# Note to Marker

*I arranged for both my teaching observations to take place on the same day, and thus have used the same form for both my peer and tutor observations. Lindsay Jordan was present for an hour in the morning session (when students had just finished their warm-up tasks and were engaging with a lecture), and Peony Gent was present for the last hour of the session (when students were making mono-prints).*

# Record of Observation or Review of Teaching Practice

Session/artefact to be observed/reviewed: Day 3 of CSM Short Course: Computer-free Graphic Design Beginners short course

Size of student group: 7 students

Observer(s): Lindsay Jordan (Tutor) and Peony Gent (Peer)

Observee: Eilis Searson

##### Note: This record is solely for exchanging developmental feedback between colleagues. Its reflective aspect informs PgCert and Fellowship assessment, but it is not an official evaluation of teaching and is not intended for other internal or legal applications such as probation or disciplinary action.

Part OneObservee to complete in brief and send to observer prior to the observation or review:

What is the context of this session/artefact within the curriculum?

This session is day 3 of a 5 day short course, which aims to prime students with techniques, modes of thinking, looking at and making graphic design, without a computer!

Some of the students are mature/professional students, taking time out from work to learn a new skill. Some of the students have not been to University yet, and are taking the course to learn new skills and consider their future in education. Some of the students are already in Higher Education, using the Spring Break to broaden their skillset to further support their studies.

On day 1 the students received an introduction to graphic design principles and tools, tested out talking about design, then utilized these skills and tools to create portraits and badge designs.

On day 2 the students went deeper into analyzing and distilling imagery, using their own photographs and objects to respond to and make drawings and designs.

The teaching observation will take place on day 3 of the course, where students will go deeper with using typography, using their own writing, existing typefaces and collage to attempt to create meaning through layout skills. They will also test out printmaking!

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

I met this group on day 1 of the short course, working with them between 10AM—4PM. My co-tutor met with the students for day 2 of the short course. So, I have worked with these students for only 6 hours so far!

I am the leader of this short course (I have written/directed the content of all days on the short course, in consultation with my co-lecturer), and I am delivering this content in collaboration with a co-lecturer from LCC, Jamie She. I deliver 3 days of the 5 day short course, and Jamie delivers 2.

What are the intended or expected learning outcomes?

This course is not assessed, however, I hope the session will cover the following learning outcomes:

KNOWLEDGE: Attempt to practice a foundational understanding of the practices and knowledge base of Graphic Design & typographic layout

PROCESS: Utilise experimentation and iteration in the development of final outcomes. Use written or verbal analysis to articulate and reflect upon progress and skills development.

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

Today students will make:

* Multiple collages with letters and drawing, attempting to convey meaning through layout.
* Thumbnail sketches, laying out their own writing by utilizing typographic layout skills.
* A larger collage, putting their thumbnail designs into practice.
* A mono-print of their final design (they can make multiples of these if they feel confident to!)

Are there potential difficulties or specific areas of concern?

There are potential difficulties in the varying levels of experience and points of reference within the student cohort. I will attempt to alleviate this through creating flexibility within tasks, suggesting faster students can attempt iterations in their process, and suggesting students who are struggling to keep up with the timings can perhaps only tackle a reduced set of the tasks whilst still meeting the same learning outcomes. I will also attempt to alleviate this through trying to make the learning environment as comfortable and open as possible.

There are also potential difficulties relating to language, as many of the students do not use English or Latin characters as their first language, and therefore learning typographic rules in an additional language can feel challenging and uncomfortable. I will attempt to be flexible with the use of pre-printed collage materials in English, and encourage drawing can play a role in this process for those who would prefer to design using none latin characters. I will also attempt to alleviate this through ensuring there is time for questions and for any information to be repeated or explained in a different way.

How will students be informed of the observation/review?

Students agreed to an observer from a Japanese University joining the class on day 1 of the course, as the observer wanted to document the experience for two of her study abroad students. The students, observer and I had an open discussion about what it meant to have an observer in the room, and came to the decision with confidence. Students signed a sheet on this day agreeing to observers in the classroom. I will let them know about Lindsay and Peony’s presence when they enter the room and explain the reason why I am being observed!

What would you particularly like feedback on?

It would be wonderful to get feedback on the challenges mentioned above. I’d be very interested to hear about the observers’ own methodologies with these challenges, especially Lindsay’s, as I’m sure that in the PGCert the student cohort contains varying levels and cultural points of reference.

It would also be wonderful to get feedback on the tone and feeling of the session — I always attempt to create a relaxed and comfortable environment, and favour colloquial language and explanation when attempting to de-bunk complex ideas or knowledge… However! Sometimes I worry about this — would students benefit from a more authoritative voice? It would be great to get your thoughts on this.

How will feedback be exchanged?

I’d be very happy to go with your preference on whether they would like to exchange feedback in written or verbal form.

I have arranged for a break after the first hour of the session — I’d be happy to exchange feedback verbally in this time, or after the session. However, if something changes (a student needs support in the break, the first hour overruns for some reason, etc) I’d be totally happy to exchange the feedback in writing.

## Part Two (Peony’s [peer] reflections)

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

* This is a session plan for a sensitive and nuanced workshop, that is broken down into manageable tasks in achievable time slots.
* The workshop does well to blend practical tasks and a theoretical basis – introducing some basic theories of typographic rules for the students and providing references to those who may wish to research into the topic further. Some of these references were offered out loud, rather than on the slides themselves. It could be a good idea to include a bibliography or further reading slide within the presentation to aid accessibility.
* The workshop is also well scaffolded to aid students of varying levels – it’s encouraging that there are few rules when it comes to the design process of the making tasks, despite the lecture content itself being quite rigid in terms of typographic rules for students who wish to employ them.
* An inclusion of a ‘definitions’ section could be advisable for supporting students unfamiliar with the provided terms.
* Some of the discussions and suggestions made during the making process were very interesting – could there be space within the workshop for the students to discuss and document these in more detail? The end of the session was punctuated by the need to clean the monoprinting stations, and by celebrating one another’s work (which was lovely to see), but perhaps planning for a more formal ‘de-brief’ section of the session could allow for the knowledge more casually shared to be formalised.
* On the challenges you have identified – language barriers felt well managed, and it was encouraging to see that the student who wanted to include French accents on their typographic poster embraced this as a design/drawing challenge to render the accents themselves. You employ a welcoming and open tone that was appreciated and understood by all. I did not feel a ‘lack of authority’ in the session, though as previously mentioned, perhaps formalising the ending of the session could aid you in this challenge, not changing your mode of social exchange with the students.

## Part Three

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

I am very grateful for Peony’s feedback, which is generous and constructive.

I agree entirely that the presentation slides could benefit from a more formal bibliography — the observed session is one that I have run a few times, and I actually find myself anecdotally referencing John Hochuli’s *Detail in Typography* and Herbert Spencer’s *The Visible Word* in almost every instance of delivery. It’s completely bonkers that I haven’t since updated the slides and included them — on some level, I think I was hoping that a spontaneous tangential delivery of these references (I normally approach students on an individual basis to go through these sources) would help to aid engagement and concentration… however, through Peony’s feedback I can see that, though there is merit in this informal mode of delivery, there are issues with accessibility of information and re-visiting this knowledge after a session.

During Lindsay’s observation, I became aware the students might not have understood a piece of terminology I had been using throughout the lecture (“the baseline”) and I discussed the definition of this term with the students in person. Again, although this mode of delivery felt like a successful piece of communication with the moment, it is remiss of me not to include a glossary of terms within the slides themselves for the students to refer back to outside of the classroom.

I will update my slides and try to plan for better accessibility alongside dialogic delivery in the future.

It was encouraging to read that Peony felt the multi-lingual challenges in relation to the English, Latin alphabet turned out to be a positive and autonomous opportunity for creation amongst the students. I too observed this as a strength in the session, but following on from Peony’s prior advise on updating my slides, I wonder if there could be room to build this element of the task into a slides themselves, also.

Thank you so much to Peony and Lindsay for their time — being observed also helped me observe myself! There is lots to improve, but my confidence in attempting to make these improvements is growing.