

# Reflecting on Your Teaching

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## INTRODUCTION

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These materials have all been designed to encourage you to reflect on your teaching practice and how your students learn – with the potential to change what you do as a result.

This section is concerned with:

- ❖ **THE APPROACHES AND QUESTIONS YOU MIGHT ASK ABOUT YOUR OWN TEACHING**
  
- ❖ **THE ‘EVIDENCE’ YOU MIGHT USE TO HELP YOU EVALUATE WHAT YOU HAVE DONE**

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## GOOD TEACHING PRACTICE

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Good teaching practice suggests that it is useful to think about the cycle of teaching and learning:

- ANALYSIS OF STUDENT GROUP AND LEVEL OF EXPERIENCE
  
- INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES OF THE TEACHING SESSIONS
  
- THE DESIGN AND ORGANISATION OF TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES
  
- THE INDEPENDENT LEARNING TO TAKE PLACE
  
- THE EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EXPERIENCE
  
- DECISIONS FOR CHANGES TO SESSION OR PLANS FOR SUBSEQUENT SESSIONS

## Reflecting on Your Teaching

This will probably lead you into an understanding of the complex relationship of teaching, learning and student performance.

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### PLANNING YOUR TEACHING

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You may wish to consider keeping a record of your teaching and using a teaching planning technique to decide on how you teach and design the students' learning in any teaching session. A teaching plan will generally include consideration of the following:

- ❖ **LEARNING OUTCOMES**
- ❖ **LEVEL OF STUDENTS' PRIOR EXPERIENCE**
- ❖ **SIZE AND NATURE OF THE STUDENT GROUP**
- ❖ **THE ENVIRONMENT – EQUIPMENT, SPACE ETC**
- ❖ **THE LENGTH OF SESSION**
- ❖ **THE STRUCTURE OF THE SESSION**
- ❖ **THE EXPECTED PERFORMANCE OF THE STUDENTS**
- ❖ **THE RELATIONSHIP TO PREVIOUS, PARALLEL AND FUTURE TEACHING AND LEARNING EXPERIENCES**

*For further advice on planning your teaching, see the relevant section in this pack*

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### EVALUATING YOUR TEACHING

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There are informal and formal ways to get feedback on your teaching alongside your own reflections.

Informal ways might include:

- **ASKING COLLEAGUES WORKING WITH YOU FOR INFORMAL FEEDBACK**
- **TALKING TO THE STUDENTS ABOUT WHAT THEY FOUND USEFUL AND WHAT ASPECTS LESS USEFUL**

Formal feedback might include:

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TYPE OF FEEDBACK	LIKELY TO GIVE YOU FEEDBACK ON....
<p><b>Teaching observation</b> – this is normally done as part of a formal arrangement in a department. You could find out whether you can be included. There is normally a structure to what is observed and the way feedback is conducted. This is often a positive experience – with both the observer and observee enjoying the discussion. Constructive suggestions will usually be given</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● An individual session</li> <li>● Minor changes that might be considered</li> <li>● Subject perspectives</li> <li>● Thinking about the organisation of learning in an individual session</li> <li>● Planning of an individual session</li> </ul>
<p>Having an <b>appraisal</b> by your head of department or line manager – this is normally a formal performance review which looks in detail at your work over the year and looks forward to actions to be taken in the coming year</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Where your role relates to the department's direction and needs</li> <li>● General staff development opportunities</li> <li>● Your perspectives in relation to performance over the previous period</li> </ul>
<p>If you are teaching a particular module or unit of study there may be a <b>student questionnaire for the module</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● General perceptions about the success of the module</li> <li>● Possible changes to the content or teaching of the module</li> </ul>
<p><b>Student feedback on teaching staff</b> is often done by module</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How your own teaching is received</li> <li>● Your rating against the department average</li> <li>● Areas for further consideration</li> </ul>
<p><b>Student examination results</b> module or year group</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The spread of student performance</li> <li>● Your general impression of the students and their actual performance</li> <li>● The relationship of students on any units/modules you have taught and how these compare to results for other units/modules</li> </ul>

## Reflecting on Your Teaching

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### IT IS PARTICULARLY USEFUL:

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- ❖ TO COMPARE STUDENT RESULTS FROM ONE YEAR TO THE NEXT TO PLOT CHANGES
- ❖ TO LOOK AT DIFFERENT FEEDBACK TOGETHER E.G. STUDENT PERFORMANCE ON A MODULE IN RELATION TO STUDENT FEEDBACK ON A MODULE
- ❖ TO REFLECT ON ANY FEEDBACK YOU GET – IN ORDER TO SEEK EXPLANATIONS OF WHAT SEEMS TO WORK AND WHAT IS LESS SUCCESSFUL
- ❖ TO IDENTIFY THE KINDS OF ANALYSIS USED IN THE INFORMATION AND HOW THESE RESULTS CAN BE INTERPRETED

You should be able to access some of the material in the table above. You may find it particularly helpful to be provided with copies (if they exist) of your personal feedback from students and module feedback.

At the time of writing not many hourly paid staff are actually included in the appraisal process. However you should be able to gather full enough formal and informal feedback to provide material for you to think about your own performance and to identify areas of potential change.

You will find that your own reflections and others' feedback can be included in a professional journal and portfolio of continuing professional development (see next section on continuing professional development for more details).

## Questions for Further Consideration

<p>How do I usually plan my teaching and is this a helpful process?</p>	
<p>What informal evidence do I have that students are learning whilst I am working with them?</p>	
<p>Give an example of a teaching session that went particularly well – what were the key points that could be used again?</p>	
<p>Give an example of a teaching session that did not seem to go well – what were the key learning points?</p>	
<p>Find some examples of the kind of feedback listed in the table – how could the feedback be interpreted? What is indicated and what is problematic?</p>	
<p>In what ways does feedback indicate a change is needed? How could I bring about changes that might improve the feedback?</p>	

# Continuing Professional Development

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## INTRODUCTION

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You will be aware of the importance of keeping yourself up to date in your subject. As well as the benefits to you, this is an activity which your students and college or university will value. Keeping yourself up to date is known currently as Continuing Professional Development or CPD.

This section sets out to support you in asking:

- ❖ **WHAT IS APPROPRIATE CPD FOR ME?**
- ❖ **WHAT HELP MIGHT BE AVAILABLE?**
- ❖ **WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS TO ME AND MY STUDENTS?**
- ❖ **HOW MIGHT I EVIDENCE CPD?**

You may have a complicated working life combining a variety of jobs, professional practice and experience, and it may be useful to look at CPD across this mix since skills and knowledge gained outside education are useful in your teaching.

Most professions, for example doctors and lawyers, have definitions of the amount and kind of Continuing Professional Development that professionals would undertake after initial qualifications are completed. The professional body for teaching in higher education is the Higher Education Academy.

Professionalism has been defined as a set of people, using a body of (evolving) knowledge and having an agreed standard of practice. Key

attributes of professionals are the ability to critically apply knowledge to situations encountered, and to continue to learn and develop skills throughout their professional lives.

Continuing Professional Development is concerned with:

- CURRENCY OF KNOWLEDGE
- SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES
- FITNESS TO PRACTISE
- CONTINUING EFFECTIVENESS IN THE WORKPLACE

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## WHAT IS CPD WITHIN ART AND DESIGN HIGHER EDUCATION?

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There are many areas of activity that make up CPD in art and design higher education. Here are some categories of CPD - these areas may overlap with one another:

- ❖ **PEDAGOGY: DEVELOPING SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE UNDERPINNING YOUR TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING**
- ❖ **ART AND DESIGN PRACTICE: WORKING AS AN ARTIST, DESIGNER OR OTHER CREATIVE PRACTITIONER**
- ❖ **RESEARCH: HAS A VARIETY OF MEANINGS – IN ART AND DESIGN YOU MAY HAVE HEARD IT USED TO DESCRIBE THE KIND OF INVESTIGATIONS, THINKING AND PROCESSES USED IN CREATIVE PRODUCTION. THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES RESEARCH COUNCIL FUNDS RESEARCH INTO VISUAL ARTS AND MEDIA PRACTICE, HISTORY AND THEORY. THE AHRC DEFINITIONS INCLUDE POINTS CONCERNED WITH DEFINED PROBLEMS/QUESTIONS, NEW OR ENHANCED KNOWLEDGE, SPECIFIC RESEARCH CONTEXTS AND RESEARCH METHODS. IN RESEARCH FUNDING THERE IS A CONCERN WITH THE QUALITY OF THE OUTPUT (FINAL RESULTS) AND WHERE IT IS VIEWED/READ AND THE NATIONAL OR INTERNATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS. PEER REVIEW – IS AN IMPORTANT COMPONENT BOTH AT THE SELECTION/START POINT AND VALUE OF THE WORK BY OTHERS**

These definitions have been contested recently – partly as a result of the funding given to the categories and the various bodies protecting and developing the work in the different areas. You also may have heard reference to the following:

## Continuing Professional Development

- SCHOLARLY ACTIVITY: ANOTHER TERM USED IN HIGHER EDUCATION TO DESCRIBE THE KIND OF ACTIVITIES WHICH HELP TO KEEP US UP TO DATE WITH OUR KNOWLEDGE. THIS MAY INVOLVE READING OR GOING TO EXHIBITIONS OR EVENTS IN RELATION TO A SUBJECT AS WELL AS ASPECTS OF THE THREE CATEGORIES ABOVE.
- PRACTICE-BASED RESEARCH

There is currently national support for funding small practical research projects into teaching, which can then be shared amongst colleagues (see ADM website). This is taking a practice-based approach. The area of 'research' for art and design has also been argued about in the last few years. The main reasons for this are that art and design departments can submit to the "Research Assessment Exercise" which rates research activities in Higher Education. Some students use these ratings to decide where to study – particularly in relation to postgraduate study. The Research Assessment Exercise is also used to distribute funding.

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### CPD AND THE DIFFERENTIATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION PROVIDERS

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Higher Education Institutions are being encouraged through funding to classify themselves as particular kinds of places, which are strong or less strong in four main sectors:

- ❖ **TEACHING (ALL INSTITUTIONS HAVE TO DO THIS ONE)**
- ❖ **RESEARCH**
- ❖ **WIDENING PARTICIPATION – PROVIDING EDUCATION TO UNDER-REPRESENTED GROUPS**
- ❖ **BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY LINKS.**

You may be aware of the kind of institution you are working in and also how it is encouraging its staff through posts, promotions and other schemes – to build on its strengths.

Since teaching is so central, many institutions have their own internal academic development and professional support programmes that would be useful for you to know about. Many also have postgraduate teaching programmes with modules which can be taken separately on different kinds of topics. You may wish to find out more about these by asking your colleagues.

# Continuing Professional Development

## Some examples of Continuing Professional Development

- ❖ **ATTENDING A TEACHING OR SUBJECT-BASED CONFERENCE OR EVENT**
- ❖ **COURSE DEVELOPMENT AND WRITING/RESEARCHING TEACHING MATERIALS**
- ❖ **CREATIVE PRACTICE**
- ❖ **EXHIBITIONS OR OTHER CULTURAL EVENTS OR VISITS**
- ❖ **EXHIBITING CREATIVE WORK OR DISSEMINATING IT THROUGH VARIOUS MEANS**
- ❖ **FUNDING BIDS FOR RESEARCH OR PRACTICE SUPPORT**
- ❖ **MEETINGS CAN BE CPD IF YOU ARE LEARNING SOMETHING NEW**
- ❖ **NETWORKING EVENTS WITH OTHER LECTURERS/PRACTITIONERS/RESEARCHERS**
- ❖ **OBSERVING OR SHADOWING A COLLEAGUE IN ORDER TO LEARN ABOUT THEIR JOB**
- ❖ **PREPARING AND GIVING A PAPER OR TALK ON YOUR PRACTICE/RESEARCH/TEACHING**
- ❖ **EVENTS RUN BY THE PROFESSIONAL BODY**
- ❖ **PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE AS A DESIGNER**
- ❖ **READING JOURNALS OR RECENT PUBLICATIONS TO UPDATE KNOWLEDGE**
- ❖ **RESEARCHING A NEW PRODUCTION METHOD AND APPLYING IT**
- ❖ **TEACHING PRACTICE, WHICH IS THEN EVALUATED AND WRITTEN UP/SHARED WITH COLLEAGUES**
- ❖ **TECHNICAL UPDATING INDEPENDENTLY OR WITHIN A COURSE/EVENT**

A note of caution: these would all be seen as generally valuable to teaching and subject knowledge, however the extent of recognition may not extend to funding or other forms of specific support by different institutions.

## Continuing Professional Development

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### HOW THESE ACTIVITIES BENEFIT STUDENTS

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At the heart of CPD is the idea of benefiting your development and therefore your students' learning. CPD may benefit you and your students by improving:

- YOUR TEACHING SKILLS
- YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF CULTURAL CONCEPTS AND CONTEXTS RELATED TO YOUR SUBJECT
- YOUR ABILITY TO GIVE TECHNICAL ADVICE
- YOUR ABILITY TO CRITIQUE STUDENTS' WORK
- YOUR ABILITY TO GIVE A COMMERCIAL / PROFESSIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON STUDENTS' WORK
- YOU WILL BE ABLE TO THINK OF OTHERS. . .

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## QUESTIONS AND SCENARIOS FOR DISCUSSION

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## Continuing Professional Development

### Questions:

- WHAT KINDS OF ACTIVITIES HAVE YOU BEEN INVOLVED IN WITHIN THE LAST YEAR THAT COULD BE DESCRIBED AS CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT?
- HOW DO YOU SEE THESE ACTIVITIES AS CONTRIBUTING TO YOUR TEACHING AND YOUR STUDENTS' LEARNING?
- HOW HAVE YOU RECORDED THESE ACTIVITIES? GIVEN THE POTENTIAL USE OF THESE ACTIVITIES AS CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, WOULD YOU NOW SEEK TO RECORD OR USE THEM DIFFERENTLY?
- WHAT APPROACHES IS YOUR INSTITUTION TAKING TO CPD AND HOW IS IT ENCOURAGING IT TO HAPPEN?

### Scenarios:

David is a textile designer; he studied in London and completed his textiles degree ten years ago. He has moved out of London since and is living in a small town. For the last few years he has been concentrating on bringing up a small family and he has been doing some teaching at an A level college. He feels that his knowledge is out of date and he is not very aware of the current design scene. How would you suggest he proceeds?

Sally has twenty years experience of working in large companies in the design department as a graphic designer. She has a good knowledge of working with clients, controlling budgets and taking design to print. She is an experienced lecturer teaching on a large graphic design course but her input has been limited and it has been suggested that her professional knowledge could be used more extensively for the benefit of students. What suggestions would you have for her to explore?

Hamid is a fine artist who has been exhibiting for five years and also earning an income as a web designer. He has started work recently teaching fine art within a large modular course. He has large classes and short blocks of teaching time made up of two to three hours each day. He has worked out some basic ideas but wants to check these out further so as to reduce possible difficulties. How could he go about doing this?

## Continuing Professional Development

Ben has been working for ten years as a lecturer in departments of art in three different universities and colleges. He wants to do some further study or research to deepen his subject knowledge – but is not sure what the options are. He also wants to see whether he can get any support for this from the departments he has worked for. How would you suggest he goes about this?

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## KEEPING A PROFESSIONAL JOURNAL AND PORTFOLIO OF CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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## Continuing Professional Development

In order to support your learning and professional development, it is a good idea to keep a Professional Learning Journal (Diary or Log). As well as providing a focus for reflective practice, you will also find the journal to be a valuable source of evidence material should you wish to apply for accreditation as a lecturer in the future.

Your journal could be made up of lesson plans, with follow-up notes on how the sessions went. Or you could include self-assessment sheets linked with teaching sessions. These can be very helpful, particularly if you want to construct a portfolio for accreditation at a later date. Feedback from teaching observation by a peer or mentor can also be included. For maximum effect the journal should include some form of reflective analysis around such basic questions as:

- WHAT AM I DOING?
- WHY AM I DOING IT IN THIS WAY?
- HOW MIGHT I DO IT DIFFERENTLY?

You should be prepared to explore a range of approaches and techniques. If you would like more information and ideas on keeping a journal, see Chapter 3 of Ghaye and Lillyman's book *Learning Journals and Critical Incidents, 1997*.

Building up a portfolio of evidence will also help you to keep examples of best practice from your work which would be useful to show at job interviews, as a personal archive to retrieve material for future use, or as part of any discussion about your future development.

The Continuing Professional Development material could usefully include evidence of activities and events linked to your subject teaching. You may find it helpful to consult the previous list of examples of CPD. It is most valuable if the portfolio includes a reflection on what was useful and what could be gained in relation to your teaching and students' learning – this could be in the form of notes or a short report.

The current Higher Education Academy application areas for becoming a registered practitioner in Higher Education include submitting an evaluative account of:

## Continuing Professional Development

- 1 TEACHING AND SUPPORT OF LEARNING
- 2 CONTRIBUTION TO THE DESIGN AND PLANNING OF LEARNING
- 3 ASSESSMENT AND/OR GIVING FEEDBACK TO LEARNERS
- 4 DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS AND LEARNER SUPPORT SYSTEMS
- 5 EVALUATING YOUR PRACTICE AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT
- 6 USING YOUR RESEARCH, SCHOLARLY ACTIVITY OR RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL WORK TO INFORM AND IMPACT ON YOUR TEACHING

These could be used as sections for your portfolio or be considered in your evidence and reflection.

**A HEAD OF DEPARTMENT HAS COMMENTED 'I HAVE FOUND IT VERY USEFUL IN INTERVIEWING HOURLY PAID LECTURERS FOR POSSIBLE WORK TO SEE A PORTFOLIO OF MATERIAL ABOUT THEIR WORK. THIS GIVES MUCH BETTER INSIGHTS INTO THE TEACHING THAT HAS ACTUALLY BEEN DONE. OFTEN THE CV IS TOO VAGUE AND USUALLY A BIT OF A LIST OF COURSES THAT THEY HAVE TAUGHT ON; YOU CANNOT REALLY SEE WHAT THEY HAVE DONE OR WHAT THE ATTITUDE IS TO STUDENT LEARNING. PUT NEXT TO MATERIAL ABOUT PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE – IT CAN GIVE A FULLER PICTURE AND GIVE CONFIDENCE IN THE EMPLOYMENT OF THAT PERSON.'**

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## ORGANISATIONS THAT PROVIDE HELP WITH CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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## Continuing Professional Development

You will probably find you can get advice from your:

- PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT
- LEARNING AND TEACHING DEVELOPMENT UNIT
- STAFF DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
- COLLEAGUES
- PROGRAMME TUTOR/COURSE DIRECTOR
- HEAD OF DEPARTMENT
- TEACHING FELLOW

Getting advice from outside your institution:

Art Design Media Subject Centre within the HEA – this organisation currently offers funding for small teaching research projects

<http://www.brighton.ac.uk/adm-hea/>

Arts and Humanities Research Council

<http://www.ahrb.ac.uk/>

Centre for Learning and Teaching in Art and Design

<http://www.arts.ac.uk/cltad/sitemap.htm>

Chartered Society of Designers

<http://www.csd.org.uk/>

Group for Learning in Art and Design

Higher Education Academy website

<http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/>

Oxford Brookes staff development

<http://www.brookes.ac.uk/services/ocsd/index.html>

SEDA – Staff and Education Development Association

<http://www.seda.ac.uk/>