assurance and enhancement, and their implications for practice

Comments

Dr Sullivan has shown excellent use of available technology both in her own use of the technology and also in being able to guide students in their own use of it, and this is a critical element of this module and its delivery; a tutor who does not have a good grasp of the specialist equipment that the students are required to use would soon find themselves struggling in the delivery of this module, but that means time and preparation in learning usage beyond that required by the students. Dr Sullivan has clearly done this learning and that is crucial to good delivery of this type of teaching and learning.

Professional values

- V1 Respect for individual learners/ Diverse groups of learners.
- V2 Promote engagement and learning and equity of opportunity for all to reach their potential.
- V3 Use scholarship, Research or professional learning? All other evidence informed approaches as a basis of effective practice.
- V4 Respond to the wider context in which higher education operates, recognising implications for practice.
- V5 Collaborate with others to enhance practice.

Comments

Dr Sullivan's professionalism in the delivery is also excellent, showing respect but also engaging appropriately with the learners in what is quite an intimate environment. She balances well the availability to the students but also giving them their own space in which to engage with the work, and ensured that she was both cognisant of when students looked as if they may be struggling and responding when direct help was requested.

Whilst this comment is identical to that of a previous observation carried out for a different module, I have left it as is and this is testament to Dr Sullivan's overall approach; the fact that she exhibits a consistent way of working in this environment, regardless of level of study or different domain topic, is important because what is being modelled in this environment is also the professional behaviour expected of practical work in psychology, and this consistency across cohorts displays this to students.

Examples of good practice:

1. In such a dynamic environment where each group is at a different stages of their work, the preparation in terms of reviewing and providing critical feedback and consideration on their work at an individual level is to be commended as it allows groups to move forward at their pace rather than being restrained by the tutor..

2. The consistency of behaviour and professionalism modelled in a lab environment is excellent and is something that is easily forgotten – whilst there is much explicit learning going on in this module, the implicit learning of practices such as professionalism and ethics is one that is equally important and Dr Sullivan has done this extremely well.

Action points:

3. Relating to the point made about potential cohort meetings that go above individual group meetings, if this does not already take place it would be worth considering whether this is something that could be incorporated – it may ease the burden on you as tutor to be the font of all knowledge by outsourcing some of this to the (hopefully-occurring) problem-solving that the students are engaging

with on their projects, and would also potentially foster a greater sense of cohort cohesion.	
For Observee	
Write a short statement to address area of activity [A5]. Describe how this observation will enhance your practice	
Observer ..Paul B. Hutchings.....	Date 02/04/26
Overservee Katie Sullivan.....	Date 02/04/26
PGCert PARTICIPANTS	
On completion of the peer observation reports for each module, compose a short reflective paragraph on your observation experiences for inclusion in your portfolio along with the observation sheets.	

Teaching Observation Reflection 2

This reflection relates to a teaching observation undertaken by my Practice Advisor during a practical session for the Level 5 module 'Research in Action' (ECPS5016). The session took place within the Psychology labs and focused on supporting students working in small research teams at different stages of their projects. Reflecting on this observation has provided valuable insight into my teaching approach within a dynamic, student-led learning environment and has highlighted opportunities for further development (Schön, 1983; Brookfield, 2017) [A5, V3].

A key aspect of the observation was recognition of the adaptive preparation required for this module. Unlike traditional taught sessions, Research in Action demands a responsive approach, as student groups progress through different research competencies at varying speeds. The observer commented that I had prepared effectively to support each group based on their current needs, including providing guidance on ethics submissions, data collection methods and documentation. This feedback confirmed the importance of flexible preparation in enquiry-based learning, where the educator's role shifts from content delivery to responsive facilitation and troubleshooting (Healey & Jenkins, 2009) [A1, A2, K2].

During delivery, the observation commented on my ability to manage the challenges of teaching across multiple labs simultaneously. The observer positively mentioned my capacity to move between groups, respond to queries and ensure equitable attention to learners without allowing any single group to dominate my time. Maintaining this balance is essential in practice-based modules, and the feedback reassured me that my approach effectively supported student progress while encouraging autonomy (Race, 2014) [A2, A4]. Students appeared confident in working independently but also comfortable seeking guidance when needed, indicating that the learning environment was both supportive and appropriately challenging (Vygotsky, 1978) [V1].

The observer also identified the positive learning atmosphere within the session, commenting on the high levels of engagement. However, a constructive

comment was made regarding the potential isolation of groups when working independently. The possibility of incorporating whole-group discussions to share progress, challenges or solutions was raised. Reflecting on this, I recognise the value of creating structured opportunities for cross-group learning. Introducing short group-sharing could enhance cohesion, promote peer learning and reduce reliance on the tutor as the sole source of knowledge (Boud & Cohen, 2014). I intend to trial this approach in future sessions [K3, A2].

Assessment-related feedback confirmed that students demonstrated a clear understanding of how formative development throughout the module linked to the summative assessment of competencies (Black & William, 1998). This alignment reflects my intention to embed assessment literacy within teaching, ensuring students see assessment as integral to learning rather than an isolated endpoint. The observation reinforced the importance of making these links explicit and regularly revisiting assessment expectations as projects progress (Biggs & Tang, 2011) [A3, A2].

Finally, the observer commented on the consistency of professionalism across different modules and levels of study. This consistency is particularly important in laboratory environments, where implicit learning about ethics, professional conduct and collaborative working goes along with skill development. Reflecting on this feedback has reinforced my commitment to modelling professional standards, recognising the influence this has on students' developing research identities (Wisker, 2012) [V1, V4].

Overall, this observation confirmed the effectiveness of my student-centred approach within complex teaching contexts while offering constructive guidance for development. Engaging critically with this feedback supports my ongoing professional development and strengthens my capacity to design responsive, inclusive and collaborative learning experiences within research-based teaching (Kennedy, 2014) [A5, V3, K3].

Teaching Observation Form 3

PGCert tHE- OBSERVATION FORM -PSF 2023

Details of the Observation	
Observee	Stacey Coleman
Practice Advisor / Expert peer observer	Katie Sullivan
Date of the Observation	12/02/2026
Campus / Location	SA1 IQ campus, Swansea
Date, Time, Duration	12/02/2026 – 9:00am (1 hour)
Subject Speciality	Personality and Individual Differences
Type of activity	Taught session/Lecture
This observation will contribute to the participant's portfolio of evidence to satisfy the assessment of the PGCert tHE and should be undertaken by an experienced academic colleague. Observation by a fellow participant on the programme is not permissible as a means of authenticating practice.	

Teaching/Support preparation [A1: Design and plan learning activities/programmes] <i>i.e. Preparation, selection and organisation of content. Choice of teaching/learning methods.</i>
Comments The session demonstrated a high level of preparation and thoughtful organisation of content. Teaching materials were clearly structured, beginning with an overview of the Dark Triad before progressing logically through individual traits and the proposed D-Factor, supporting conceptual scaffolding. Content selection was well aligned with the session's learning outcomes, balancing theoretical foundations with contemporary research and applied examples. Teaching methods were planned to promote active engagement rather than passive listening through the inclusion of a structured case-study task that required students to apply theory to behavioural examples. Visual materials were clear and uncluttered and task instructions were explicit enough to enable independent group work. Overall,

preparation reflected strong alignment between content, teaching methods and learner engagement, indicative of effective planning and design.

Teaching [A2: Teach and/or support learning.]

i.e. Beginning class, introduction, continuity with other sessions, students' prior knowledge. Clarity of presentation. Pace. Attitude to the subject matter. Use of appropriate reinforcement. Ending the session – summary, future work etc. Technique and Aids: General apparatus – board, data projector, use of handouts. Was effective communication achieved? Was there good student–teacher rapport? Were the aims/outcomes achieved? Appropriateness of teaching/learning methods.

Comments

The session opened with a clear introduction that situated the topic within the wider module and activated students' prior knowledge. The lecturer made links to earlier learning on personality frameworks, supporting continuity across sessions. Content was delivered clearly and progressively, with complex concepts broken down into manageable sections and reinforced through examples.

The pace of delivery was appropriate to the material, maintaining engagement while allowing sufficient time for explanation. Teaching methods were well matched to the learning outcomes, combining direct instruction with an applied task that encouraged students to use theory in context. Slides supported, rather than duplicated, verbal explanation, contributing to effective communication. Rapport between lecturer and students was very positive, and the session achieved its stated aims by supporting students' understanding of dark personality traits through theory and application.

Effective Learning Environments [A4:Support and guide learners/V1 Respect individual learners/diverse groups of learners]

i.e General class atmosphere, level of participation, attention, and interest. Student attitude and ability to carry out classwork. Were learning problems identified and overcome? Awareness of individual needs. Attitude to students.

Comments

The session had a positive and inclusive learning environment, with students demonstrating attention and interest throughout. The lecturer's approachable and respectful manner contributed to a classroom atmosphere that supported engagement with potentially sensitive material.

Student participation was encouraged through collaborative case-study work, which enabled active application of theoretical concepts. Students were able to carry out the task effectively, indicating clear expectations and appropriate guidance. Where uncertainty arose, the lecturer responded with clarification and support, addressing

learning challenges without reducing student autonomy. Pacing and task design reflected awareness of diverse learner needs, contributing to an environment that supported confidence, understanding and respectful participation.
Assessment [A3: Assess and give learners feedback for learning] <i>i.e Formative/summative assessment examples , Question and answer technique. Other evaluation procedures, class management, instructions to students.</i>
Comments Formative assessment was embedded effectively throughout the session. The lecturer used targeted questioning and discussion to assess understanding of key concepts in real time, allowing misconceptions to be identified and addressed promptly. The case-study activity functioned as an informal assessment of learning, requiring students to apply theoretical knowledge rather than recall definitions.
Core Knowledge • K1 - how learners learn, generally and within specific subjects • K2 - approaches to teaching and/or supporting learning, appropriate for subjects and level of study • K3 - critical evaluation as a basis for effective practice • K4 - appropriate use of digital and/or other technologies, and resources for learning • K5 - requirements for quality assurance and enhancement, and their implications for practice
Comments The session demonstrated a strong understanding of how students learn in Psychology, with concepts introduced progressively and supported through applied examples (K1). Teaching approaches were appropriate to the subject and level of study, combining structured explanation with active application (K2). Critical evaluation of teaching effectiveness was evident through responsive questioning and adaptive clarification (K3). Digital and visual resources were used appropriately to support learning without cognitive overload (K4). The session aligned clearly with module learning outcomes and broader programme expectations, supporting consistency and quality enhancement in practice (K5).
Professional values • V1 Respect for individual learners/ Diverse groups of learners. • V2 Promote engagement and learning and equity of opportunity for all to reach their potential.

• V3 Use scholarship, Research or professional learning? All other evidence informed approaches as a basis of effective practice. • V4 Respond to the wider context in which higher education operates, recognising implications for practice. • V5 Collaborate with others to enhance practice.
Comments The lecturer demonstrated respect for individual learners through inclusive delivery and supportive interaction (V1), while promoting engagement and equitable participation through structured activities (V2). Teaching was grounded in established psychological theory and current research, reflecting evidence-informed practice (V3). Content was contextualised within wider ethical and disciplinary considerations relevant to higher education (V4). Engagement with peer observation and reflective feedback reflects a collaborative approach to enhancing practice (V5).
Examples of good practice: • Clear and logically sequenced presentation of complex psychological theory. • Effective use of applied activities to reinforce understanding and engagement. • Confident, enthusiastic delivery supporting positive student-teacher rapport. Action points: • Introduce a short consolidation or check-in point to further support monitoring of understanding. • Explore opportunities to increase peer discussion or feedback during activities. • Continue to develop formative questioning strategies to deepen conceptual engagement.
For Observee Write a short statement to address area of activity [A5]. Describe how this observation will enhance your practice
Observer Katie Sullivan..... Date 16/02/2026 Overservee S. L. Coleman Date 25.02.26 PGCert PARTICIPANTS On completion of the peer observation reports for each module, compose a short reflective paragraph on your observation experiences for inclusion in your portfolio along with the observation sheets.

Teaching Observation Reflection 3

This reflection considers feedback received following my teaching observation of a lecture session focused on the Dark Triad and related constructs within a 'Personality and Individual Differences module'. Engaging with this observation has provided a valuable opportunity to critically evaluate my teaching practice, particularly in relation to session design, learner engagement, and the creation of an inclusive learning environment when addressing complex and potentially sensitive psychological material (Schön, 1983; Brookfield, 2017) [K3].

One of the key strengths I noticed through this observation was the level of preparation underpinning the session. The structure of the lecture was deliberately designed to scaffold learning, beginning with accessible definitions before moving towards more integrative concepts such as the proposed 'D Factor' [A2, A4, K1, K2]. Reflecting on this reinforced the value of content order in supporting student understanding, particularly when introducing theoretical content. It was clear to see that careful planning enables students to build conceptual confidence before engaging with more challenging tasks (Biggs & Tang, 2011) [A1].

During delivery, the explanations were clear and well-paced, and that theoretical points were reinforced effectively through examples and discussion. Reflecting on this, I recognise that using concrete examples plays an important role in helping students relate theoretical constructs to behaviour (Race, 2020) [A2, K2]. Additionally, positive rapport was evident throughout, which prompted me to reflect on how enthusiasm for subject matter and an approachable teaching style contribute to student engagement. It was clear that the balance between explanation and interaction supported student focus without overloading learners with information [K1, K2].

A particularly valuable aspect of the observation related to the learning environment. I witnessed that students appeared comfortable engaging with the material, which is especially important given the morally and socially sensitive nature of topics such as manipulation, psychopathy and moral disengagement. Reflecting

on this reinforced the importance of establishing respectful norms and inclusive language so that students feel able to participate meaningfully without discomfort or judgement. This is an aspect of my practice I intend to continue developing, particularly with my own modules that involve potentially sensitive topic areas (Edmondson, 1999) [A1, A2, A4].

I also reflected on constructive feedback for further development. While the case-study activity supported application and participation, I recommended that incorporating an additional short check-in or consolidation point during the session could further support understanding [A3]. Reflecting critically on this, I recognise that even when a session feels well-paced, embedding deliberate moments for clarification can allow misconceptions to be addressed before they become rooted (Black & William, 1998). In future sessions, I plan to introduce brief formative questions mid-way through content-heavy lectures to support students in communicating their understanding and to guide my teaching more swiftly [A3, V2].

Overall, this observation reinforced the importance of balancing preparation, clarity and responsiveness within teaching practice. Engaging critically with the feedback has strengthened my awareness of how design decisions, delivery style and learning environment interact to shape student experience. The observation process itself has supported my ongoing professional development by encouraging reflective practice within teaching, and it has highlighted specific strategies that I can carry forward into future teaching to further enhance learning and engagement (Kennedy, 2014) [K3, A5].

Continuous Professional Development: Springboard Development Programme

My engagement with the 'Springboard Development Programme' so far has been limited to the half way point of the course, but even at this early point I am beginning to see how it is contributing to my personal and professional growth. Springboard is a development programme designed to support women in building confidence, clarifying strengths and goals, and engaging in structured self-reflection [V3, A2]. Although I have not yet completed the full programme, the early workshops and materials have already encouraged me to think differently about how I approach my teaching practice and how I support learners (Schön, 1983; Kennedy, 2014).

During the initial session and first workshop, I was introduced to the Springboard workbook, which is described as "full of information, examples, self-reflection prompts" and intended to be a long-term tool for development. Working through the early chapters prompted me to consider my academic career and reflect on what I value, what motivates me and where I would like to grow (Moon, 2004; Brookfield, 2017). This has been useful in evaluating aspects of my teaching, particularly how I communicate expectations to students and how I create space for them to reflect on their own development [K3, V3].

One of the most impactful aspects of the programme so far has been the opportunity to connect with other women across the university. Springboard emphasises the importance of effective networks, stating how sharing experiences can open new possibilities and provide support for future development. Even within the first workshop, hearing colleagues speak openly about confidence, decision making and work-life balance resonated deeply with me. These early conversations emphasised the importance of supportive peer environments and prompted me to be more intentional about facilitating peer support and collaboration among my students [A4, V3] (Vygotsky, 1978).

Although I have only attended the first two in person workshops, I can already see how the themes of confidence, assertiveness and positive self-presentation are

beginning to influence my teaching style. The early exercises helped me identify instances where I tend to minimise my expertise or rush through explanations. This awareness has supported me in making small but meaningful adjustments; taking more time to pause, modelling confidence when addressing challenging topics, and encouraging students to communicate their strengths [A2]. These changes reflect my early attempts to apply programme insights to my teaching, even before completing the full course (Ashwin et al., 2015; Biggs & Tang, 2011). Looking ahead, I anticipate that the upcoming sessions, particularly those involving role model speakers, networking activities and further reflective work, will deepen this development. I hope that as the programme continues, I will gain a stronger sense of clarity about my long term academic goals and how to align my teaching, research and professional identity more intentionally (Megginson & Whitaker, 2007) [V3].

In summary, although I am only at the beginning of the Springboard journey, the programme has already encouraged important early reflections on my teaching practice and professional growth. It has prompted me to slow down, evaluate my strengths, and start making purposeful adjustments in how I support learners [A2, A4]. I anticipate that the remaining workshops will further strengthen my confidence.

Continuous Professional Development: safeTALK Course

Participating in the safeTALK training was an important and impactful CPD experience; it has influenced how I think about supporting students, responding to distress and creating safer learning environments (Maynard et al., 2019; Advance HE, 2018; NEA, 2023). The training is designed for people with no prior knowledge or experience in suicide prevention and focuses on learning to recognise signs that someone may be having thoughts of suicide and taking a few immediate steps to keep them safe until professional help can be accessed. This emphasis on early recognition, calm intervention and signposting to support aligns strongly with my role as a lecturer, particularly in the pastoral/supportive aspect of teaching [V3, A2].

One of the key messages I took from safeTALK was the importance of noticing subtle indicators of distress. It encouraged attention not only to overt statements but also to subtle changes in behaviour, engagement or affect. Although I am not a mental health professional, safeTALK gave me a better understanding of what may signal risk, and this has increased my confidence in trusting my instincts and checking in with students when something feels “off” [A4] (Rickwood et al., 2007).

A second early impact of the training was the reframing of talking openly about suicide. Before attending safeTALK, I held the common misconception that bringing the topic up might cause distress or make things worse. The course challenged this by making clear that asking directly and compassionately about suicide can actually reduce risk, not increase it (Dazzi et al., 2014). This has reshaped how I understand my responsibilities as an educator, increasing my confidence to respond appropriately without fear of saying the wrong thing [K3]. The training emphasised that the goal is not to fix the problem or provide therapy, but to listen, acknowledge and ensure the student reaches appropriate professional support. This aligns with my role in supporting learners [A4].

safeTALK also encouraged critical reflection on the boundaries and limitations of my role. The course clearly separated recognition and safe response from full scale intervention, prompting critical evaluation of my current practice (Brookfield, 2017). I realised that although I frequently signpost students to wellbeing services, I have sometimes hesitated to ask more direct questions or probe further into their emotional state. safeTALK allowed me to see that, with the right approach, I can do this ethically and sensitively. This has led me to adopt a more proactive approach when supporting students who show signs of distress [K3, A2].

Finally, even at this early stage, safeTALK has reinforced my commitment to creating open, supportive environments within my teaching. I am now more intentional about reminding students of support, normalising help seeking and creating space to reflect on wellbeing (Edmondson, 1999; Universities UK, 2020). I anticipate that the longer term impact of the course will involve increasing my confidence, improving my ability to respond in real time and strengthening the sense of safety in my classroom [A4, A2].

Overall, safeTALK has provided a strong initial foundation for recognising and responding to suicidal distress, and I am already integrating its principles into my teaching practice. As I gain more experience applying these skills, I expect my competence in supporting learners to deepen further [V3].

Continuous Professional Development: Completing the PG2 Research Ethics Application Training

The 'Completing the PG2 Research Ethics Application' training was a highly relevant CPD activity that has directly informed my professional practice as a lecturer, research supervisor and Chair of the School Research Ethics Committee (SREC). The session provided a step-by-step guide to the ethics review process and the requirements for ethical approval, designed specifically for supervisors of research students. Although I am already familiar with the ethics process through my committee role, this training offered a valuable opportunity to standardise and critically evaluate my understanding of ethics from both supervisory and teaching perspectives (Schön, 1983; British Educational Research Association, 2018) [V3, A2].

One of the benefits of the training was the opportunity to engage with the ethics application process from the position of a supervisor rather than solely as an reviewer/approver. Working through the PG2 form in a structured way highlighted areas where students commonly experience difficulty, including writing risk mitigations, demonstrating informed consent and appropriately addressing data protection. This has prompted me to reflect critically on how I currently teach research ethics within modules and how effectively I prepare students for ethical decision-making (Israel & Hay, 2006; Israel & Hay, 2012; Biggs & Tang, 2011) [K3]. As a result, I have begun to adapt my teaching materials to place clearer emphasis on the rationale behind ethics, rather than treating them as procedural barriers to be completed [A2].

The training has also influenced how I support and guide dissertation students during supervision. Previously, ethics guidance often occurred reactively, in response to draft applications. Following the session, I am now adopting a more proactive approach, introducing ethical thinking earlier in the process. For example, I now encourage students to consider ethical risks at the proposal stage and explicitly link these to methodological choices. This supports students in developing ethical sensitivity alongside methodological competence (Wisker, 2012). In this way, the

CPD has directly informed my approach to supporting learners and facilitating ethical research practice [A4].

Additionally, critical evaluation was an important feature of this CPD. Despite my experience chairing SREC, the training prompted me to reconsider assumptions I held about student understanding of ethics requirements (Brookfield, 2017; Moon, 2004). Reflecting on the clarity and language of the PG2 form led me to recognise where my expectations of students may exceed what they have been explicitly taught. This insight has resulted in changes to how I frame ethics discussions in taught sessions and supervision meetings, including the use of examples and anonymised excerpts from strong applications [K3, V3].

The training also reinforced the importance of consistency and transparency across ethics supervision and review. As Chair, this CPD will inform how I advise committee members and supervisors, helping to ensure that feedback to students is constructive and supportive (UK Research Integrity Office, 2020). It has strengthened my ability to act as a bridge between institutional requirements and student learning [A2, A4].

In summary, the training has contributed meaningfully to my ongoing professional development [V3]. It has informed my teaching practice, enhanced my supervisory approach, and prompted critical reflection on how ethics is taught and supported within Psychology (Schön, 1983; Kennedy, 2014). By integrating insights from this CPD into both teaching and ethics leadership roles, I am better placed to support students in conducting ethically sound, reflective and responsible research.

Teaching Hours Log



PG Cert tHE--TEACHING LOG

Student name : Katie Sullivan

Student Number: 1402498

Date	Session Details (Teaching/Tutorials/Support?)	No of Hours	Practice Advisor's Signature
01/10/2025	Teaching (ECPS6022)	3	Paul B. Hutchings
08/10/2025	Teaching (ECPS6022)	3	Paul B. Hutchings
15/10/2025	Teaching (ECPS6022)	3	Paul B. Hutchings
22/10/2025	Teaching (ECPS6022)	3	Paul B. Hutchings
05/11/2025	Teaching (ECPS6022)	3	Paul B. Hutchings
12/11/2025	Teaching (ECPS6022)	3	Paul B. Hutchings
19/11/2025	Teaching (ECPS6022)	3	Paul B. Hutchings
26/11/2025	Teaching (ECPS6022)	3	Paul B. Hutchings
03/12/2025	Teaching (ECPS6022)	3	Paul B. Hutchings
10/12/2025	Teaching (ECPS6022)	3	Paul B. Hutchings
28/01/2026	Teaching (ECPS5016)	3	Paul B. Hutchings
04/02/2026	Teaching (ECPS5016)	3	Paul B. Hutchings
11/02/2026	Teaching (ECPS5016)	3	Paul B. Hutchings
25/02/2026	Teaching (ECPS5016)	3	Paul B. Hutchings
04/03/2026	Teaching (ECPS5016)	3	Paul B. Hutchings
11/03/2026	Teaching (ECPS5016)	3	Paul B. Hutchings
18/03/2026	Teaching (ECPS5016)	3	Paul B. Hutchings
25/03/2026	Teaching (ECPS5016)	3	Paul B. Hutchings
		Total Hours = 54	Paul B. Hutchings

Student's signature...Katie Sullivan.....

Practice Advisor's signature Paul B. Hutchings.....

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