

Evaluation of teaching practice development



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The desire to pursue teaching began as a university student when I was truly inspired by the commitment and energy demonstrated by the tutors that supported my personal and academic development. During this period, I recognised that teaching requires delivering more than simply content to develop the next generation of designers. Therefore, I have a desire to impart a love of learning to the students and to empower them with the cognitive and social skills that they will need to be successful.

On reflection, I underestimated how difficult the transition process to becoming a teacher would be, and how it affected my development both in a personal and professional way. Within the industry, I mentored students that entered a placement course from university or college and provided the required skills and knowledge to succeed. I concluded such skills and knowledge would be transferable to effectively and efficiently teach in further education. However, it was the level at which these skills needed to be adapted so students were able to understand and learn that caused considerable effect on my transition in becoming a Further Education (FE) teacher. I also found difficulty in adjusting within the academic environment.

From the reviewed literature, the challenges experienced by teachers have been identified in the transition to further education. This has been described as a confusion of identity as well as becoming a beginner within their new field of work (Boyd and Lawley, 2009). This was usually due to the lack of understanding about how the institution itself was run (McArthur-Rouse, 2008).

I found the transition process and the ability to adapt in teaching were very dependent on my personality. Yet, I benefited greatly from the mentorship I received at the college to help address the balance of transition and the change in culture. The relationship with my mentor enabled us to work collaboratively and recognise strategies to support me whilst adapting to the new working environment. It was the determination, commitment and enthusiasm of my mentor and myself that directed my successful journey through the course.

On a number of occasions during the course, my lessons were observed by an experienced colleague or my mentor. The constructive feedback received regarding my teaching and interaction with the students was essential in developing my skills as a teacher. Furthermore, students also gave their feedback when evaluating the lessons: this not only helps consolidate their learning but also supports continuous improvement in the teaching (Gopee, 2005). This encourages reflection and helps identify strategies to progress my development, whilst also supporting me to maintain a relationship with the students.

During my time on placement, I engaged with my peers and teachers in which I took onboard all the feedback they gave me. From the feedback given, my lessons to begin with were mainly teacher focused but, as my confidence developed, I engaged more in new teaching methods. This enabled me to play more of a facilitator role which in turn helped enhance the students' learning. The experiences and relationships I had built with my students allowed for this development, as well as my studies on the PCET PGCE course.

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I feel another area that needs continued work is being able to establish an appropriate level of support to the students due to the different needs they all bring. I feel that being a student teacher I wasn't fully in control therefore, now I have graduated I believe it will just take time to adjust and will be a growing experience. I know that no matter what level you are at, seeking advice and support from colleagues will always be important in teaching. However, it is up to me as the professional to seek the appropriate methods and strategies to effectively manage and support my students.

One of the more challenging aspect of teaching for me was giving feedback to the students. When I reflect back on my time on placement, I recognised that students saw written feedback to be of lesser value compared to that of verbal feedback. Therefore, I feel that engaging students with support and feedback will continue to be a struggle and will be an obstacle I will have to overcome.

The reason I was inspired to become a teacher in FE is due to the enthusiasm and commitment I received from the lecturers during my fashion design course. Although, performing this position has not just dimensions of my personal fulfilment but to yield inspiration and passion to the next generation of designers. I have a long journey ahead of me however, I know that I have no doubts in making the transition from the fashion industry in to teaching. Yet, more importantly, I need to continue to adjust and adapt in order to be successful within my new role.

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