

Review of Teaching Practice

Session/artefact to be observed/reviewed: Brand Culture seminar

Size of student group: 60

Reviewee: Joana Pereira

Reviewer: Carys Kennedy

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 One

Reviewee to complete in brief and send to reviewer prior to the review

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

This session is part of a series of branding seminars, designed to contextualise branding in society, culture, competitive landscape and purpose. This series was delivered as part of the Major Project unit (Year 3), where students were asked to design two brand identities, each to respond and align to the United Nations Sustainable development Goals.

This session unpacks the meanings of culture signaling as individuals, ascribed and subscribed culture and finally how culture defines branding and vice versa. The session is punctuated by an initial exercise of assumptions and reality and ends with a group empathy mapping workshop, to help culture mapping brands and audiences.

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

I have worked with this cohort as a lecturer during Year 1 and Year 3.

What are the intended or expected learning outcomes?

The session prepares students for the empathy mapping workshop, which is designed to encourage them to look beyond rigid brand audience demographics and produce a qualitative study of people subscribing to brands.

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

The main output is an empathy map, to help students understand their audiences more deeply.

Are there potential difficulties or specific areas of concern?

The intention is to mitigate students from defining audiences by generation (Z, Millennials, etc.), which can be quite reductive and lead to generic brand identities. It's about understanding aspiration, social 'tribes' and tastes to help predict audience and brand behaviour.

How will students be informed of the observation/review?

This session has been previously delivered and I will be sharing the slides, materials and session plan.

What would you particularly like feedback on?

General feedback on the content, the style (which I tried to make quite informal) and how designing thinking was used to help defined brands rather than using traditional market research.

How will feedback be exchanged?

We have arranged for an online discussion.

Part Two**Reviewer to note down observations, suggestions and questions.**

Thanks Joana for sharing the session plan and slide deck, which were developed for the Year 3 Major Project Unit. You asked for general feedback on the content, style, and how designing thinking was used to help defined brands rather than traditional market research.

We talked about the formality and structure of your session. You explained that you try to keep your sessions 'informal' but 'meaty', with thoughtful content, and lots of punctuation activities. You contrasted this to a more traditional 90-minute lecture model, with less interaction. We talked about how content can be robust and accessible at the same time, and that active learning techniques can support student learning. My impression is very much that your approach is likely to be effective, and I asked you what tools you have to know if the approach is working. You explained that you already get 'snap feedback' from students, which is providing an evidence base that this is working.

Prompt question: Could you consider using [Brookfields Four Lenses \(Brookfield, 1995\)](#) to evaluate and reflect on your approach? And what literature might you draw upon to evidence the need for engaging, active learning approaches?

You also talked about the importance of your design practice in your teaching. You explained that your industry experience informs who you are as a lecturer. As such, you ensure that your lectures reflect developments in industry and seek to foster a 'studio' vibe where all perspectives are valued.

For me, this connected with a few key concepts in the wider literature:

- How being a dual-professional or practitioner-teacher informs your practice (see [Beaton, 2022](#); [WonkHE, 2018](#))
- The role of constructive alignment (see [Biggs, 2003](#)) and how your lectures are designed to align with the intended learning outcomes.
- In Chapter 8, [Orr and Shreeve \(2017\)](#) write about studio culture, live briefs, and other ‘signature pedagogies’ which seem to relate to your practice and aims.

Prompt question: Do any of these concepts resonate with you? How does this inform your practice.

You asked for feedback about how designing thinking was used to help defined brands rather than using traditional market research. When we spoke, I sought clarification about this as I am not a subject specialist. You explained your decision to move away from quantitative, market research approaches to tapping into culture, emotion, and qualitative approaches. My impression is that this is highly appropriate given your industry knowledge, and also likely to be more relatable, playful, and interesting for students. With this in mind, it seems like a win-win – students learn about key concepts like empathy mapping and subcultures, moving away from designing solely for themselves – and this is approached with humour (the “London Fields” example) and care (cautioning against stereotyping).

We also spoke briefly about diversifying the brands you refer to, drawing upon international/non-Western materials, and considering decolonial approaches. This is something you’re very aware of and working towards in other units – and we also acknowledged the challenge of Western/Global North dominance.

Prompt question: You commented that some educators take the view that students choose to study in the UK, and so should expect a ‘Western’ education. What are your thoughts on this?

I hope these notes are helpful, and give you an opportunity to reflect on the resources you shared with me. I have included some prompt questions (in bold) for you to reflect on. You don’t have to answer all the questions – just respond in Part 3 to what feels of interest following our discussion (up to 500 words).

Part Three

Reviewee to reflect on the reviewer’s comments and describe how they will act on the feedback exchanged. Reviewee should return this to the reviewer once complete.

During our teaching practice review discussion, Carys introduced me to the concept of dual professionals, which strongly resonated with me and prompted me to reflect more critically on my academic identity. I recognise myself as a dual professional, bringing industry experience directly into the studio. This has become a defining aspect of my teaching approach.

Beaton (2021) argues that practitioners entering higher education often experience tensions between their established professional identities and emerging roles as educators. Whilst I have not experienced significant emotional challenges in my transition to academia, I recognise that such tensions are not unfamiliar to me; they are embedded within professional practice itself, particularly within the creative industries. This awareness has allowed me to reframe these tensions more productively, using my industry experience to inform teaching in a way that is purpose- and practice-driven, rather than purely academic.

However, reflecting on Beaton's (2021) argument, I find myself questioning whether the emphasis should be placed solely on dual professionals adapting to academic culture. Instead, I would argue that the increasing focus on graduate employability within higher education highlights the need for a mindset shift in the opposite direction. Rather than positioning practitioner-teachers as needing to assimilate into traditional academic norms, there is a growing need for institutions to more fully embrace practice-informed approaches that respond to the realities of the contemporary employment landscape.

Having joined the course staff team post-pandemic, I became acutely aware of students' lack of industry preparedness. This prompted me to restructure aspects of the curriculum with the intention to better prepare students for professional practice. Similarly, in my role as co-host of the Ladies, Wine & Design London chapter, where I bring together design agencies and practitioners for professional development and networking, I frequently hear industry leaders express concerns about graduates' readiness for practice. These conversations have reinforced my commitment to aligning teaching with professional expectations, ensuring that students are equipped with the skills, confidence, and understanding required for industry.

The GuildHE (2018) report on practice-informed learning also supports this approach, highlighting that dual professionals can enhance the authenticity of learning by embedding real-world contexts into teaching, enabling students to develop both disciplinary knowledge and industry-relevant skills.

In addition to this, the positionality of my design practice has also shaped my academic approach. I primarily collaborate with organisations that facilitate social change and further culture, informing a teaching philosophy that foregrounds purpose, sustainability, and critical engagement with industry norms.

Reflecting more broadly, I find that I have managed to carve a niche where I combine design thinking and graphic design principles that bring about meaningful verbal and visual identities in branding. Though Beaton (2021) argues that dual professionals lack academic training, I do believe that a growth mindset can bridge the gap between academic- and industry-centric staff, and create opportunities for more productive exchange between both communities.

References

Beaton, F. (2021) *How do I know who I am? Academic professional development, peer support, and identity for practitioners who teach*. International Journal for Academic

Development, 27(3), pp. 234–248. Available
at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360144X.2021.1910953> [Accessed on 18 March 2026]

GuildHE (2018) *Practice-informed learning: The rise of the dual professional*. London: GuildHE. Available
at: https://www.improvingthestudentexperience.com/library/UG_documents/Practice-Informed_Learning- Final_Nov_18.pdf [Accessed: 18 March 2026].