Review of Teaching Practice

Session/artefact to be observed/reviewed: **Brand Packaging Design Sprint**
Size of student group: **60 students**
Reviewee: **Joana Pereira**
Reviewer: **Eric Fanghanel**

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 was developed in response to student feedback requesting more ideation and development. The new revalidated course handbook reshaped the course to be more theory- and marketing-based. However, students did not respond well to this approach (nor I, as this was a design course after all). With this in mind, I developed a series of design sprints to meet students' expectations, bring them up to speed on ideation, concept development, design principles and prototyping. This change of direction later helped leadership understand the importance of design, ideation and making, with later units reshaped to accommodate this approach.

How long have you been working with this group and in what capacity?
I have worked with this cohort as a lecturer and Year Lead during Year 1.

What are the intended or expected learning outcomes?
The session was designed to introduce students to brand packaging ideation, concept development, and low- and mid-fidelity prototyping. The intention was to take students out of their comfort zone, and away from the screen, experiment with sketching, cutting and folding before translating their concept using design software. More importantly, this framework helps students avoid being too precious and applying too much pressure on one design without looking and thinking laterally. They are encouraged to explore and develop multiple concepts and keep trying new approaches.

What are the anticipated outputs (anything students will make/do)?
Packaging sketching, low and mid fidelity prototypes. Students were asked to produce a high-fidelity prototype in their self-study time.

Are there potential difficulties or specific areas of concern?
The unit was designed to respond to the course handbook, allowing little time for design, ideation and experimentation. These sprints were shoehorned to respond to students' needs and expectations. Ideally this would have been two sessions.

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 and pace. I would like some feedback on using this rapid approach to help students experiment and avoid overthinking.

How will feedback be exchanged?
We have arranged for an online discussion.

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

"Packaging can be theater, it can create a story." – Steve Jobs

Observations

There's a very clear and coherent path from theory into embodied practice. The Gather → Sketch → Low Fidelity → Mid Fidelity structure mirrors professional design workflows beautifully. It feels purposeful rather than arbitrary, and students can see how one stage feeds the next.

The slides support this progression well. The practical constraints (box measurements, shelf context, certifications, competitors, etc.) are particularly strong. They prevent superficial aesthetic wandering and instead situate design decisions in real-world parameters. The constraints feel productive rather than restrictive.

The insistence on low-fidelity prototyping before moving into Illustrator is excellent. It directly tackles the common tendency toward premature digital refinement. Framing the session as a sprint also works very well — the idea of "failing faster and better" is a powerful ethos and feels pedagogically sound. It creates permission to experiment rather than polish too early.

Overall, the session design feels grounded, industry-aware, and thoughtfully structured.

Questions / Suggestions

1. Pacing
Given the intensity of a 4-hour sprint, I wonder whether extending the low-fidelity / refined low-fidelity phase could be beneficial, and leaving high-fidelity rendering explicitly as homework (which you're already partly doing).

There's an argument that staying longer in iteration mode may deepen learning, whereas high-fidelity output might risk shifting the focus toward finish rather than thinking. On the other hand, seeing something resolved can be motivating. It may be worth clarifying which learning outcome the high-fidelity stage is really serving.

2. Make the value of speed explicit
You're clearly using time pressure intentionally to disrupt overthinking. It might help to state explicitly why speed matters — that constraints generate decisions, that tempo prevents perfectionism, and that professional practice often operates under similar conditions. Framing constraints as generative rather than punitive could strengthen the rationale.

3. Micro-crits during the sprint
There could be scope for very short peer feedback moments embedded into the process. For example:

- 20–30 min sketch
- 5 min paired critique
- Refine and continue

This might help students recalibrate before committing to the next fidelity level and increase critical dialogue without slowing momentum.

4. Printed templates
Providing an optional flat packaging template could support students who struggle with construction or dexterity. It would narrow friction for those who get stuck on mechanics rather than concept, without removing challenge for others.

5. Packaging as theatre
It could be interesting to frame packaging explicitly as performance. The “unboxing” moment — particularly in the era of social media — is dramaturgical. How does the object enter the world? How is it revealed? What is the emotional arc of opening it?

Bringing in unboxing videos (good and bad examples) might sharpen awareness of narrative, tactility, and user experience.

Overall

This is a strong, clearly structured session that bridges theory and practice effectively. The constraints are well-judged, the sprint framing is pedagogically sharp, and the emphasis on low-fidelity experimentation is particularly powerful.

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.

My discussion with Eric, alongside his written feedback, was extremely valuable and provided a thoughtful opportunity to reflect on both the strengths of the session and areas for refinement. I was particularly encouraged by his recognition of the clear progression from theory into embodied practice through the Gather → Sketch → Low Fidelity → Mid Fidelity structure, which intentionally mirrors professional design workflows and makes the rationale behind each stage legible to students.

One of the most pressing issues Eric raised was the pacing and duration of the session. Ideally, this workshop would be delivered across two four-hour sessions, allowing additional time for extended iteration and the inclusion of a high-fidelity stage within timetabled teaching. In its current format, high-fidelity development is briefed as self-directed study, which aligns with Eric’s suggestion to prioritise iterative thinking over finish during contact time. This session was designed in direct response to student feedback and my own instinct to counterbalance an increasingly dense, theory-led curriculum introduced through recent course revalidation. The emphasis on hands-on idea generation was therefore deliberate, intended to re-centre learning around making, testing, and decision-making.

While acknowledging the intensity of a four-hour sprint, I am keen to retain the fast pace spirit of the session. As discussed with Eric, time pressure is used intentionally to mitigate perfectionism and overthinking, encouraging students to “fail faster and better.” Following his suggestion, I will make the pedagogical value of speed and constraint more explicit within the slides, framing tempo as a generative condition reflective of professional practice rather than a punitive limitation.

Eric's suggestion to foreground packaging as theatre was particularly resonant. I plan to incorporate Steve Jobs' quote – "Packaging can be theater, it can create a story" – alongside Apple's packaging as a case study, given their leadership in experiential and inclusive packaging design. This will help students consider emotional arc, tactility, and narrative in the unboxing moment, and how theatre and anticipation can be designed into even simple structures.

I will also adopt Eric's recommendation to introduce optional starter templates. Some students struggle with dexterity or spatial thinking and can become overly focused on mechanics rather than concept, occasionally misinterpreting the brief as paper engineering rather than brand packaging. Providing templates will reduce unnecessary friction while still allowing more confident students to explore bespoke structures.

Finally, while the session is primarily student-led with tutors offering group tutorials during the session, I will integrate short peer feedback moments between sprint stages, as suggested. Brief, peer-led micro-crits after sketching and early prototyping stages will allow students to recalibrate their ideas before progressing, increasing critical dialogue without disrupting momentum.

Overall, Eric's feedback was extremely positive and constructively framed. His suggestions align closely with my intentions for the session, and I greatly appreciated his insights. I will iterate the session accordingly to strengthen clarity, inclusivity, and pedagogical impact.