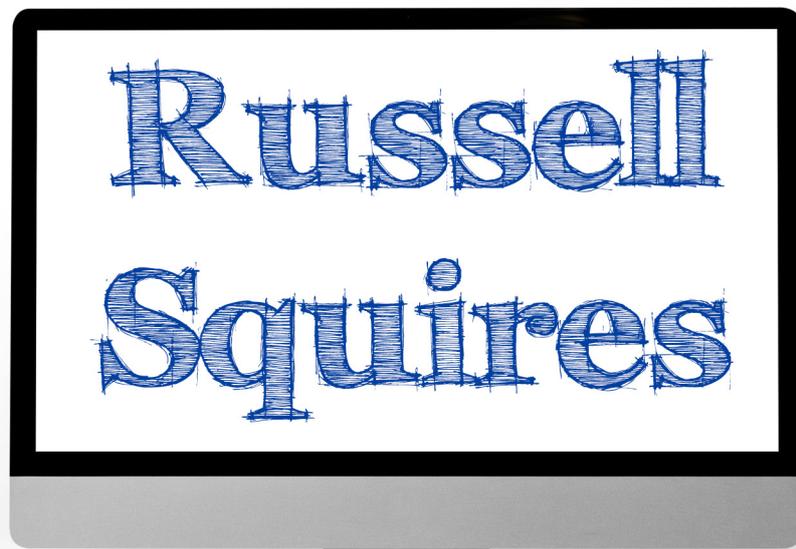


Teaching in a Specialist area

UET 12



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Learning Outcome 01.

A. My overall practice is concerned with Art, Design & Media, with my specialism being photography and graphic design. In my current role as a lecturer in a further educational institute, it is my responsibility to deliver a diverse and rich curriculum to Post-16 learners. The key aims of education and training in my specialist area is to equip the learners with a grounding in graphic design and photography, develop their visual language, promote Equality & Diversity and prepare them for progression into either higher education or other vocational pathways.

The former State for Schools Minister Nick Gibb, stated in a speech at the 2015 Education Reform Summit; *'Education is the engine of our economy, it is the foundation of our culture, and it's an essential preparation for adult life.'*¹ The objectives stated by Gibb are paramount in ensuring that learners enter adulthood, with a range of social and cultural skills to enable them to pursue an enriching and respectful pathway. It is not about teaching a subject specialism, but it is about instilling cognitive skills that will foster growth and overcome the challenges of our ever-changing social landscape.

B. However, pursuing a career in the creative industries, is what my learners are inevitably seeking. Initiating an academic pathway to achieve this, has been the most common route, where learners will progress through Post-16 education via college or sixth form and into higher education. This inevitably results in the learner obtaining a BA(Hons) degree in their specialty, with hopes of developing the required skills and portfolio to secure a job or initiate a self-employed practice.

To support this academic pathway and to ensure that my learners needs and requirements are met, I need to be aware of not only HE requirements, but also industry standards and trends. This is achieved through CPD opportunities and also keeping an active research and practice presence within HE and industry. Through maintaining a presence within industry, I am able to observe professional influences, which can then be developed and designed into the FE curriculum.

An initial impact on HE progression, was the Browne Report² of 2010, which lifted the cap on the £3,000 per year tuition fees. This enabled universities to set their own fees up to £9,000 per year; once initiated in 2012 there was an initial drop of 40,000 applicants³. However, this did not indicate a trend and university applications have steadily risen. Yet an academic pathway is not the only route in pursuing a creative career; apprenticeships are on the rise and as part of the Lord Sainsbury's Post-16 Skills Plan⁴, the new technical option bridging routes, could allow apprentices to continue learning through to university and gain a full bachelor's degree.

¹ GOV.UK. (2015). *The purpose of education*

² Browne, Lord J. (2010) *Securing a sustainable future for higher education*. GOV.UK.

³ Coughlan, S. BBC News. (2015). *Did £9,000 fees cut applications?*

⁴ Sainsbury, Lord D. (2016). *Post-16 Skills Plan*. Department for Education

Learning Outcome 02.

A. The primary qualification that is offered at L3 within the creative arts, is a two-year Extended Diploma; this comprises of a first-year Subsidiary Diploma, followed by a second-year Extended Diploma. If they choose, learners can complete the first year and still graduate with a diploma, which depending on the awarding body, they could still achieve 84 UCAS points to apply for university. A two-year program is ideal in examining a learners practice and creative identity, as it allows more time for exploration and personal development. However, if a Post-16 learner has established a strong identity, they could undertake a one-year BTEC L3 Foundation in Art & Design. Pearson's⁵ offers a number of BTEC Specialist qualifications, which are also recognised as the knowledge components of Apprenticeships Frameworks.

B. In my own specialist area, I deliver a two-year Level 3 Diploma & Extended Diploma in Art & Design; the awarding body for this is the University of the Arts London (UAL).⁶ To achieve the full extended diploma, learners are required to undertake nine units in the first year and four units in the second. These units are assessment based, set against specific learning objectives and assessment criteria. Art & Design is the overall specification title, yet the content itself is generic and adaptable, where each unit can be applied to the various specialist pathways. Currently I am delivering this course, to both first and second year diploma & extended diploma learners across Photography and Graphic Design.

C. A visual arts course, implies that the preferred teaching style would be visual; now whilst this is largely accepted, it has been evidenced through initial assessment events, that learners exhibit a diverse range of skills and experiences in learning styles and subject specialisms. Taster days provide an opportunity to evaluate and assess potential learners; through delivering micro projects, prior experience can be measured, coupled with being able to identify any barriers that may inhibit learning. Through the application process, Recognition of Prior Learning can be obtained via transcripts and certificates from the learner's previous education provider.

As stated, the UAL specification is generic, the assessment criteria provides clear objectives from which to formulate a project; however, a pivotal piece of data that is invaluable for designing curricular is the Guided Learning Hours (GLH) and the Total Qualification Time (TQT). This enables me to deconstruct the term, where the design of a custom Scheme of Work (SOW) can be written. In my SOW, I can effectively plan the term, where I can allocate key formative feedback events, one-to-one tutorials to negotiate SMART targets and embed key developmental practice based sessions. To strengthen and support non-verbal communication, my recent SOW has been embedded with key taxonomical verbs from Bloom, colour coded and written with clear objectives so it can be issued to all learners to allow full transparency.

⁵ Pearson: Edexcel BTEC Level 3 Award/Certificate/Diploma in Graphic Design (QCF) (Specification)

⁶ UAL: Diploma and Extended Diploma in Art & Design (Specification)

Learning Outcome 03.

A. My approach to planning & preparation is built upon an experienced background within education; primarily within a higher educational environment, my methods to accommodate different learning styles and learner's abilities have been adapted and developed to cater for the needs and requirements of further education learners. As stated in the previous chapter, the design of my recent SOW, has key assessment objectives embedded. Starting with the allotted TQT from each unit, I can work backwards from the proposed hand-in dates and allocate pivotal teaching, learning and assessment events. Currently I am working on a two-week rotation of one-to-one personal tutorials, where mutually agreed SMART targets are set. At the start of a unit, the learners receive their feedback from the previous project; this provides an opportunity to measure any potential barriers and develop feed-forward strategies to develop and maximise the learner's personal objectives.

My primary group of learners are in their final year of the extended diploma, they have all undergone a minimum of one full year in Post-16 education, some have come from a L2 course, so they would have completed two full years in this sector. This age range presents opportunities to merge learning theories; as the learners are on the cusp of adulthood, integrating andragogy into the established pedagogical curricular allows for the learners to begin shaping their own teaching and learning. To support this, I formed a diverse focus group, which I call upon to advise and provide more structured feedback on course content and its direction.

Within my specialist area, the advancement of technology and its integration into the creative industries has governed curricular design. It is imperative that the learners are sensitised or made aware of new trends and emerging technologies within their field. Apart from an education into specialist packages, such as the Adobe Creative Suite, the processing and understanding of a range of data via Information Technology is crucial in maintaining and developing effective communication. In the UAL specification, there are no technological requirements, specifically, there are no requirements that the learners are to engage in core ICT development. This would have been written to account for educational providers with a diverse socially-economical background, where resources may be underfunded.

However, as part of Minimum Core, it would be expected that all learners achieve a basic level of ICT competence, specifically in word processing and document handling. These basic skills are paramount in supporting professional development, such as CV writing and strengthening non-verbal cognitive communication. With my primary learners, all resources are available to them electronically for further examination and all of their coursework is submitted via an online learning log in the form of a Wordpress blog. The use of this technology is advantageous for both learner and teacher as it enables timely and live access to progress, which can be used to form more efficient evaluative and feedback methods.

Learning Outcome 04.

A. The UAL specification does not stipulate clear entry requirements, they do state the following: *'UAL Awarding Body recommends that students have a minimum of 4 x GCSEs at grade C or above, at least one of which should be in an art and design subject (or the equivalent level 2 qualification in an appropriate subject).'*⁷ As the awarding body only provides a guide, it is standard practice that the college delivering the course set clear entry requirements. To gain entry onto the UAL L3 Extended Diploma in Art & Design, Fareham College have clearly stated that the learners must have: Three GCSEs at grade A*-C, plus English and Maths GCSEs at grade 9-4 or a Level 2 Diploma or Extended Certificate with a merit profile and grade 9-4 in GCSE English and Maths.⁸ In practice however, this is not always the case, I currently have three learners in my Extended Diploma group who have yet to obtain a pass in English or Maths.

Based upon initial assessment and measured checks, the overall reading age of my group corresponds with their demographic; however, some evidence a higher range and some evidence below their level. When constructing written resources, aside from setting clear learning objectives and identifiable goals, my aim is to structure the material in plain English that corresponds to the average reading age.

B. My assignment and workshop briefs have been developed and refined to meet the diverse needs and requirements of the learners. Samples of the text are fed into an online SMOG readability calculator, where I can get an accurate measurement of the texts reading age, which then enables me to adjust the polysyllabic count and/or sentence structure to yield a clearer document. Specifically, for the practical skills workshops, I include measurable visual target of what is required. This subscribes to Schön's 'Reflection in Action' theory, where during practice, the learners can assess and reflect upon their progress against the target and then based upon experience, they can research, adapt and develop their work to meet the objective.

Equality & Diversity, needs to be observed when developing resources, specifically the cultural needs of our diverse range of learners. A basic awareness of religious and belief systems is crucial for all educators and support staff who have an impact on the learner's wellbeing and development. When presenting resources, a level of sensitivity is advised to ensure no offending images or material is shown. To support this, educational institutes may have in place certain firewalls and keyword filters that block potentially harmful websites from being accessed. To further this and to support the governments Prevent strategy, a non-statutory advice report was written in 2014; titled, 'Promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC in schools'. This document and its values has been actively promoted and embedded in our curricular, but is this view on 'Britishness' effective, or is it distilling mistrust?

⁷ UAL: Diploma and Extended Diploma in Art & Design (Specification)

⁸ Fareham College: 2018-19 Careers Manual

Learning Outcome 05.

A. Working in education, irrespective of role, requires a competent level of both verbal and non-verbal communication. In my specialist area, I typically communicate with dozens of people on a daily basis; these can range from fellow lecturers, support staff and learning support assistants to financiers and external agencies. To support and develop my teaching practice, I currently liaise with my immediate colleagues to discuss college procedures and protocols. Overall, this involves informal verbal communication, where topics such as best practice, administration and enquiring about specific learners needs and requirements are discussed.

Departmental staff meetings provide an ideal opportunity to liaise with others within my specialist area, these meetings generally involve the full faculty, including support staff. These meetings typically provide an opportunity for the department head to disseminate key points and dates with the curriculum and convey any wider policies and college business. They can also be used to share ideas and learning resources and to promote any best practice procedures.

B. As part of my assimilation into further education, the acquisition of its procedures, policies and philosophies towards teaching, learning & assessment are paramount. My current L5 Teacher Training course provides a number of invaluable 'Peer Observations', where an experienced educator and/or mentor can provide feedback and feedforward advice to develop and refine my teaching practice. This is conducted in a formal setting, where through a combination of verbal and written advice I am able to reflect upon my areas of development.

In education, learner feedback is an invaluable source of information, which can be used to develop and evolve curriculum and practice. The collection of this data is usually in written form through feedback surveys. Ranking is a common format, where a set of statements are produced for the respondent to rank/rate them, these generally follow a 'Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree' discourse. Although not entirely reliable, they can be supportive of overall trends and patterns.

Recently, I have been reflecting upon classroom behaviour, specifically tardiness. Fareham college has in place 'late slip' booths, which are designed for learners to enter in their details, receive a printed slip and hand it to their tutor. During my last official observation, it was noted that I do not collect 'late slips' and that I need to action this for the future. I have applied reflective models, such as Atkins & Murphy's to this situation in an attempt to fully understand and analyse its pertinence. Yet, my overall feelings is that this system is counterproductive and illogical. My reasoning for this statement is that as we are trying to instil a mature and professional approach to our learners, where constant reference to industry is given; no such purposeless systems are found in the workplace. My arrangement is of mutual respect and acknowledgment, where my learners will offer an apology and reason.

Learning Outcome 06.

A. Obtaining feedback from a range of sources to gauge the effectiveness of my own specialist skills and knowledge is beneficial in feeding forward and developing my continuous professional development. This can be achieved a number of ways and can be collected at various point throughout the teaching, learning and assessment cycle. Conducting practical workshops is a reliable method as this requires setting learning objectives, visual targets, conducting demonstrations and providing differentiated personal support to the learners. Once the task is completed, I can measure the visual evidence and reflect upon how I have delivered and taught the knowledge and skills within my specialist area.

To support an andragogic approach, I enlist my focus group to review and comment upon resources; this allows them to feedback on the strengths and effectiveness in supporting their needs and requirements. Their candour can be refreshing at times, where honest and emotionally guided responses are provided; this is good, but it does require further Socratic questioning to identify what points need developing.

B. An area that potentially requires improvement in relation to my practice, is the structure of my summative feedback reports. These reports are written in line with the learning objectives and grade criteria set by the awarding body and are typically structured in the 'praise sandwich' method. When a learner has failed a component, and is required to resubmit, I ensure that the report reflects this with a feedforward passage of how to improve and what components need action. With a recent resubmission, the learner specifically asked for a bullet point list, of what needs to be done to pass. I have since reflected on this request and will look into simplifying such feedforward advice in my future reports.

C. Improving my knowledge and skills within my specialist area is not always concerned with the practice of my craft. Teaching & assessment practices within Art & Design is an area to also develop. I have recently taken up the position of an External Moderator with the GCE examination board OCR. This is a great opportunity to examine a wide range of art, whilst developing my standardisation skills, it also allows me to assess the quality of work from a qualification that feeds into my current level. I have not yet had the chance to attend one, but the UAL offers Standardisation Events⁹ in their various qualifications, this would be a logical step in furthering my continuous professional development, whilst also providing an invaluable insight into what other colleges are producing.

To conclude, my overall teaching, learning and assessment practice within my specialist area is strong and well developed. However, in our ever-evolving society, there will always be areas to improve and adapt to allow for an all-inclusive and differentiated approach to creative education.

⁹ UAL. (2018). *Events Calendar*

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