# Record of Observation or Review of Teaching Practice

Session/artefact to be observed/reviewed:  ‘Unit 4 Methodology Workshop: Comics’

Size of student group: 30-45

Observer: eilis searson

Observee: Peony Gent

##### 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?

* Within this Unit students are at the stage of writing a project proposal, inspired by a theme or idea they discovered during the previous unit.
* This workshop I am leading is part of a set of ‘methodology workshops’ where students try out a series of new mediums and methods of working.
* The idea is that these new mediums/methods may inspire a new line of enquiry or create new potential for their future project. I was briefed by the Unit Leader to create a workshop that allowed for exploration of a new form, whilst also letting students apply that form to their personal unique project idea/theme.

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

I have been working with this year since September 2023, as one of their primary tutors for the Year 1 students.

What are the intended or expected learning outcomes?

* Students will build knowledge around different comic genres and experiment with new formats of comic making to generate potential ideas for their Unit 4 project proposals.

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

* Students will look at examples of a variety ways they can use the comics form:
* Comics as fictional storytelling
* Comics as reportage
* Comics as autobiography
* Comics as visual essay
* Comics as poetry
* Students will generate ideas for each of these comic forms relating to Unit 4 theme.
* Students will look at 3 different comic formats that require no binding materials.
* Students will make at least two rough versions of a comic using one of those templates.

Are there potential difficulties or specific areas of concern?

* There is a potential that students may not be sure of their Unit 4 theme yet, and therefore find it difficult to generate content for their comic roughs
* The knowledge base about comics may differ widely for students – the introductory short ‘lecture’ on different comic genres may therefore feel unnecessary or ‘basic’ to some.
* Some students have previously expressed dislike for our workshops containing too many short and quick exercises – which this workshop contains some element of.

How will students be informed of the observation/review?

* This review will happen remotely through sharing of a lesson plan and presentation slides.

What would you particularly like feedback on?

* Clarity – I always find it useful to hear feedback on whether my sessions have clear instructions that can be easily followed.
* Pace – my desire for clarity also means I sometimes fear the pace of my workshops is too ‘slow’, as I feel I can spend too much time going over simple concepts to ensure all understand. Feedback on this would be appreciated!
* The ‘lecture’ element – could there have been a more engaging way of introducing these different comics genres to students without it being so didactic?

How will feedback be exchanged?

* On this form or in person if a time can be arranged post-session.

## Part Two

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

Looking at the lesson plan and presentation slides for this session, I am struck by how dynamic and exciting the approach to engagement is.

I love the idea of briefing a warm-up task, in a self-contained slide, as students are entering the room. In my own teaching practice I always struggle to know what to do with the inevitability of a large amount of latecomers (when teaching large cohorts) and think that this is an excellent solution. The instruction on the slide was made extra clear by the example drawing made by Peony — so in answer to her request for feedback on clarity, in this instance, I think it couldn’t have been better.

As a neurodiverse person, occasionally I found myself struggling with the amount of text on many of the slides, which felt like a lot to digest… however, I can see the benefit of including this wealth of information on a slide for students to revisit the content outside of the session. Perhaps, if clarity is of importance to Peony, finding a balance between these two ideas could be useful — shorter, digestible text slides defining key principles, followed by more detailed textual slides defining further contexts?

I think the pacing of the session plan was completely fair, and that it’s useful for even the most advanced students to be patient with a ‘slower’, clarified and considered approach to concreting their own knowledge. I would advise Peony to explicate the value of this to her more advanced students if she feels there is further need to alleviate/explain this challenge to her more varied cohorts.

In addressing the challenge of ideation for students approaching a workshop at the beginning of a unit, I thought the warmup task was a really useful prompt in overcoming this barrier (by suggesting to students that they use themselves as the driving force for a character design). Perhaps more prompts/suggestions of subject matter/content of this nature as the tasks develop in complexity could still be useful — even if made non-compulsory, intended only for students who need something extra to bounce off.

I really liked the way the complexity and timings of the tasks intensified as the session went on — and it felt good that after the potentially tiring quick fire drawings tasks (I’m only assuming that this is why students have reported an issue with fast drawing tasks!) that the form of the session switches into a more didactic lecture for a moment, before introducing the more time intensive making tasks. If there is a desire to make the lectures more dialectic, I have found Kimberly Tanner’s *Think-Pair-Share* methodology a useful tool in introducing students’ voices into the lecture format: <https://www.ibiology.org/professional-development/think-pair-share/> (A bit cheesy though, apologies!)

Amazing lesson Peony, nice one.