

Written Reflection and Peer Review

Reflection has played a large part in the design of my curriculum and I have been referring to Gibb's model (1988) to characterise this. The basis of the curriculum is drawn from lesson plans and course materials that I had already produced for one of my placements, which gave me the benefit of having presented the course beforehand (Avis, 2019, chapter 9). This provided the advantage of being able to draw on reflection in action, the reflective accounts written directly after the sessions, and the opportunity to consider further later reflection with analysis, to draw conclusions, that would go on to inform and prime the curriculum (Frost, 1997).

The opportunity to write a curriculum has been extremely useful for me, certainly for articulating the sessions I have been conducting on my placement into a comprehensive programme. I found that working to a formula was very effective in ensuring that all aspects of the curriculum were addressed, and that they complimented each other (Marshall, 2020).

Firstly, by providing an overview and context, I was able to focus attention on the gaps I had identified in fine art education, and from this I was able to compose the rationale to justify the curriculum logically. By going beyond the aims and objectives of individual sessions illustrated the wider scope of the curriculum, and what it was attempting to encompass and achieve overall.

Quality assurance is vital in education, and this can be shaped by applying SMART goals (Doran, 1981) and professional standards (Race, 2007). The assignment has provided the platform for me to accomplish a detailed scheme of work, and that provides the ability to visualise the course at a glance. This has to be comprehensive enough for another tutor to manage the course, which is actually very useful for identifying any flaws or omissions.

Initial, formative and summative assessment, either formal or more informal also makes up another required element of any teaching strategy (Race, 2023). Generating a curriculum has given me the confidence to build various assessment strategies into the programme (Gravells, 2011). Other considerations that were relevant include compiling the reading lists and the scrutiny of the skills, knowledge and benefits for learners completing the curriculum.

The peer review process offers an opportunity for deeper reflection. Through reading my peers' assignments I could certainly gauge my own efforts more clearly. The curriculums I reviewed were all outside of my field but the content was fairly interesting nevertheless. In hindsight I was probably quite harsh in my reviews, but I would not have expected anything less in return, after all one learns more from mistakes. I did not think that the aim of a peer review should be celebratory or at worse patronising, I expected it to be highly critical and

by that means constructive. I would have hoped to glean more from my peers' curriculums, perhaps something I might have missed in my own curriculum, but I actually found them a little disappointing. Maybe my expectations were set too high, or maybe it is because I am so dedicated to my field so much and tend to be quite meticulous about what I do.

Having a fresh set of eyes on any work I have produced can often be very beneficial. It is encouraging to have your work confirmed by peers but at the same time they might possibly uncover some phenomena that I may not have considered. There were some proposals that I agreed with and others I disagreed with.

Included in the first set of reviews concerning the justification, one peer review suggested that there was limited data to support the demand for traditional methods of fine art practice, which is surprising as there are four relevant sources in the research links at the end of the document. The peer also recommends that the curriculum could benefit from a wider and younger demographic, I do agree, and the curriculum is designed as adaptable to be simplified or extended as appropriate. I do intend to deliver to either foundation or BA1 students another version at some point. However I do think that oil painting as a technique is in itself advanced and is not really suited to pre 16 learners. The other two peer reviews agreed with the justification and target audience.

All reviews were in consensus regarding the appropriate aims and objectives and their suitability of the topic for the target group. However one review did propose that the aims might be expanded to include pinpointed goals in relation to careers. The aims and objectives do refer to transferable skills and the building of a portfolio which I would have thought sufficient at this level of enquiry. The same peer recommended that 'digital art tools and methods' be integrated into the curriculum to 'expand its relevance in current creative practices'. The point of the curriculum is to bring traditional techniques into a contemporary context, but I do not think it is a good idea to simply use any tech for its own sake. I do make presentations on PowerPoint, record time lapse films of demonstrations, this is indicated in the overview and context and evidenced in both the lesson plans and course materials. I do suggest the use of iphones for example, to take progress photos and I could write this into the curriculum, but I am not sure it is actually that important.

Concerning the suitability of the structure for the needs of the subject and cohort the reviews were mixed. One peer put forward that there was the need for more interactive tools and the use of online galleries and forums. I would counter this by pointing out that nothing other than charcoal behaves like oil paint and it has to be experienced in practice and seen in the first person to be fully appreciated, looking at pixels is no substitute (Gardner, 1993). Concerning feedback forums I have had to research this to understand where they might fit in. All I can surmise is that some learning groups do set up WhatsApp groups to share information, but these can sometimes be counter productive producing misinformation and confusion. Another peer proposed that the curriculum may be too advanced for those new to art, I do agree that this is not really an entry level class. Having

already tested the course on my placement I can confirm that although I have a very low drop out rate, this can always be addressed and I always allow for differentiation and inclusion.

Peers were all in accord concerning adequate quality control, there was just a suggestion that facilitating updates and feedback from educational bodies could be included to improve performance, I will look into this.

The peer reviews of the scheme of work were mainly in assent, although there were some issues to discuss. Firstly it was suggested that there should be more emphasis on contemporary art trends. To address this I could add to the reading list some more of the books that I do bring in to every session, as I do include material from contemporary and extant artists. Secondly it was argued that the scheme of work was too wordy. I did try to be as economical as possible, while giving a potential supply tutor enough information to conduct the course, as per the remit of a scheme of work. Thirdly there was the proposal to build in some time to allow for any unexpected difficulties encountered. Usually this is addressed during the practical applications as I move about the room microteaching, plus there is a session entirely dedicated to catch up and analysis in the scheme of work.

The value of writing a curriculum and participating in the peer review process has to be one of the most valuable elements of the PCET course, and it has served to solidify and confirm the course for me. The curriculum assignment brought together most of the elements covered during the PCET course and it suited my approach very well. I had been diligent in my placements; completing lesson plans and thorough course materials. This paid off, as I had enough subject matter to begin the curriculum relatively easily. I had also been fortunate enough to have been able to teach exactly what I wanted to, which helped enormously.

This assignment combined with details of my action research project has formed part of the substance for my PhD proposal. I do intend to extend the curriculum and develop further curricula to improve my employability prospects. I have already had some promising interest, as the gaps identified and the potential phenomena that they may stimulate could offer the possibility to tap into funding streams.

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