

# Tutorials and Other Teaching Approaches

---

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>145</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>WHAT IS A TUTORIAL?</b>	<b>146</b>
2.1	ONE WORD - MANY MEANINGS	146
2.2	EXAMPLE TUTORIALS	146
<b>3</b>	<b>FIRST THINGS FIRST</b>	<b>152</b>
3.1	RESEARCH	152
3.2	AIMS AND OUTCOMES	153
3.3	EVALUATION	153
3.4	TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES	153
3.5	TIMING	154
3.6	RESOURCES	154
3.7	LOCATION	155
3.8	STUDENTS	155
<b>4</b>	<b>PLANNING A TUTORIAL</b>	<b>157</b>
4.1	WHY PLAN?	157
4.2	USING A PLANNING GRID	157
<b>5</b>	<b>PROBLEMS WITH TRADITIONAL TEACHING METHODS</b>	<b>162</b>
5.1	THE TRADITIONAL CRIT	163
5.2	IMPROMPTU ONE-TO-ONE	164
5.3	INDIVIDUAL TUTORIALS	165
5.4	RETHINKING TRADITIONAL TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES	165

<b>6</b>	<b>STRUCTURING YOUR TEACHING</b>	<b>169</b>
6.1	KOLB'S EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CYCLE	170
6.2	RENDERING STUDENTS UNCONSCIOUS...	171
6.3	THE ABSTRACT-SPECIFIC-ABSTRACT MODEL	174
<b>7</b>	<b>DISCUSSION AS LEARNING</b>	<b>176</b>
7.1	STARTING A DISCUSSION	177
7.2	PYRAMIDING	179
<b>8</b>	<b>HANDLING DIFFICULT SITUATIONS</b>	<b>181</b>
8.1	PROBLEMS IN CONTEXT	182
8.2	BASIC SURVIVAL TIPS	185
8.3	PREDICTING DIFFICULT INCIDENTS	186
8.4	COPING WITH DIFFICULT INCIDENTS	188
<b>9</b>	<b>DEALING WITH PERSONAL ISSUES</b>	<b>193</b>
9.1	KNOWING WHEN TO REFER	193
9.2	RECORDING ONE-TO-ONE DISCUSSIONS	193
<b>10</b>	<b>SUMMARY</b>	<b>196</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>FURTHER INFORMATION</b>	<b>197</b>

---

## 1 INTRODUCTION

---

# Tutorials and Other Teaching Approaches

As a part-time teacher in art and design you are an important member of the course team, and this section is designed to give you some background information about planning and delivering effective tutorials. It does not go into the depth that a formal teaching course might, but where relevant reference will be made to useful books or pieces of research so that, if you want to, you can delve deeper into the issues covered.

Different courses expect different things from part-time teachers, and offer different amounts of support. Some of you may find that all your planning is done for you, while for others of you are simply asked to come in and "help the students with their project". Whichever end of the scale you are at, this guide will help you

- ❖ **PLAN DIFFERENT TYPES OF TUTORIAL**
- ❖ **RUN YOUR TUTORIAL**
- ❖ **THINK ABOUT DIFFERENT TYPES OF TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITY**
- ❖ **PREPARE FOR, AND DEAL WITH, DIFFICULT INCIDENTS**

---

### 2 WHAT IS A TUTORIAL?

---

#### 2.1. ONE WORD - MANY MEANINGS

The word "tutorial" describes a range of teaching and learning activities, from the classic one-to-one "sherry by the fire" Oxbridge model in which tutors discuss a student's reading with them, to a lecture in which a lecturer introduces a new topic to a small group of students. Confusingly, not only does it mean different things in different places, but often different things in the same place and - just to make life even more interesting - different things on the same course!

It does not matter what you, your colleagues, your course or your institution mean by "tutorial" but what your students understand a particular session is for.

#### 2.2. EXAMPLE TUTORIALS

To give an idea of the different types of tutorial, it might be useful to look at two descriptions of typical scenarios, both from the same fictional module. Each contains different aspects of a tutorial, for example:

- ❖ SIZE OF GROUP
- ❖ ACADEMIC OR PASTORAL
- ❖ HIGHLY STRUCTURED OR RELATIVELY UNSTRUCTURED

#### A SMALL GROUP TUTORIAL

Alan has been asked to run a 90-minute tutorial with a group of ten students about halfway through a module on animation, and one of the learning outcomes of the module is that students will understand and be able to demonstrate their understanding of simple techniques, in this case "walk cycles". The module also aims to introduce students to the history of animation techniques. He will run the same tutorial four times in one day.

Alan wants to be careful that the students see this as a lesson in animation, not a lesson in Flash so he asks the students to view a short video he has prepared and placed in the library on which a series of clips from different films are presented. They can do this at any point in the week before the tutorial. The clips range from Steamboat Willie through to the latest live action monster movie in which the monster is an animated computer model. The video is

accompanied by a worksheet in which the students are asked to consider different things and make notes and a simple storyboard of a stick figure walking. They are asked to do this before the tutorial and to bring the work with them.

When the tutorial starts, one of the points Alan makes is that even though nearly a century separates the earliest example and the most recent, they rely on similar techniques, regardless of the technology used. He introduces them to the concept of key frames, 'tweening', animated backgrounds and walk cycles.

He quickly plays through the tape with the group and highlights the points where these concepts are demonstrated. He also plays a video game to show how the characters are animated using the same techniques, and quickly shows how 2D models are animated using computers.

Alan tells the students he is going to show them how 2D animations are created. He uses a data projector to demonstrate how he would recreate a simple walking character using Flash. He goes through it quickly first, then repeats it more slowly.

Alan then asks for a volunteer to try it in front of everyone else, and asks the group to help her.

Afterwards he gives out a worksheet with simple instructions, puts the students into pairs and asks them to work together to recreate the animation using some files he has started already. As they work he helps them, stopping the whole group if a question is asked that would be useful for the whole group to hear. Where necessary he makes a note to ensure the point is raised in the repeats of the session. Where possible, he asks the group if they know the answers to some questions, and reminds students that they can learn from each other and not just from him.

Fifteen minutes before the end of the session, Alan gathers the group together again and they play through the tape once more. Using the projector, he shows how his simple stick man, by replacing the arms, legs, head and body, can turn into a mouse, a dinosaur or a robot. He reinforces the main outcome of the session (students will learn about and demonstrate walk cycles), that they have done this using modern technology but the techniques are the same whatever the medium, and that the techniques are part of the history of animation. He also reminds the students that they have learned something of the particular software package. At the end of the session, after taking questions, Alan hands out some blank storyboards and asks the students to observe and storyboard (without using a computer) a

## Tutorials and Other Teaching Approaches

walk cycle for a limping man with a walking stick, and a caterpillar, and to bring the storyboards to the next tutorial, where they will be used again.

### **A DROP-IN TUTORIAL**

Samantha is working on the same animation module and has been asked to run a surgery workshop for students to drop in with any problems they have. Two students appear together and ask if they can talk to her. They tell her they went to Alan's session on walk cycles and that they really enjoyed looking at the examples, but are really worried that they don't know the software well enough and think they are going to fail.

Samantha asks when the session was, and looks it up in her module folder where she finds Alan's session plan. She quickly reads through it, and the module description as a whole, and then goes through it with the students. She points out that the module isn't about learning a particular piece of software, and that it is about learning basic animation techniques. They look at the assessment criteria for the module and see that they will be assessed on their understanding of these techniques and that the media they choose is up to them. In fact, the criteria only ask for a completed storyboard and, at most, a series of drawings which, when flicked through, show they have understood how the techniques work. Samantha asks if Alan made it clear that he only used Flash to show how the technology may change but the techniques don't. The girls aren't sure, but Sam has a copy of the handouts from the session, and the relevant page in the module handbook, which stresses this point. She emphasises to the students that they need to make sure they read these things carefully and not feel afraid to raise questions during sessions. She feels that the students are unduly worried about their computer skills but mentions that there are some classes on Wednesday afternoons that they might want to go to, while reinforcing that the module is about knowledge and understanding, and that somebody who knows the software back to front but can't draw a storyboard or accurately observe someone walking will only ever execute other people's ideas, not their own. She points again to the module's learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

Samantha notices that one of the students is very quiet and wonders if anything else is wrong, and if this has anything to do with the students coming together. Rather than asking the quieter student, she asks her friend if there is anything else they want to talk about. She says that her friend is really worried about money but doesn't know who to talk to. Samantha asks the quiet student if she wants to talk

about it, and if she is happy doing so with somebody else there. She says she is so Samantha carefully asks what things she is having financial difficulties with – rent, equipment, food or maybe social life. It turns out that it is all of these, but especially the social life. Because she can't afford to go out she feels she is missing out on making friends, and feels quite left out of the rest of the course.

Samantha is not an expert on budgeting but says that it isn't an unusual situation. She relates a story from her own student days and says that she was able to get help simply by talking to her bank, who will help if you ask them, and to the NUS welfare officer. She also mentions the looming deadline for applications to the hardship fund and suggests she make one. She asks her friend if she will help the student draw up a budget to see where money is going, and to make an application to the fund. She also gives a card with the times the student counsellor is available for drop-in chats and makes her promise to go today if possible.

The students are happier now, so she asks them to summarise the tutorial as a list of around three or four bullet points on a pre-printed tutorial form. She quickly reads over the points and adds a couple of her own with the students' agreement. Then she signs the forms and takes copies for her records and lets the students keep the originals.

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **Structure**

The session run by Alan had a very clear structure that was informed by a basic plan. The tutorial had clear aims and outcomes – things that it was intended to cover, and things that students should know, better understand, or be able to do either at the end of the session or before the next one. In this case, Alan gave the students something to do before the tutorial so they came armed and ready to start. He also gave them something to do afterwards that picked up immediately from the work done with him, and that the students knew would lead in to the next session with him. Keeping students informed like this is one way to help develop their motivation.

But what about Samantha's tutorial? You may have felt it was unstructured, or 'student led', but in fact it did have an underlying structure. There was a clear beginning, middle and end, and the students and Samantha ended with a clearer picture, and with questions answered, along with follow-up work to do before the next session. (Being 'student led' is not a bad thing at all, but you should still provide the basic structure – it has to be led somewhere). Like Alan's tutorial, this one had aims and outcomes. One aim

## Tutorials and Other Teaching Approaches

might be "to allow students to review the content of the course so far and to raise questions and concerns before assessment". The outcome might be that students should be able to describe answers to their questions and identify sources of further help. There are also outcomes from the tutor's (and the course team's) point of view. For example, "by the end of the session, the course team will have a greater understanding of individual and collective problems, and be able to plan remedial action, further study or future revisions."

In this example, Samantha could raise with Alan that two of his students felt that they had not learnt enough about Flash, and this would enable him to reinforce the point that this is not actually important in the next session. He might also decide to revise the session for the next presentation so that he keeps the things that worked, but changes the Flash aspect as he really did not want his students to see the session as being about learning the software.

Note too that structure does not just concern the session itself – Samantha's session would not have worked if she did not have a clear understanding of what the students had been doing, or were going to do later. Alan's session linked clearly into his next tutorial with his students. It is vital, as we shall see later, that you do not attempt to teach in a vacuum and make sure that the course or module leader helps you put your teaching into a wider context.

Structure, then, is important. It provides the reason for having the session and, if communicated to students beforehand, allows them to see the point in attending. If Alan's session had had no structure, it would literally have been aimless. Would you go to somebody's session again if the first had been badly planned and a waste of your time? Lack of attendance can often be blamed not on student laziness but on poor planning on the part of teachers!

### **Academic/pastoral**

The other thing that was noticeable about Samantha's tutorial was that it dealt with both academic and pastoral matters. In the example, Samantha realised her limitations in terms of expertise, but also that her own experience was useful as a way of empathising with the student, and helping her to pass the problem over. It would have been much less effective if she had said, "well, I'm not an expert on finance – in fact when I was a student I got into all sorts of debt and I'm still paying it off! You should find someone else to talk to. Have you been to see the counsellor?" If you were the student, would you be more inclined to go and see someone?

### Size matters

The size of these tutorials is a factor too. Alan's group of ten (a large or small group depending on where you work!) is at least predictable. Alan knew how many students he could expect, and planned appropriately. He had to repeat this session several times; if he had had a variable group size of between four and sixteen, the plan would not have worked and the teaching and learning experience would have been extremely variable. Knowing the group size helps you plan the type of session you can hold (a round-table discussion will not be feasible with more than around eight students, for example) and choosing the right type of session is key to effective teaching. More about this later.

Samantha's session was far less predictable in terms of group size. She could have ended up with half a dozen or more students, or even none at all. As a part time tutor, what could you do to ensure that you had some control over the number of students? (The answer is more obvious than you might think...)

---

### SUMMARY

---

From the discussion above, a series of points can be listed. Each of these will be looked at in more detail later in this section.

- ❖ **ALWAYS MAKE SURE A TUTORIAL HAS CLEAR AIMS AND OUTCOMES**
- ❖ **PRODUCE A WRITTEN PLAN OF THE SESSION**
- ❖ **KNOW WHERE THE TUTORIAL FITS INTO THE 'GRAND SCHEME'**
- ❖ **GIVE STUDENTS AS MUCH ADVANCE INFORMATION ABOUT THE TUTORIAL AS YOU CAN**
- ❖ **USE APPROPRIATE TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES FOR THE SIZE OF GROUP**
- ❖ **GET COPIES OF OTHER TUTORS' SESSION PLANS**
- ❖ **KNOW THE LIMITATIONS OF YOUR OWN EXPERTISE**
- ❖ **EVALUATE YOUR SESSIONS CRITICALLY**

---

### 3 FIRST THINGS FIRST

---

Effective learning takes place when the students are active. However, that does not mean that active students are actually learning – there needs to be some sort of overall plan and direction. There are eight aspects to planning an effective tutorial:

1.     **RESEARCH**
2.     **AIMS AND OUTCOMES**
3.     **EVALUATION**
4.     **TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES**
5.     **TIMING**
6.     **RESOURCES**
7.     **LOCATION**
8.     **STUDENTS**

#### 3.1 RESEARCH

The first thing you need to do is find out as much as possible about the course you are teaching. Most courses are broken up into units, or modules, that deal with specific aspects of a subject, and your first port of call should be the module description. This will be found in the course handbook, or in a separate module handbook. Ideally, you should be given a copy of the module description when you are first approached to teach on a module, and you should read it and answer several questions before agreeing to work on it. Typical questions might be

- ❖     **WHAT IS MY CONTRIBUTION GOING TO BE?**
- ❖     **WHERE DO MY SESSIONS FIT IN TO THE OVERALL SCHEME OF WORK?**
- ❖     **HOW MANY STUDENTS WILL I BE TEACHING AT ONE TIME?**
- ❖     **WILL I BE REPEATING MY SESSIONS?**
- ❖     **WILL I BE LEADING SESSIONS OR ASSISTING?**
- ❖     **WHAT LEVEL IS THE MODULE (E.G. FIRST, SECOND OR THIRD YEAR?)**
- ❖     **WHEN DOES THE MODULE START?**

### 3.2. AIMS AND OUTCOMES

We will look at aims and outcomes in more detail later. All modules have aims (statements of what the module is about and why it is being studied) and outcomes (statements of what students will have achieved by the end of the module). Learning outcomes are very important as they not only give a structure to the module, but it is these things that will be assessed.

You need to be fully aware of the learning outcomes (and the associated assessment criteria) so that you can make sure your teaching is 'aligned' to them.

As well as the module aims and outcomes, each individual session should have its own specific ones, and this is where the creativity comes in. It may be that you are given the aims and outcomes for your tutorial, which the module leader should have come up with in their own planning work, in which case your job is to plan your teaching based on them.

### 3.3. EVALUATION

As well as the overall "summative" evaluation of student learning – the marks or grade they get at the end of the module – there needs to be plenty of "formative" evaluation during the module. This gives the students the chance to learn from their mistakes, reflect, and improve before a final judgement is made.

As well as knowing exactly what is being assessed, and how your tutorial contributes towards it, you need to build in some form of evaluation during the session so that you and the students leave it with a clearer understanding of where they are.

### 3.4. TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES

After you know the aims and outcomes of the tutorial, and the expected quality of understanding that should result, you can begin to plan the type of teaching and learning activity (TLA) that will help the students achieve them.

Every tutorial needs a basic structure, as we have seen, and you will need at least three different TLAs including an introduction/icebreaker to get started, and a summary or review activity to allow you and the students to make the evaluation mentioned earlier.

Descriptions of some useful TLAs are given later in this guide.

## Tutorials and Other Teaching Approaches

### 3.5 TIMING

You need to know how long your sessions will last. This may seem obvious, but it is a common mistake made by even the most experienced teachers: know how much time you have for a tutorial. A two-hour tutorial with a fifteen minute break does not mean you have one hour and three quarters. Things that affect your available time are:

- ❖ GETTING STUDENTS SETTLED
- ❖ GETTING YOURSELF READY
- ❖ ANSWERING QUESTIONS AT THE START
- ❖ LATE STUDENTS
- ❖ 15-MINUTE BREAKS NEVER LAST 15 MINUTES
- ❖ ANSWERING QUESTIONS DURING THE TUTORIAL
- ❖ PURSUING INTERESTING BUT UNPLANNED LINES OF ENQUIRY
- ❖ RESTLESSNESS
- ❖ WAITING FOR ORDER AFTER AN ACTIVITY
- ❖ MAKING ANNOUNCEMENTS
- ❖ AND SO ON...

While you may think that students should arrive back from a break promptly, the fact is they don't (for all sorts of reasons, from rudeness to the fact that everyone is having a break at the same time so there is a queue half a mile long for the canteen or toilet – and you are at the back of it!) The point of planning is that you take these things into account (without letting the students know you've planned for a half-hour break, obviously!) otherwise your tutorial will not achieve its aims.

### 3.6. RESOURCES

Your planning will identify certain resources you will need and these have to be booked in advance. Things like flipcharts and pens should be easy enough, but data projectors, VCRs, DVD players etc will require special arrangements. The sooner you know what you need, the easier it will be. This applies too to things like overhead transparencies and handouts that you will have to prepare or source beforehand. Some institutions have repro departments who will do the duplication and collation for you, but their lead times will vary

from time to time. Bear in mind that most repro departments are capable of more than simply photocopying and stapling, so it's well worth a visit to check what they can offer – even simple things like a coloured cover sheet can make the difference between a handout that is ignored and one that is read and re-read.

All requirements should stem from your aims and outcomes.

### 3.7 LOCATION

Ideally, a room should be booked after the session has been planned but for some reason we have yet to find one institution where this happens! Consequently, you may find you are expected to hold a small group discussion in a cavernous studio, or a lecture in a seminar room.

However, we have found that teachers who carefully plan their sessions and work out what sort of room they need are treated like heroes by the staff who control the room booking system, and they will bend over backwards to get you the type of room you need. Alternatively, simply approaching other course leaders and offering a swap can be equally effective. Be prepared to use a room in a different part of the campus, or even another department, if it means delivering a better session.

You should also make sure your room fits your needs in terms of acoustics, light and seating or table arrangements. Moving furniture is one of the simplest ways to get a session going in the right direction. Institutions differ on this and we have experienced overly helpful caretakers who will shift everything for you and then put everything back, through to departmental memos forbidding any changes to the strict row-by-row arrangement of chairs and tables. We will leave it up to you to work out which was the more effective learning environment.

### 3.8 STUDENTS

Last, but by no means least, come the students. As mentioned in the introduction, students today are vastly different from students in the past. For one thing, there are more of them. Their experiences of education will be different too – some may have done A-levels and/or a foundation diploma. Some will have one or more degrees to their name. Some may have been teachers themselves! There will undoubtedly be mature students (and the definition is broad, but chances are you will be teaching at least one person who is older than you). There will also be students with family responsibilities, including ones you might not expect or even be aware of.

## Tutorials and Other Teaching Approaches

There will be students with all manner of personal issues from money problems through to drug and alcohol addictions. Depression is a frequent problem from the obvious to the mild (and therefore virtually unnoticeable, but no less serious). Most, if not all, students will be holding down part-time jobs, often during the day, and many will be living away from home for the first time.

Add to that a range of different abilities from dyslexia to severe physical impairments, and you will begin to see that while the popular image of modern students is that they are uncommitted and lazy, the truth is quite the opposite; for many of your students, getting into college on a daily basis is a major achievement.

As a teacher, you need to plan sessions that will stimulate and motivate your students, using activities that build on their abilities but that take into account their individual differences. It isn't easy – in fact it is difficult, hard work. But it is also challenging and rewarding work.

Assuming this hasn't put you off, read on!

---

## 4 PLANNING A TUTORIAL

---

### 4.1 WHY PLAN?

As we saw from the examples in the first section, every teaching and learning session requires a plan of some sort. The basic building blocks of any plan are 'aims' and 'outcomes'<sup>1</sup>.

<b>Aim</b>	An aim is a purpose - it may be something like "to get students discussing each other's work critically" or "to introduce students to the ways in which colour theory can be applied to graphic design".
<b>Outcome</b>	An outcome is something that students will be able to do, know or understand by the end of the session or soon after.

As we said earlier, sometimes you will be given specific aims and outcomes for a session, and perhaps even a plan, but for now we will assume that you've been given a fairly vague aim of "just look at their work and check they're doing okay" - hopefully this is not something that happens often!

### 4.2 USING A PLANNING GRID

In the companion section, *Planning Your Teaching*, we show you how to use a planning grid to develop a session. The grid has space for you to write specific aims for the session, as well as specific outcomes, and the level of performance you want your students to achieve by the end of the tutorial. These then help you work out what sort of teaching and learning activities you should use.

The planning grid then helps you to devise a **session plan** (sometimes referred to as a lesson plan). By writing your plan after using the grid you can make sure that everything you do links directly to the stated learning outcomes.

A session plan is an essential component of a teacher's work. As well as being an indispensable aid to you as you work, it helps other teachers to see what you are doing and what students are learning with you. It also provides a record for the course leader and institution.

Your session plans should be given to the module leader, and discussed with the other teachers on the module. Do not be put off if some colleagues do not write plans, or listen to anyone who tells you they are a waste of time – that is their problem.

You should also give a version of your plan to your students as far in advance of the session as possible. This allows them to prepare, and helps to ensure attendance.

<sup>1</sup> Outcomes are sometimes referred to as objectives but the meaning is the same. Here, we will use the word 'outcome'.

## Tutorials and Other Teaching Approaches

### "IS IT MY JOB TO PLAN?"

Most part-time tutors are paid not only for the hours they teach, but also for preparation, assessment, and post-teaching administration (evaluation, completing tutorial forms etc). The formula is *sometimes* given as 2:1 – for every two hours of teaching there is an hour of preparation, admin or assessment, and this is included in your hourly rate. So a contract for five hours' teaching includes 2.5 hours of other work (making a full standard day of 7.5 hours). Check the situation at your institution before signing on the dotted line if you are worried.

Most people will argue that teaching is only enjoyable and, more importantly, useful, if the teacher is responsible for what they teach. So while some of the groundwork of preparation may be done for you, it is in your interests as a professional to take on as much as possible. There is no pleasure to be gained from simply going in, talking to some students about their work, and then going home – there has to be a purpose, and planning is about creating that purpose.

### "BUT IT TAKES TIME . . ."

Actually, planning saves time. It's a crude analogy, but if you've ever painted a room you will know that professionals tell you the surfaces must be clean and smooth, and that means getting busy with sugar soap, sandpaper and masking tape. Those of us who dispense with that advice find that while on the surface our walls look well-covered, the truth is that it is very patchy, smudged and will need a new coat very soon.

In the same way, an hour invested in planning is more likely to produce a tutorial that actually achieves something and prevents you having to go over some bits again later – usually when a student collars you in the corridor as you're trying to go home...

Examples of the planning grid, session plan, and student outline are presented in the section “Devising Teaching and Learning Activities” along with fuller details of how these were produced. Blank planning grids can be downloaded from the ADEPTT web site.

## Tutorials and Other Teaching Approaches

Before the session students should watch the video reserved for them in the library and carry out the activities on the accompanying sheet.

Time	Activity	Resources
2	Introduce the session and outline its aims and objectives	OHT & projector
	Check that students watched the video as they were asked to	
	Remind students that on the video, one of the contributors mentions the usual order of doing things	
10	Ask the students to get into groups of two or three and draw a flowchart of how they understand an advertising campaign to be developed	Flip chart sheets, blu-tak and pens
10	Ask students to stick their charts on the wall. Put my version up and lead general discussion on things missed out. Probably need to draw attention to what happens before the campaign is decided upon, the way media are chosen, the role of audience research, and the way ideas are evaluated	My outline of a typical campaign dev. process
10	Show video of several TV ads from a recent Safeway campaign using Jamie Oliver. Hand out copies of print ads from different magazines	Video of ads, photocopies of press & mag ads
10	Ask students to look at the print ads in their groups and try to guess why some are different	
	BREAK – ASK STUDENTS TO CONTINUE THEIR DISCUSSION OVER COFFEE	
15	Show three 'ad breaks' from different TV programmes illustrating how the type of ad changes depending on time, programme etc. Lead discussion on the link between audience, message and media	Video of ad breaks
5	Ask for student opinions on the Safeway ads, and begin to focus the discussion on to objective analysis (i.e. "You may not like it, but is it aimed at you?")	Whiteboard and pen to summarise key points
5	Show section of video in which qualitative and quantitative research are mentioned. Ask for ideas about what the difference is, and examples of methods	
5	Show clip of Victoria Wood 'mayonnaise' sketch as an example of how not to do a questionnaire	Video of Victoria Wood
8	Hand out notes on different research methods and show a video of a focus group in action. Lead short discussion on the pros and cons of a focus group. Hand out articles about Skoda cars and the 'Brown Linkage Test' and ask students to read them after the session	Notes and articles, task outlines
2	Set tasks to carry out a questionnaire and small focus group related to current module assignment	
2	Remind students about the written report that is required for this module and hand out a bullet point list of what is required and how it fits into today's session. Advise that they should really try to do the report by the end of this week	
7	Hand out blank time-planning sheets and ask students to spend five minutes quickly identifying their commitments for the week ahead (work, socialising etc) and then identify times to do the tasks set today. At the bottom of the sheet they should identify any areas they think they will need help. Ask them to make a copy of the sheet and hand it in to the office by 4.30pm	Time plan sheets and examples
5	Outline the aims and objectives of the session again and how they have been covered. Ask for quick questions and feedback. Check everyone is happy, then let them go	First transparency

**A FIRST DRAFT SESSION PLAN BASED ON THE PLANNING GRID, ABOVE**

# SESSION 4

## **JAMIE OLIVER AND THE NAKED ADVERTISING PROCESS**

DATE: **24 November**

TIME: **13:30 – 15:30**

PLACE: **Room 214**

TUTOR: **Sarah Reece**

This session looks at the development of a recent advertising campaign for Safeway starring TV chef Jamie Oliver.

By the end of the session you should be able to:

- **OUTLINE THE PROCESS OF COMMISSIONING A CAMPAIGN**
- **USE DIFFERENT RESEARCH METHODS ('QUALITATIVE' AND 'QUANTITATIVE') TO TEST YOUR ADVERTISING CONCEPTS**
- **EVALUATE A CASE STUDY (THE SAFEWAY CAMPAIGN) AND IDENTIFY KEY INCIDENTS**
- **YOU WILL ALSO BE ABLE TO PRODUCE A PLAN OF ATTACK FOR THE FOLLOWING WEEK'S WORK**

During the session you will be briefed on an important task, and given vital information for the written report for this module.

**Before the session**, please watch the video "How Advertising Works", two copies of which are reserved for you behind the desk in the library. When you borrow this you will be given a worksheet each – do the short tasks on the sheet while you watch and bring your notes with you to the session; you will need them! You will not be able to take the video out of the library during the week before this session.

**THE STUDENT-FRIENDLY VERSION OF THE SESSION PLAN – WHILE IT'S OKAY TO 'SEX UP' THIS SORT OF PLAN, BE CAREFUL THAT YOU DON'T END UP DISAPPOINTING STUDENTS**

## Tutorials and Other Teaching Approaches

### 5 PROBLEMS WITH TRADITIONAL TEACHING METHODS

There is nothing wrong with "traditional" teaching – it is just that it is not always appropriate to what it is that you want students to learn. A traditional "crit" for example is good at letting the teacher get an overview of the aesthetic progress of a class, but very poor at understanding the extent of students' learning. It is also a long and often dull if not frightening process for students. There may be other ways to achieve the intended outcomes, but in all subjects, not just ours, there is a tendency to stick with what we know – or how we were taught.

But what exactly do we mean by "student-centred"? In their *Handbook for Teachers in Universities and Colleges*<sup>2</sup> Cannon and Newble list some of the distinctions between "traditional" and student-centred learning, which we have adapted slightly for art and design below:

STUDENT CENTRED	TRADITIONAL
Students have a responsible and active role in planning their learning, interacting with teachers and other students, researching, and assessing	Students are often passive (no role in planning learning; sitting in lectures; listening to tutors talking about their work)
Students required to make choices about what and how to learn	Most decisions made by the teacher
Emphasis on integrating learning across the curriculum	Emphasis on learning this subject only
Emphasis on enquiry-type activities	Emphasis on receiving information
Teacher as guide, mentor and facilitator of learning	Teacher as expert dispenser of knowledge and controller of activities
Intrinsic motivation (from interest, curiosity, responsibility)	Extrinsic motivation (grades, teacher praise)
Focus on cooperative learning	Individual learning and competition between students
Learning can occur anywhere	Learning confined to fixed venues (lecture room, studio, library etc)
Greater flexibility in learning and teaching	Relatively inflexible arrangements
Greater flexibility in assessment with self and peer assessment becoming more common	Assessment seen as the responsibility of the teacher with work towards a final performance deadline
Long-term perspective: emphasis on lifelong learning	Short-term perspective: emphasis on completing assigned work and learning for final project or exhibition

<sup>2</sup>Cannon and Newble, 2000

TRADITIONAL AND STUDENT-CENTRED TEACHING, ADAPTED FROM CANNON AND NEWBLE

Looking at this list, it seems that some of the least effective methods of teaching are:

- ❖ THE TRADITIONAL 'CRIT'
- ❖ IMPROMPTU ONE-TO-ONE
- ❖ INDIVIDUAL TUTORIALS

This may come as a shock as they are among the most popular methods in art and design, jealously guarded even in the face of increasing student numbers and diminishing resources. Let us quickly look at the problems with each

### 5.1. THE TRADITIONAL CRIT

Commonly found in two main forms. In the first, the whole student group is asked to put up their work and then stand or sit while tutors work their way around each piece, offering criticisms on each and asking students to defend their work. In the second, small groups of around ten students take it in turns to show their work to two or more tutors and receive advice on what to do next.

Problems with this sort of tutorial format include

:

- ❖ TUTORS TALK MORE THAN THE STUDENTS
- ❖ THERE IS AN AIR OF CONFRONTATION
- ❖ FOR AT LEAST AN HOUR, NO ACTIVE LEARNING IS TAKING PLACE
- ❖ THE CRIT FOCUSES ON AESTHETICS, NOT LEARNING
- ❖ THE TUTORS ARE THE EXPERTS, THE STUDENTS SIMPLY LISTEN
- ❖ STUDENTS FIND IT TERRIFYING
- ❖ STUDENTS FIND IT BORING
- ❖ IT DOES NOT LINK TO THE MODULE OUTCOMES OR ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
- ❖ TUTORS CONTRADICT EACH OTHER
- ❖ TUTORS OFTEN CONTRADICT THEMSELVES
- ❖ WITH THE ROUND-TABLE TYPE OF CRIT, WHAT IS HAPPENING TO THE OTHER STUDENTS NOT BEING SEEN?

## Tutorials and Other Teaching Approaches

- ❖ **THERE ARE BETTER WAYS TO ACHIEVE THE THINGS THAT TUTORS THINK CRITS ARE GOOD FOR**

Among the reasons given to keep the crit are that:

- ❖ **IT IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO COMPARE ALL STUDENTS**  
THIS FORM OF COMPARISON IS CALLED 'NORM REFERENCING', BUT TAKES NO ACCOUNT OF THE DEPTH OF A STUDENT'S LEARNING. A PIECE OF WORK MAY APPEAR TO BE FANTASTIC – BUT THE STUDENT MAY NOT HAVE LEARNT ANYTHING ALONG THE WAY EXCEPT HOW TO PLEASE YOUR EYE. THE NEXT STUDENT MAY NOT HAVE PRODUCED A VISUALLY STUNNING PIECE OF WORK, BUT HAS LEARNT FAR MORE THAT MIGHT BE DEMONSTRATED LATER IN THE MODULE OR COURSE.
- ❖ **STUDENTS CAN SEE WHAT GOOD WORK LOOKS LIKE**  
AS ABOVE, SUBJECTIVE JUDGMENTS OF "GOOD WORK" ARE UNHELPFUL. THIS TYPE OF ACTIVITY PROMOTES "SURFACE" LEARNING WITH STUDENTS ATTEMPTING TO COPY THE TECHNIQUES AND STYLES THEY THINK GET GOOD MARKS.
- ❖ **IT IS TRADITIONAL**  
SO WERE POUNDS, SHILLINGS AND PENCE, BUT TIMES CHANGE – TRADITION IS NO GUARANTEE OF QUALITY OR WORTH.
- ❖ **THAT IS HOW WE WERE TAUGHT**  
AS WE MENTIONED IN THE INTRODUCTION, TODAY'S STUDENTS ARE VASTLY DIFFERENT TO HOW WE WERE, AND WE OWE IT TO THEM TO SELECT AND CREATE NEW, EFFECTIVE METHODS AIMED AT THEIR LEARNING NEEDS, NOT OUR MEMORIES.
- ❖ **IT BOOSTS CONFIDENCE**  
ACTUALLY, IT DOESN'T – FOR EVERY STUDENT WHO LOOKS BACK WITH ROSE TINTED GLASSES AND TALKS WISTFULLY OF THE DAY THEY WERE PULLED APART IN FRONT OF EVERYONE ELSE, THERE WILL BE TEN WHO DIED A THOUSAND DEATHS. AGAIN, USING OUR OWN MEMORIES IS NOT A GOOD MEASURE – WE ARE NOT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MAJORITY OF STUDENTS.  
THERE IS ANOTHER POINT TO BEAR IN MIND – UNDER RECENT LEGISLATION YOU MUST MAKE SURE YOUR TEACHING METHODS ARE "INCLUSIVE". FORCING STUDENTS WHO ARE SUFFERING FROM DEPRESSION, OR ARE CHRONICALLY SHY, TO UNDERGO THE TRADITIONAL CRITIQUE MAY RESULT IN SERIOUS PROBLEMS LATER ON.

### 5.2. IMPROMPTU ONE-TO-ONE

Impromptu one-to-ones should be avoided unless specifically timetabled. Research has shown that "studio cruising", a common type

of teaching in art and design, is a very poor way of getting students to focus on learning or to reflect on their work<sup>3</sup>. If you have been asked simply to walk around a studio helping students where necessary, consider how your time might be better spent in planning a series of short small-group discussions instead, working your way methodically through an entire class, while making sure the rest of the class is actively engaged in something else.

The "corridor tutorial" in which a student corners you in the most unlikely of places (staff in one college had to complain about students following them in to the toilet!) is the least effective form of tutorial. However, it often occurs because students are not getting the answers they need in timetabled sessions. If you are getting a lot of requests for impromptu help, try to find out why, and work out how your planned sessions could be improved. Contrary to popular belief, it is not the mark of a "committed" teacher to always be available – doing that eats into your essential planning time, and means you are spending inordinate amounts of time on a relative few students. Be firm but polite in dealing with requests for corridor tutorials.

### 5.3. INDIVIDUAL TUTORIALS

Preserving one-to-one teaching is a battle cry of many teachers who resist accepting greater numbers of students into higher education. Traditional one-to-one tutorials are ideal for discussing personal issues and academic progress on the course as a whole, but we would not recommend them for teaching if the things you want to achieve can be better served through student-to-student interaction. Apart from the immense drain on resources, tutorials are often simply ineffective at promoting deep learning and reflection on the part of the student, and are a strain for both them and you. In five hours you might be able to see ten students on a one-to-one basis including the attendant paperwork. By organising students in small groups of four you could see forty in the same space of time while both you and they get far more out of it.

If you are asked to run one-to-one tutorials, consider changing the format.

### 5.4. RETHINKING TRADITIONAL TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Having demolished the three icons of teaching in art and design, you may be wondering what is left. You may also be surprised by the first suggestion: have you considered a crit?

In many cases, making simple changes to favourite methods of teaching can dramatically affect the effectiveness of the session.

<sup>3</sup> Davies and Reid, 2000

## Tutorials and Other Teaching Approaches

The following example, first published in the Times Higher Education Supplement, illustrates the point.

"One morning, both my colleagues called in sick with flu. Initially, being left alone with two large year groups filled me with panic, particularly as, against all the odds, both the first and third year groups had turned up in their entirety. Just me and 100 students – it didn't look good. The third years were due for an interim crit and had been busy preparing. The brief had called on them to produce an advertising campaign aimed at 18-25 year olds but instead of considering the social and cultural aspects of the target audience and exploring different ways of making them respond to a message, as the module required, they had focussed on satisfying the taste of the assessor, a huge fan of type and modernism; consequently, most of the pieces made heavy use of them. This sort of response, encouraged by traditional A&D teaching methods, would have been poor at level one, but for students approaching the end of a degree, it required urgent attention.

Meanwhile, the first years had reached that point in the course where they start to flag. Unlike one colleague, ever ready to blame "idle" students, I knew the fault was ours: we were boring them, and keeping them in the dark about how they were progressing. I felt they needed a little glimpse into the future to help them fit everything into place and boost their motivation. An idea began to form...

Fortunately both year groups knew each other well thanks to a mentoring scheme I had introduced in which third years 'looked after' first years. It had resulted in some great social interactions and even pastoral care, making up for the times when I couldn't be there, or when students didn't feel comfortable talking to a tutor. So, when I told the third years they were going to be evaluated by the first years, they were surprised, but enthusiastic. Having only just decided to do it, I was less so. Hopefully, my face didn't show it.

I formed the first years into groups of five and armed them with post-it notes. As each third year team presented, they were to write down at least three positive comments, three constructive criticisms and three questions for the team. They were to think like 18-25 year olds, not like Graphic Design students. After each presentation, I allowed time for discussion in the groups, then asked for comments and encouraged the presenters to seek clarification. As expected, comments focussed almost entirely on the ideas and why they would or wouldn't work for them (speaking as the target audience). Few commented on the visuals except to say they weren't to their taste. This contrasted with usual tutor comments, which focussed on technical aspects – "making things look nice" as one student put it. The third years began to realise their visually attractive pieces weren't

very effective but, rather than being upset at the implications, they began to ask for even more feedback. It was like a traditional crit in reverse – despite being the only member of staff there, it was probably the easiest day of my career. After each team had finished, they collected in the post-its to look at later. In this way, first years who felt uncomfortable speaking out were able to make anonymous comments.

It was a long day – but the buzz in that crowded, sticky room was intense, and, importantly, not one student had sloped off despite several breaks and a lunch hour – a sure sign that the session had got them thinking and interested, and proof positive that attendance is as much down to us as to students. At five, most students carried on to the bar where the conversations continued about design and its effectiveness. The sight of students working hard over a burger and a beer is one to behold. One team completely revamped their ideas using the available first years as critics, and many of the first years were asking excited questions about what the next two years held for them. Deep learning from the third years, and a sense of context and progression for the first – not to mention a feeling of being valued for their opinions. At the end of the year, while going through third year portfolios prior to the external examiner's visit, I found that almost all of them contained fully annotated photocopies of the first years' post-it notes."

This description of a crit answers all the criticisms made earlier – there was little, if any, tutor involvement. Students were making evaluations of the sort that they should be able to make, and those receiving the feedback got far more than they would have done in a traditional crit. The fact that the session remained fully attended, and even carried on informally afterwards, is proof of success but more so is the way in which the feedback was kept and analysed afterwards. And only one tutor was involved showing that it is not necessary to deal with large classes by increasing the number of staff.

In fact, this session worked so well that similar activities were properly planned for the future. By having 100 students with just one tutor, teaching time was saved up for other occasions to allow for more staff to come in at critical times, rather than just having a formulaic approach of, say, four staff in all day every day no matter what.

The example here was unplanned. But it led to the development of two further variations which were fully planned and trialled before becoming regular additions to the TLA toolkit. They are outlined on the next page.

## VARIATION A: THE STUDENT-LED CRIT

**LEARNING OUTCOME:** STUDENTS WILL EVALUATE THEIR WORK AND THAT OF THEIR PEERS, AND PLAN IMPROVEMENTS BASED ON FEEDBACK

Give students post-it notes and a set of criteria, and form them into pairs or more. Ask them to go around the studio looking at each piece. They should briefly discuss the work and summarise their discussion into comments which should be written on a post-it and stuck on or near the work. The criteria should relate to one or more of the stated module learning outcomes. After an hour, students should then collect together the comments from their work and summarise them on a sheet of A4 paper. The morning session can be supervised by one member of staff.

In the afternoon, four more members of staff join in (or students from another year) and form the students into groups of around five. They spend an hour discussing the comments (not the work). At the end of the hour, students add their own comments to their sheets including a short plan of action, for example a way to improve what they have learnt.

At the end of the afternoon, tutors feed back on the quality of the comments left by students, and the students' level of involvement with the evaluations of their peers.

## VARIATION B: THE NEGOTIATED ASSESSMENT

**LEARNING OUTCOME:** STUDENTS WILL EVALUATE THEIR WORK AND THAT OF THEIR PEERS, AND DETERMINE A GRADE BASED ON THE PUBLISHED ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Students are gathered together in groups of five at the end of a module. They are asked to bring their work and sketchbooks with them. One tutor sits with each group. They begin to discuss a student's work, using the assessment criteria and learning outcomes as an agenda of the things to be covered. As the student talks, the tutor listens and, instead of making comments, asks the other students if they have anything to say, prompting where necessary using phrases like "That's interesting – would you agree with that, Simon?"

As others comment on their work, students are asked to write notes next to each of the learning outcomes under headings such as "good aspects", and "areas for improvement". At the end of the discussion, the student is asked, based on the assessment criteria, what grade they think they should get. The other students are asked if they agree. If the tutor disagrees, he points out why and tries to help the students understand. Agreement is reached (almost always the agreement is the tutor's grade) and the student's notes taken to be used as written feedback, before turning to the next student's work. In this way, the assessment process becomes transparent and is perceived as being fair. Students also get to compare their work with others' but understand how their grades are arrived at, and the arduous task of writing feedback is delegated to the students writing notes that are then summarised by the tutor or simply annotated and signed.

The key to these two variations is getting the students active, which the traditional crit format prevents them from being. But the activity is entirely related to the intended learning outcomes, and the "crit" as a technique is preserved.

---

## 6 STRUCTURING YOUR TEACHING

---

## Tutorials and Other Teaching Approaches

Sequencing is important and can be as simple as making sure you learn one thing before you learn something else that depends on the first thing (e.g. don't unscrew the wheel nuts until you have jacked the car up...)

But sequencing can be far more creative than that – for example, it is often a good idea to let students have an overview of a subject so they know where they are heading. So you might start off very complex, but quickly bring it down to the right level. There's no reason not to teach how to remove a wheel before you teach them to jack the car up, so long as you make sure that you do cover it at some point, and make it clear that there is some important knowledge missing and when it will be covered.

In this section we will look at some concepts to consider when planning sessions, or a sequence of sessions. They are intended as starting points – there are other models and you will undoubtedly come up with your own.

### The four structures



Your tutorial is like a little Russian doll inside lots of others. To get at it, you need to open the others up first. When planning the structure you need to bear four structures in mind:

## Tutorials and Other Teaching Approaches

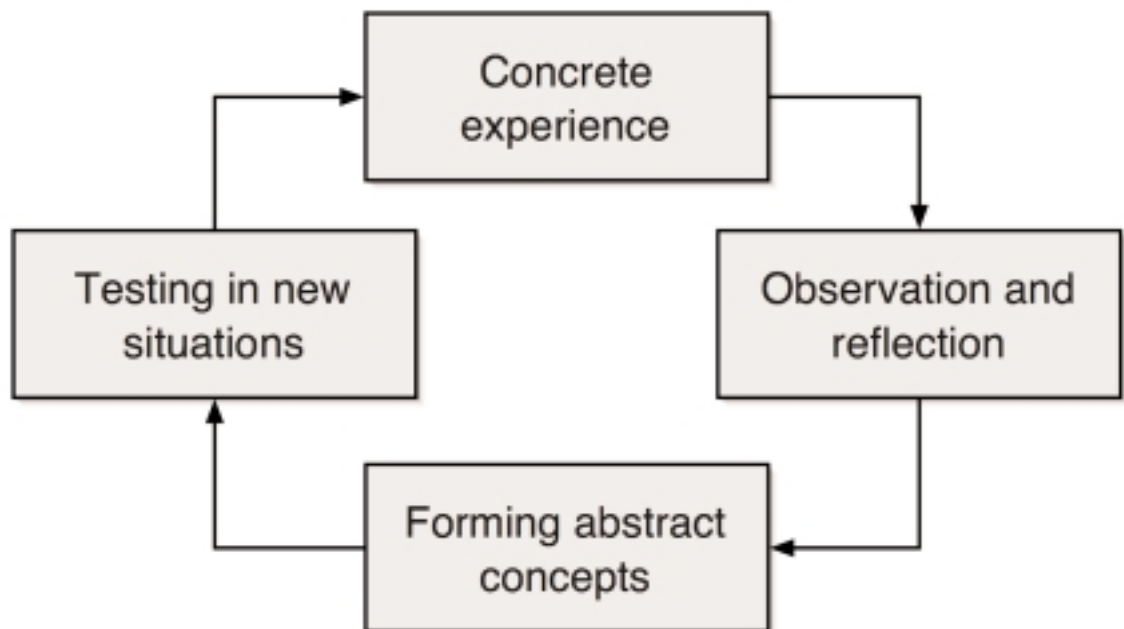
- ❖ THE STRUCTURE OF THE WHOLE COURSE
- ❖ THE STRUCTURE OF THE MODULE
- ❖ THE STRUCTURE OF YOUR SESSIONS WITHIN THE MODULE
- ❖ THE STRUCTURE OF EACH INDIVIDUAL SESSION

As a part-time teacher you will have varying levels of influence over the first two or even three sequences (though as an expert in your subject you should feel free to provide constructive feedback to the team). It is important that you exercise as much control as possible over the sequencing of the sessions you teach.

### 6.1. KOLB'S EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CYCLE

Most teaching courses at some point make mention of "Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle" to such an extent that it has become almost a cliché. This is a shame as it is a very useful model to consider.

Basically, it suggests that effective learning takes place when students are able to test out new ideas or skills, reflect on their experience, adapt the ideas to suit their experience, then test them again. This process might take place several times before the student is assessed.



#### **Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle**

*This translates into the maxim "Learning by Doing".*

<b>A BASIC EXAMPLE OF A KOLB-BASED SESSION</b>
Get students to plan what they are going to do, let them do it in a group or individually, then ask them to review what they have done and plan improvements.

**6.2. RENDERING STUDENTS UNCONSCIOUS...**

Another way of approaching teaching is to think of learning as a four-step process:

<b>UNCONSCIOUS IGNORANCE</b>	The student does not know that they do not know something (e.g. a student has never heard a piano played or considered learning)
<b>CONSCIOUS IGNORANCE</b>	The student is now aware that there is something they need to know (they hear someone play the piano and begin the first steps towards learning)
<b>CONSCIOUS KNOWLEDGE</b>	The student knows they know something (they can play quite well but they have to think about it)
<b>UNCONSCIOUS KNOWLEDGE</b>	The student knows something but is no longer consciously aware of it (they can play with their eyes closed – more importantly, they don't just play, they perform)

**TAKING YOUR TIME**

That last aspect, which may also be called "expertise" is where we are aiming, though it is unlikely to happen in the space of one session. It may not even be the ultimate aim until the end of the course, or after it, and this is another consideration you need to make. Take this example:

## Tutorials and Other Teaching Approaches

### GETTING THE LEVEL WRONG

Mike is a part-time tutor one day a week. The rest of the week he is a senior partner in a web design agency. He takes a group of students at the start of their second year for a technical component of a module in web design looking at the development of user interfaces.

He quickly realises that the students have never done this sort of thing before and is disappointed in their first attempts. Over the course of the module there is some improvement, but none of the work is of commercial quality. He gives bare passes to most of the students and fails the others, telling them that they would never get a job in industry with that quality of work.

Of course, in his last judgement, Mike may be correct – but you probably spotted that while it might be an appropriate thing to say to an employee after a few months' experience in his company, it was an inappropriate evaluation to make of a student just starting the second year of an undergraduate programme. The module is probably a level two module, but the students are starting out with level one (or lower) understanding and experience. His first session should have been designed to judge students' knowledge and understanding as they enter the module, and his tutorials should have been planned to help them progress to a predetermined exit point (the pass criteria for the module) or better.

Mike, as well intentioned as he is, is being impatient, ignoring the fact that the students have another two years before they even begin looking for jobs in industry, and that it is okay to produce work that would be substandard at postgraduate level. That's a concept that a lot of people have difficulty with.

You need to aim your teaching, and your judgment of students' learning, at the right level. You also need to allow time for expertise to develop. Remember the Russian dolls? Your tutorial is only a small, but vital, component of a larger structure. The Conscious /Unconscious structure is a good one to use when planning a whole module, particularly if you are able to connect it with other modules.

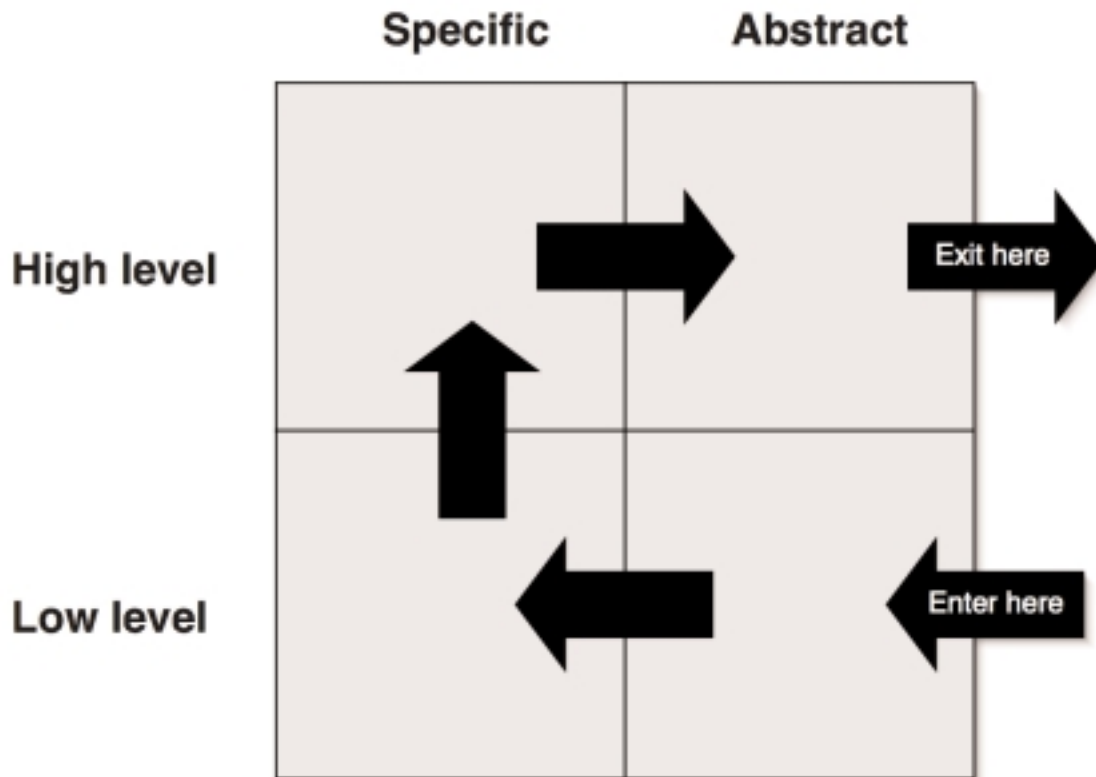
### A BASIC EXAMPLE OF A CONSCIOUS/UNCONSCIOUS MODEL

- INTRODUCE A NEW CONCEPT TO STUDENTS IN THE FIRST SESSION
- GET STUDENTS TO PLAN WHAT THEY ARE GOING TO DO IN THE NEXT SESSION
- LET THEM DO IT IN A GROUP OR INDIVIDUALLY OVER A PERIOD OF TIME WITH REGULAR REVIEW SESSIONS
- IN THE FINAL SESSION REVIEW WHAT THEY HAVE DONE
- ARRANGE SMALL GROUP TUTORIALS TO REVIEW THEIR LEARNING IN MORE DETAIL
- PLAN "INVISIBLE" OPPORTUNITIES FOR THEM TO PRACTISE THEIR NEW SKILLS IN FUTURE MODULES
- ASK THEM SIX MONTHS OR A YEAR ON TO IDENTIFY WHERE THEY HAVE PRACTISED THEIR NEW SKILLS

## Tutorials and Other Teaching Approaches

### 6.3. THE ABSTRACT-SPECIFIC-ABSTRACT MODEL

A third way of looking at sequencing a session or number of sessions is shown in the diagram below:



Moving from abstract to specific then back to abstract knowledge

In this model, a topic is introduced using an abstract but fairly low-level reference outside the students' or the course's area, is then brought into focus, before finally being placed again in a broader, higher-level context.

So a session on team work might start by talking about the performance of the England squad in the World Cup (abstract, low level), then look at the different roles people play in a football team (specific, low level). This then becomes a discussion on teamwork on the course (specific, high level), before being linked to the way teams work in industry (abstract, high level).

## Tutorials and Other Teaching Approaches

### A BASIC EXAMPLE OF **ABSTRACT-SPECIFIC-ABSTRACT** MODEL

- Visit a factory to look at the production line from start to finish. In a lecture, look at the product before it got to the factory, and the way the product is used. Show how demand often leads to supply
- Show how products such as clothes are designed to fit with demand, and analyse the whole process and the designer's role in that process
- Look at the students' working methods and how they tackle a brief
- Talk about how design can also stimulate, rather than follow, demand
- Visit a factory to see how product designers solved spare capacity by coming up with an innovative new product

---

## 7 DISCUSSION AS LEARNING

---

There are those of us who still remember, maybe with a tear in the eye, the days when school was a silent place. Teacher spoke, you listened. Talking in class was forbidden. Go into any school now and the difference is amazing – talking is not only allowed, it is positively encouraged.

This is because we often learn best when we are actively able to talk a problem or concept over with others. As we said before, there has to be an aim to the activity, which is where planning comes in, and there are tricks and techniques to getting constructive discussion going.

### **A WORD ABOUT LEARNING STYLES**

Not everyone learns in the same way, as you are probably aware from your own personal experience. For example, some people like to approach a subject with a broad overview, then go into detail. Others like a methodical step by step approach and are put off if they get a glimpse of the "big stuff" too early on. Others love nothing more than being able to piece seemingly unconnected bits of information together. Some people are social learners, others are not and are happiest when left alone. Being aware of students' preferred learning styles is important, but difficult. At the very simplest level, it means structuring a tutorial in such a way that there is a range of different types of activity – for example, a mix of you talking and students taking notes, and students discussing what you have said, followed by a few minutes for private reflection and summary. Many studies of learning styles have been undertaken, including some specifically in art and design and you may find it interesting to read more about this area. Some suggested sources of information are at the back of this section.

One of the best things you can do to support learning is to allow students the opportunity to discuss their work with each other rather than simply listen to you talking about it. This is an empowering experience, but some teachers think it relegates them from the role of subject expert – surely we are there so they can learn from us?

Effective discussion among students does not stem from simply asking them to look at each other's work and say what they think needs doing to it, there has to be a structure and your role as subject expert comes in by ensuring that discussion is guided, that students look at and talk about the right things, and that the right conclusions (where appropriate) are reached.

### MIKE WORKS IT OUT

We met Mike, our web designer, earlier when he was judging second year students the way he might judge his own employees. Later in the module he was teaching he began to feel a sense of frustration that students were turning up to his tutorials, and he was showing them what to do next. He felt that not only was it a waste of his time, he wondered how the students would cope if he weren't there. While working in his company one day he observed his team and noticed that his designers worked on their own, but regularly socialised to discuss what each other was doing and offering help and advice to one another. He knew that if he got involved too early there was a chance that his staff would simply design to his tastes, in order to please him, and that the only discussion going on between staff would be resentment – hardly productive! Back in his office he looked at his plan for the following day's teaching and realised he wasn't allowing students the opportunity to work the way he wanted his own team to work, and that rather than learning anything, all they were doing was designing to suit his taste. The next day he began by handing out clear copies of the assessment criteria, and made the session an opportunity for small groups to discuss each other's work without him present. Instead, he observed the whole group and made notes about common issues. Halfway through the tutorial he stopped the students and summarised his top issues, then started the students discussing again, using those points as the agenda. Towards the end of the tutorial he asked a member of each group to summarise their discussion, and Mike concluded the lesson with a free-for-all whole-group talk.

As with any tutorial, a discussion-based session needs to be planned properly, with the right resources available. The room needs to be entirely appropriate, with furniture arranged in a suitable format, and you need to have effective stimuli to aid the conversation in the form of handouts, slides, case studies, videos etc.

There are also certain tricks you can use to get the discussion going, monitor what is going on, and to stop it effectively.

#### 7.1. STARTING A DISCUSSION

Discussion should not start off cold. There are lots of techniques for kick-starting student discussion. Here are just a few:

## Tutorials and Other Teaching Approaches

<b>Summarise the last tutorial</b>	Ask students individually or in pairs to come up with three points of interest from the last tutorial. Go round the group and get each student's "top" point. Each successive student should not repeat another person's point.
<b>Get questions</b>	Ask students to write down one question they have about the current module or project, or that they are unsure of from the last session. Put them into groups of four to quickly discuss what they came up with, and attempt to answer them within the groups. Ask the groups to pick one question they could not answer and raise it with the whole class.
<b>Be controversial</b>	Say something you think may be controversial to the students (but not offensive) and ask students to discuss arguments for and against what you have said.
<b>Fishbowl</b>	A technique many teachers want to use but don't is to get a small group of students to sit in the middle of the room and discuss or do something while everyone watches and makes notes. After they have finished, discuss what people thought.
<b>Anonymity</b>	One of the biggest barriers to student discussion is shyness. You will often find students feel unable to comment on each other's work or are scared to. Or you might be asking them to discuss a controversial issue where people with certain views don't feel able to raise them in public. The humble post-it note is a good tool to have (in fact we strongly recommend you have a good supply of post-its handy at all times). Asking students to note points down privately, one point per post-it, and to pass them to others to be sorted or summarised, helps preserve anonymity. It also helps when a student sees that they may not be alone in their view, or to be able to sit back and listen while the rest of the group discusses their point without knowing who made it. Well worth trying.
<b>Brainstorm</b>	Give out flip chart paper and markers and get students to come up with thoughts in small groups. These should be written down without argument. Alternatively, ask for comments to be shouted out for you to write up. Select interesting ones to discuss further, or cherry pick the ones you plan to focus on today.
<b>Buzz groups</b>	Simply give small groups something to talk about for a few minutes, then summarise later. A good technique for breaking up tutorials or lectures.
<b>Crossovers</b>	Stop a discussion and ask one member to move to the next group with their notes and tell them what their group was saying. Can be repeated until all groups are entirely mixed.
<b>Poster presentation</b>	Underused in art and design yet potentially useful, ask groups to summarise their thoughts as a poster, then get groups to go round each poster making comments (on post-its or on the poster itself).

### 7.2. PYRAMIDING

Pyramiding, or snowballing, is an extremely effective way of starting a constructive discussion in groups of eight or more.

In pyramiding you ask students to pair up and give them a topic to discuss. As one person talks, the other makes brief notes. They then swap.

After a few minutes (tell them how long they have), ask pairs to join together to form fours. Get the students to summarise their notes from the previous discussion – e.g. Student A tells Students C and D what they were told by Student B. During this phase, all the students make notes.

Depending on the size of the class, you may then ask fours to form eights, in which one person from each group tells the others the highlights of their discussion.

Eventually, stop the discussion and go round each large sub group and ask a spokesperson to summarise their discussion. They should point out areas of agreement and areas of disagreement, along with interesting points that came up.

You then summarise the whole discussion.

Pyramiding is good from the students' point of view because it allows them an opportunity to share their thoughts on an equal basis and to compare them with others. This then transforms into a collective ownership and degree of anonymity. It also has an obvious structure to it, with the discussion building to a conclusion and being passed back to the tutor.

From your point of view, pyramiding is useful because

- ❖ **IT GIVES YOU TIME TO THINK (PYRAMIDING CAN LAST UP TO HALF AN HOUR IF NOT MORE)**
- ❖ **IT IS EASY TO WALK AROUND LISTENING IN, AND NOTING DOWN INTERESTING THINGS TO BE RAISED LATER**
- ❖ **LIKE A MAGICIAN ENSURING THE RIGHT CARD IS PICKED FROM THE PACK, YOU CAN SUMMARISE A DISCUSSION IN A WAY THAT ENSURES THE POINTS YOU WANTED TO RAISE ARE RAISED – WHICH COINCIDENTALLY YOU CAME PREPARED TO DISCUSS IN MORE DETAIL (THIS MAKES THE STUDENTS FEEL THEY ARE SETTING THE AGENDA AND GIVES THEM A SENSE OF OWNERSHIP)**

## Tutorials and Other Teaching Approaches

- ❖ **THE SAME POINTS WILL COME UP IN A HALF-HOUR PYRAMIDING SESSION AS YOU WOULD HAVE "TAUGHT" IN THE SAME SPACE OF TIME. BUT DOING IT THIS WAY HELPS IT "GO IN"**

You can use pyramiding for all sorts of things. Here are some suggested questions:

- ❖ **NOW YOU ARE HALFWAY THROUGH THE PROJECT, WHAT DO YOU WISH YOU HAD DONE DIFFERENTLY, AND WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU HAVE LEARNT?**
- ❖ **BEFORE WE START THIS MODULE, WHAT DO YOU THINK IT IS ABOUT, AND WHAT ARE YOU MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO? WHAT ARE YOU MOST WORRIED ABOUT?**
- ❖ **WHAT IS YOUR PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE OF WEB DESIGN/PATTERN CUTTING/ESSAY WRITING/ADOBE PHOTOSHOP?**

---

## 8 HANDLING DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

---

## Tutorials and Other Teaching Approaches

No matter how well planned, no tutorial is likely to go to plan. In fact, you should plan in a certain amount of flexibility! When we refer to 'difficult situations' what do we mean? Some situations are best avoided while others might actually be good.

<b>THINK OF FIVE DIFFERENT THINGS THAT COULD GO 'WRONG' DURING A TUTORIAL. IF YOU HAVE TAUGHT BEFORE, THESE COULD BE FROM YOUR OWN EXPERIENCE. IF YOU ARE NEW TO TEACHING, WHAT SORT OF THINGS DO YOU WORRY ABOUT?</b>	
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

# Tutorials and Other Teaching Approaches

We will come back to that list later on.

The worst thing about a lot of difficult situations is that they are unpredictable – or so they seem. In fact, most types of situation can be predicted to some extent, and for this section we will be borrowing from techniques used in, among other things, project management where predicting the unpredictable, and putting measures in place just in case, is vital to the success of any operation. It may seem odd to talk about planning for the unpredictable – hopefully this will become clear!

## 8.1. PROBLEMS IN CONTEXT

The type of situation you create will have an effect on the type of problem you are likely to get. If a student turns up late or unprepared to a one-to-one, it will have an entirely different effect to them turning up late to a group tutorial. For example:

ONE TO ONE	GROUP TUTORIAL
Less time available to discuss the issues the tutorial is meant to...	Student needs to bring themselves up to speed on what they've missed
...or serious over-run if you allow extra time, causing problems for you and anyone reliant on you finishing on time	Less time to evaluate that student's understanding
Easier to chastise the student Easier to find out why the student is late	Difficult to chastise the student without spoiling the flow or causing embarrassment
Little effect on other students	Easier to jump to a conclusion about the student
...and so on	Potentially large effect on other students
	...and so on

Of course this list is not exhaustive, but it does show important points. The first one that springs to mind is that, when discussing students with colleagues, it is easy to jump to conclusions. Students who are late or arrive unprepared are often described as 'lazy' or 'uncommitted', but here are some reasons that have occurred in real situations why students can be late:

- **TRANSPORT DIFFICULTIES (LATE TRAINS)**
- **BUILDING WORK IN THE UNIVERSITY GROUNDS HAS REDUCED THE NUMBER OF CAR PARKING PLACES**
- **THE TIMETABLE CHANGED AT THE LAST MINUTE**

- YOU ARE NOT IN THE ROOM YOU SAID YOU WOULD BE IN
- THEY ARRIVED ON TIME BUT YOU WEREN'T READY
- THEY HAD TO TAKE THEIR CHILD TO SCHOOL
- THEIR CHILDREN ARE SICK
- THEIR PARTNER IS SICK
- THEY ARE SICK
- THEY HAVE TO LOOK AFTER THEIR YOUNGER BROTHER OR SISTER AS THEIR MOTHER IS DISABLED
- THEIR GAS BOILER BROKE DOWN AND THEY HAD TO WAIT FOR THE PLUMBER
- THEY ARE HAVING LANDLORD PROBLEMS
- THEY BROKE UP WITH THEIR BOYFRIEND
- THEY WERE WORKING UNTIL 4AM IN A PART TIME JOB IN ORDER TO BE ABLE TO PAY RENT AND FEES

Some of the excuses are less serious than others (but if you've ever broken up with a boyfriend or girlfriend, you will know that what appears to someone else as trivial is a world-shattering event to you). Also, some of the reasons are to do with you (how do you advertise room changes? Was there a misprint in the timetable? Did you get information to the student on time?) But somebody who battles in to college despite the delays on the rail network is hardly uncommitted. And a student who is keeping down a part time job in order to pay to be on the course is in no way lazy. But labelling a student in this way can actually cause a lack of commitment.

The point here is that in handling a difficult situation, you need to make sure you are well prepared. This does not mean getting to know the intimate details of your students; it means simply thinking before acting.

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- ❖ How might you react in a one-to-one situation to a student arriving late and/or unprepared?
- ❖ How might you act in a group situation?

## Tutorials and Other Teaching Approaches

### DISCUSSION

Here are some suggestions.

#### ONE-TO-ONE

Simply mention the fact that the student is late but in a friendly, questioning manner. Wait to see if an explanation is offered. No matter how serious or trivial the excuse, mention that it would have been a good idea for the student to have rung up (but be careful to know what the policy is on this – often students do ring but the message never gets through to the tutor who needs it). For a first offence, simply agree with the student what the correct thing is for them to do but do not patronise them. If the reason is a serious one, help the student to find sources of support and ask if you can discuss the issue with other members of staff (for example, if the student reveals a difficult family situation or illness.)

#### GROUP TUTORIAL

Do not mention the fact that the student is late in front of everyone else – you do not know whether they simply slept in or have just received some very bad news. Simply welcome them in and help them find a vacant seat, then carry on.

If the student has missed something, mention to them that they will need to speak to others to catch up afterwards, and see if you can get an agreement from another student to do that with them.

At the end of the session, ask the late student for a quick word but in an open and friendly way. If the student is apologetic and the reason is trivial, let it go with a comment about the importance of being on time and making sure they catch up.

If the student is unapologetic, take a sterner approach. If the problem is a serious one (e.g. family troubles) arrange a tutorial or direct them to a source of support. If it is trivial but likely to cause repeated problems (e.g. restricted car parking or late trains) quickly discuss how the problem can be overcome while it lasts. (For example, in the case of car parking, don't tell the student simply to set off earlier – suggest car pooling or using public transport, then suggest they take the matter up with their student rep or the student union, and make sure you raise it as an issue with the course leader.)

### 8.2 BASIC SURVIVAL TIPS

#### DON'T TAKE IT TO HEART

Even the most experienced teachers face awkward situations. The 'difficult' student who refuses to take part in activities and simply wants you to tell them what they should know, the 'know it all' student, the morning after the big party, and for all we've said defending the apparently lazy, unmotivated students, there will be times when that's exactly what they are! But on the whole you should be dealing with reasonable, intelligent individuals so dealing rationally and with consideration would help to win over even the most stubborn of groups or individuals.

#### GET HELP FROM OTHER STUDENTS

If a problem persists, you will often find that you are not the only person put out by it. Use students to help arrive at a consensus if a situation occurs during a session.

#### DON'T GET TOO INVOLVED

No matter how professional you feel you are, or should be, there comes a limit to how heavily or usefully you can get involved in some of the causes of potential problems. Students with difficult domestic or financial situations, or with mental health, drug or alcohol problems need proper support and unless you are trained to give it then you should very quickly but carefully pass the problem over to an expert. If you suspect a student has a problem like this and you don't feel comfortable bringing up the issue of support with them, pass it on to a full-time member of staff.

#### WRITE THINGS DOWN

It is a good idea to keep some sort of journal of your teaching – it is a key component of professional practice and, apart from anything else, provides a good source of evidence should you decide to seek a teaching qualification. But keeping a written record of incidents that occur during your teaching could potentially come in very useful. We don't wish to scare you or put you off teaching, but simply keeping a record of what happened, what you did, what the student did, and who you informed about it could come in handy for all sorts of reasons (not all of them worrying!)

For example, it would be a good idea to back up a visit to your course leader to discuss a problem you think a student has with, say, alcohol by summarising your concerns in writing and putting them in the student's file (ask a secretary to date stamp and initial it). This will come in useful if the problem requires further help as it will allow support staff to identify key information. It will also help the student should they require extensions for assignments, or need evidence to

## Tutorials and Other Teaching Approaches

support an academic appeal. Some institutions have tutorial forms that automatically make several copies, one for you, one for the student and one for the file. Make full use of these.

It may be useful too, depending on the seriousness of the incident, to ask other students to write a note of what happened. For example, if a student becomes abusive to you and storms off, and you know another student witnessed the incident, ask them to write down what they saw and keep it safe, just in case.

### DON'T HAVE NIGHTMARES

All this advice probably makes you wonder what you're letting yourself in for! But these incidents are actually quite rare. Remember – planning a session helps you to avoid many difficult situations, and to predict what problems are likely to occur.

### 8.3. PREDICTING DIFFICULT INCIDENTS

We mentioned earlier how there are often a range of issues leading to different problems. Some are trivial, some are non-trivial (and this has to be considered from the student's point of view, so broken hearts are far from trivial). Some are avoidable, some are unavoidable. Perspective is all important here.

Using the grid below, where would you place the following causes of problems?

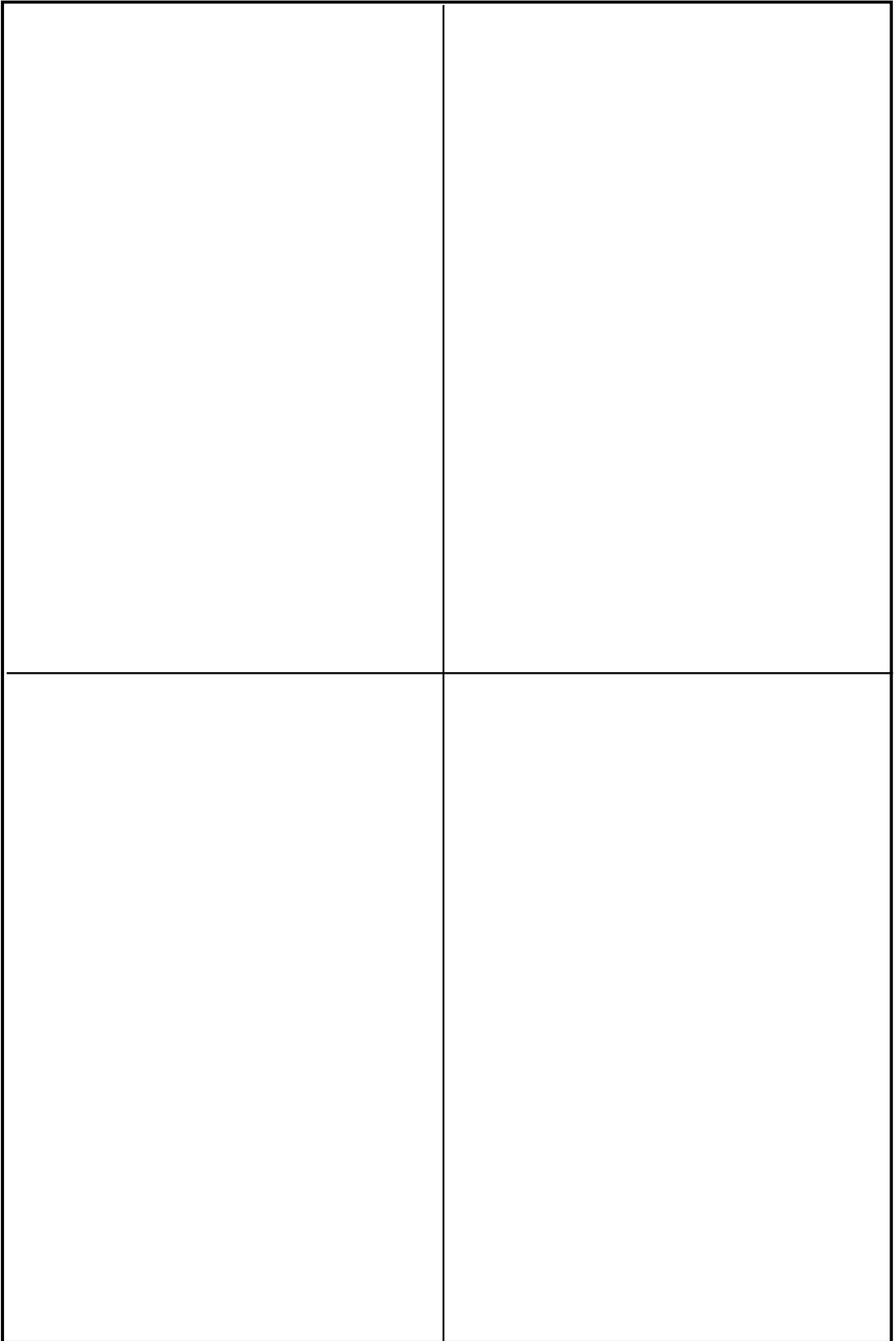
- HANGOVER
- SLEPT IN
- CRASHED CAR
- CHILDMINDER PROBLEM
- SICK CHILD
- PART TIME JOB
- FINANCIAL PROBLEMS
- LANDLORD PROBLEMS
- HOUSEMATE PROBLEMS
- BORED
- UNMOTIVATED
- NOT ENOUGH TIME

**NON-TRIVIAL**



**TRIVIAL**

**UNAVOIDABLE**



**AVOIDABLE**

## Tutorials and Other Teaching Approaches

### DISCUSSION

If you found the exercise difficult because you wanted to say "it depends" to each one, that's exactly right. If you did manage to place some incidents in the grid, then where you put things will differ from where other people may have put things. Partly it is to do with experience – students finding they don't have enough time to prepare is often seen as a trivial problem, the sort that students should not encounter if they are "committed". However, time management is a major headache for nearly every student, particularly at the start of a course. Being unable to cope with differing demands affects many students quite badly, sometimes leading to stress and depression, and in a few cases either to a drop in grades or simply dropping out. It is far from a trivial problem but it is avoidable – by ensuring that time management is taught and integrated into the curriculum.

Similarly, did you place 'hangover' in the trivial and avoidable quadrant? What if the student is dealing with an alcohol problem?

If your answer to that question is "How would I know!" and a desire to give up teaching then simply remember the advice from earlier: find out before jumping to conclusions. The real answer to the exercise above is that you can only categorise problems after you have the full facts, and that the context changes with each individual student.

### 8.4. COPING WITH DIFFICULT INCIDENTS

So the key to coping with difficult incidents is understanding:

- ❖ **WHY THEY MIGHT HAPPEN**
- ❖ **HOW BEST TO AVOID THEM**
- ❖ **HOW TO COPE WITH THEM IF THEY CAN'T BE AVOIDED**

Using the examples from earlier of a student arriving late and/or unprepared, we can start to form an action plan, like the one below. You will notice that some of the causes are beyond either the control of the student, or of you. But not being able to control the causes does not mean being unable to control the effects.

Also, notice how some of the causes are within your control. It takes a lot of professionalism to own up when you are the cause of a problem, and we as tutors cause far more than we care to admit. It is

easy, as we have said before, to blame the students for not turning up or losing motivation, but motivation is provided, not possessed, and it is up to us to make our teaching and their learning interesting and productive.

## Tutorials and Other Teaching Approaches

INCIDENT	POTENTIAL REASONS	PREVENTATIVE MEASURE	COPING TECHNIQUE
Student arrives late	<p>Trivial but unavoidable (e.g. late train)</p> <p>Trivial and avoidable (e.g. alarm didn't go off)</p> <p>Non-trivial but unavoidable (e.g. childcare didn't turn up)</p> <p>Non-trivial but avoidable (e.g. doctor's appointment)</p>	<p>Make sure all students have clear appointments and sign to acknowledge their time</p> <p>Put guidelines in place about how they alert you they will be unable to attend or will be late</p>	<p>Allow the student to explain the problem</p> <p>Explain the problems lateness causes for the student, for others, and for you.</p>
Student arrives unprepared	<p>The requirements weren't made clear enough</p> <p>There was no time to prepare (your fault)</p> <p>There was no time to prepare (student's fault)</p> <p>Required materials/equipment was unavailable</p> <p>Motivation lacking</p>	<p>Provide clear instructions and a reason for doing the preparation (students who prepare once, but are never asked to make use of it, will never prepare again!)</p> <p>Makes sure tasks are achievable – take into consideration other pressures on the student's time, academic and non-academic (e.g. part time work, caring for children etc)</p> <p>Ensure students are taught basic time management skills</p> <p>Book equipment, tell librarians what books students will be looking at, form students into groups with clear time slots, check timetables and other course teams to make sure there are no clashes.</p> <p>Loss of motivation is a result of boredom – does the preparation bore the student? Can it be made more interesting? Is it relevant?</p>	<p>Summarise what the student should have discovered</p> <p>Draw a direct link between preparation and marks</p> <p>Ensure student has action plan to catch up and avoid a repeat of the problem</p> <p>Consider rescheduling or ending the tutorial prematurely</p>

**DEALING WITH LATE AND UNPREPARED STUDENTS**

---

## SOME MORE INCIDENTS

---

## Tutorials and Other Teaching Approaches

The table below outlines some other types of difficult incident, along with possible reasons, preventative measures and coping strategies. It is adapted from the work of David and Carole Baume<sup>1</sup>.

<b>INCIDENT</b>	<b>POTENTIAL REASONS</b>	<b>PREVENTATIVE MEASURE</b>	<b>COPING TECHNIQUE</b>
Silent, unresponsive group	Boredom, perceived irrelevance of the topic or activity, don't understand the topic, tired	Let students know what each session is about right at the start of the course; give them something to do before the session to prepare them; vary the pace of the session	Be up front: ask them what the problem is, or what they would find most useful to achieve the aims of the session; stop what you are doing and try something else; have a break for coffee
Silent unresponsive individuals	As above, or fear of speaking out loud, personal problems	As above, use small groups like pyramiding or post-its, talk to their personal tutor	As above, split up large groups, take care in forming groups, talk to personal tutors
Activity goes off topic	Lack of clarity in your briefing; one or two students dominating with their knowledge (right or wrong)	Check that students understand what they are supposed to be doing; set ground rules; explain your role	Remind students what they are supposed to be doing; call a halt to the activity
Students haven't prepared	Lack of clear instructions; lack of time; lack of materials; lack of motivation	Describe what they need to do clearly well in advance; make it short and achievable; give out photocopies; make it clear why they are doing it	Take steps to avoid it happening again; accept your part in the problem, don't just blame them; don't hold the tutorial
One or two students dominate	Others haven't prepared; personal problems	Stress preparation to all; establish ground rules on participation; talk to personal tutor	"Let's hear from somebody else on this"; call on a student
Students demand answers, not discussion	Lack of understanding of the purpose of the session; lack of time or motivation; lack of study skills (e.g. use of library)	Tell students at start of the session what they will be doing and why; explain how to find or develop ideas; don't assume students know how to do the things you want them to do	Check students' perceptions of purpose; give a model answer and explain how you developed it or knew it
Sub groups hold private conversations in the class	Lack of interest; lack of understanding of the purpose of the session	Explain links to the rest of the course (including assessment); make use of subgroups by having small group activities	Intervene to bring them back to the point; split up groups

<sup>1</sup> Baume and Baume, 1996

## Tutorials and Other Teaching Approaches

At the start of this chapter, we asked you to list five types of incident that you worried about, had encountered, or had heard about. If any of those incidents has not been dealt with over the past few pages, use the table above as a model to predict, avoid and cope with them.

Inevitably you will encounter situations where you are dealing with a student who presents you with personal issues. How you deal with that is the subject of this section.

### 9.1 KNOWING WHEN TO REFER

All institutions will have student counsellors or advisors whose job it is to help with problems relating to health, finance or personal issues. There will also be people available to help with learning support, from things that all students have problems with (e.g. time management or essay planning) to specialist issues such as dyslexia.

As part of your induction, you should have been introduced to these people, or at least shown where they work and been given contact details that you can use yourself, or can give to students.

In terms of knowing when to refer students to somebody, some institutions or courses will have established guidelines and, again, these should be made clear to you. It is also a good idea to make an appointment to see a learning support advisor, for example, simply to introduce yourself and find out some of the things you should be looking for (signs of dyslexia, for example). It is not a good idea to refer a student to somebody you have never met yourself, or to an office you don't know how to find.

Some tutors find it easy to draw a line between what they are able to help with and unable – which is different from being willing or unwilling to help. Because of the inextricable link between a student's private life and their academic performance it is vital that some level of "involvement" is maintained even if it is just an occasional "how's your sister?" to a student who you know has been having trouble dealing with a family crisis.

Knowing when to refer is easy: immediately in all cases. If a student mentions to you that they are having problems with their bank, you may well be able to give advice on dealing with the problem, but you should still back it up with a reminder that there are people available to help in more detail.

Don't forget also that student unions often have elected or appointed officers or staff who can deal with students' problems, and talking to a member of the NUS should be an early priority in your first week or so just to find out what services they offer.

### 9.2. RECORDING ONE-TO-ONE DISCUSSIONS

All private discussions with students should be recorded in some

## Tutorials and Other Teaching Approaches

way, particularly if you are giving specific advice relating to the student's academic progress, or dealing with a personal issue. Notes of this kind need to be made in duplicate – there should be at least three copies:

1. A copy for the student (they should be advised on where to store it)
2. A copy for your own records  
(it is important you keep these safe and ordered)
3. A copy for the institution (normally stored in the student's file)

A fourth copy may be kept by the course or module leader, or the student's personal tutor.

Each institution has slightly different procedures, so make sure you find out what is required. Where appropriate, points raised should also be passed on to others – in the example of Samantha's tutorial at the start of this booklet, she told Alan about the issues the students had after his session, so that he could address them next time and make changes where appropriate the following year. But bear in mind issues of confidentiality, discussed below.

### **MAKING THINGS EASY**

Writing records of this kind is time consuming. However, it should never be seen as 'red tape'. It isn't. Even referring to it as 'admin' suggests it is undesirable and a distraction from the job of teaching. Far from it: tutorial records support your teaching and students' learning.

Many institutions have forms pre-printed with NCR copies, so that what you write on the top sheet is copied below without using carbon paper. Ask around if you have not been given some of these – they are handy for recording all sorts of advice to students, so keep a few with you at all times.

Some people prefer to type up notes but be wary of any system that prevents you making a record at the time, or that is too easy to amend. You should also stick to the agreed format of the institution so if handwritten notes are asked for, that's what you must do.

After writing notes, draw lines across any unused sections of the page to avoid anything being added. Use additional sheets if further notes are needed.

## Tutorials and Other Teaching Approaches

One problem with one-to-one tutorials is that students may take the sheet away and not read it. Being handed a record that somebody else has written is not particularly inclusive. Asking the students to make their own notes is one solution, but many do not or, again, never read over them. So what is the answer?

Read the description of Samantha's tutorial again. She has the pre-printed forms, but lets the students use them to summarise the meeting and the required action points. She then reads them, amends where necessary, and signs them. By asking the students to make notes on the official forms and signing off on them, a level of formality is introduced (like a contract) while, at the same time, allowing for a degree of student responsibility. It also reduces the amount of time needed for 'admin' which can then be used for discussion instead. This technique can be used for other things too, such as giving students feedback on their work.

---

### 10 SUMMARY

---

We have discussed several aspects of planning and running a tutorial, and different things will have been more relevant to your situation than might be the case with a colleague.

However, it is possible to summarise some key points:

- ❖ **PLANNING IS ESSENTIAL TO EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING**
- ❖ **RESPECT THE FACT THAT ALL STUDENTS ARE DIFFERENT AND ARE NOT THE SAME AS YOU**
- ❖ **DON'T TEACH IN ISOLATION – STRUCTURE YOUR TUTORIALS WITHIN THE BROADER STRUCTURE OF THE MODULE AND THE COURSE**
- ❖ **DO SOME RESEARCH ABOUT THE COURSE AND THE STUDENTS**
- ❖ **VARY THE TYPE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITY YOU USE**
- ❖ **ENSURE YOUR TEACHING IS ALIGNED TO CLEAR AIMS AND OUTCOMES**
- ❖ **BORED AND UNMOTIVATED STUDENTS ARE OFTEN THE RESULT OF BORING TEACHING – KEEP IT INTERESTING AND RELEVANT**
- ❖ **DON'T JUMP TO CONCLUSIONS ABOUT STUDENTS**
- ❖ **REFER STUDENTS WITH PROBLEMS TO THE APPROPRIATE SOURCES OF ADVICE AND SUPPORT**
- ❖ **KNOW WHAT THOSE SOURCES OF SUPPORT ARE, AND FAMILIARISE YOURSELF WITH THEM**
- ❖ **AVOID TEACHING OUT OF HABIT OR TRADITION – USE TECHNIQUES THAT ARE APPROPRIATE TO WHAT YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE**
- ❖ **PLAN WELL IN ADVANCE, BOOK THE APPROPRIATE ROOM AND PREPARE ALL MATERIALS BEFORE THE DAY**
- ❖ **SHARE YOUR PLANS WITH STUDENTS AT THE START OF YOUR TIME WITH THEM**

---

## 11 FURTHER INFORMATION

---

## Tutorials and Other Teaching Approaches

### References

**BAUME, D. AND BAUME, C. (1996)**

*Learning to Teach: Running Tutorials and Seminars,*  
Oxford Centre for Staff Development, Oxford.

**CANNON, R. AND NEWBLE, D. (2000)**

*A Handbook for Teachers in Universities and Colleges:  
A Guide to Improving Teaching Methods,*  
Kogan Page, London.

**DAVIES, A. AND REID, A. (2000)**

*Uncovering Problematics in Design Education:  
Learning and the Design Entity,*  
The London Institute, London.