Record of Observation or Review of Teaching Practice

Session/artefact to be observed/reviewed: **3D Site Analysis Collages I (Rhino + Illustrator)**
Size of student group: 80
Observer: Xiyao Chen
Observee: Gabriele Brambilla

Note: This record is solely for exchanging developmental feedback between colleagues. Its reflective aspect informs PgCert and Fellowship assessment, but it is not an official evaluation of teaching and is not intended for other internal or legal applications such as probation or disciplinary action.

Part One

Observee to complete in brief and send to observer prior to the observation or review:

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

This is a Digital Design class for the second year of the Interior & Spatial Design course at Camberwell.
For unit 7, students were given a site, which they must initially do an analysis of and then create a design proposal.

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

I started working with the course three years ago as a technician and this is my second year as a lecturer in charge of the digital part.
I have been working with this group since last year, but all lessons both this year and last year have been online.

What are the intended or expected learning outcomes?

In this lesson, the aim is to learn different commands and digital processes to produce a site analysis using different software. Starting with data obtained from Digimaps and Cadmapper, the aim is to create 2D and 3D visualisations using Rhino and Illustrator.

Expected learning outcomes: understand and execute technical processes of making digital content. The student, after learning technical theory, should be able to replicate what has been shown by developing their own content based on their research.

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

students will then have to use these processes in their own way to create their own site analyses.

Are there potential difficulties or specific areas of concern?

In this lesson, in order to be able to show all the various relevant processes, students are not required to do them at the same time but can ask questions and begin to familiarise themselves with the files they have been given.

The concern is that, being online, they lose concentration easily. Therefore, the lesson is recorded so that they can review what they have done and perform it in their own time.

How will students be informed of the observation/review?

students were informed during the previous lesson.

What would you particularly like feedback on?

If the explained processes seemed easy to understand from an external point of view

How will feedback be exchanged?

email

Part Two

Observer to note down observations, suggestions and questions:

Observations:

- It's a pleasure to join this resourceful and detailed session on 3D site analysis. The session took place online with a large number of students joined (camera off, I can only see their names). Gab was screensharing while working through the workflow and several task between Rhino and Illustrator. It's clear that his patience and digital knowledge held the session together in a coherent and informative way.
- The session follows a clear and timely plan, so the students can follow each task in a structured way to and follow the steps in their own space and time.
- The screensharing in real time is really effective for the students to follow the technical workflows - it's particularly impressive how Gab manages to explain the complexity of the workflow between two software (rhino & illustrator) in a clear and accessible way and going into details in explaining how the use of the two software could complement each other.

Suggestions & Questions:

- The main challenge of online teaching, also from my own personal experience, is to gauge the students' engagement, especially when you can't see them! I've noticed that in the session that all the students have their camera off (this might be because of practical reasons? So the students can follow the steps easier I suppose, than being distracted?) I wonder what are the ways to observe and respond to the students engagement and needs in this flattened online environment? I've noticed that Gab has been responding to questions in the chat simultaneously while running the session, which demonstrates some impressive skills in multi-tasking (I would probably struggle to manage chat while demonstrating a software personally). I wonder if there are any alternative & more structured ways to answer questions & receive feedback in a more timely manner?
- It's good to know that the session will be recorded for the students to re-watch in their own time, as it is difficult to tell if the students are following the steps in real time during the session. Having a resource that they can return to when they are working on their individual projects is really useful – I wonder if there's a way to include

timestamps in the session recording so students could be directed to a particular question/bottleneck moment easier? Or perhaps having a key Q&A sheet/guidance document referring to the key moments and questions.

- Or perhaps there is a way for the students to share screens when they have questions so it's easier to work through an issue together?
- I also wonder if there's an opportunity to develop a more inclusive online learning environment, in particular taking into account of students who might face language barriers/dyslexia/dyspraxia/ADHA challenges. Perhaps turning the closed captions on while talking through the steps could help? For a typed command based software like Rhino it would be particularly challenging for students with Dyslexia – is there a way to integrating more emojis/visual cues to aid their learning?
- I would also be curious to find out how you might assess the students learning after the session – how do you know if the students achieve the learning outcomes for this session? Is there a short sharing moment at the end of session for them to present what they've made in tandem? Or perhaps setting up an asynchronous sharing platform (such as miro board) so students could upload their works at a later date and see what each other's work in progress integrating the useful technical knowledge you've shared with them?

Part Three

Observee to reflect on the observer's comments and describe how they will act on the feedback exchanged:

The observations' comments are very helpful, thank you.
Some of the points taken into consideration are things I want to try to change, or have tried to change over the years and am still working on, while other things are interesting to hear from an outside point of view.

But let us go in order and take as our first point the switched-off camera and the resulting problems of participation and interaction with students.

I tried several times to ask the students to turn their camera on compulsorily. The result has always been very bad, the students refuse to turn the camera on and would rather not participate than keep it on.
For me it is a huge difficulty, as I see no faces (apart from rare cases) and hear no one speaking.
The only way they interact is through chat, which is why I always have a screen with the chat open to see if there is any interaction.

I think this problem stems from the fact that students are shy about showing themselves and being heard in front of a large group of peers even virtually.
If you kept the camera on there would be fewer distractions and more cooperation.
Next year, changing teaching year, I will try to make it compulsory from the first lesson and try to make it a habit.

Responding to the live chat on the other hand I think is a good habit because it is the only way for those following and doing at the same time to ask questions about the process and not get left behind.

Recording resource
The recording of the lesson is essential for the students, most of them tell me that they then redo the process shown later by watching the recording.
There are usually two different types of software lessons. Those at the beginning of the year where I ask them to do everything at the same time, as they are easy exercises involving a few chained actions. And then there are the lessons like this one where the process is longer and more complicated, in which case, in order to cover more topics during the lesson, I go faster while still trying to give the students time to at least familiarise themselves with the files we are using.

Since they are not doing the same process in these kinds of lessons, I think it is better to already have videos explaining the topics and processes to send them beforehand, so they can use the lesson time to see their doubts or to do parts of the process together, based on their perplexities and questions.
This would help give them more responsibility for their learning and they would not have to attend the same session twice (live and recorded).

The suggestion to try to put markers in the recording to highlight the most important moments is very useful, however, so that they can use it more as an easy-to-access and navigate resource.

Inclusive learning
Often, to overcome the problems that many students year of following and working online, I suggest that struggling students review the process together in the afternoon and do it together. This helps students who have difficulty, due to various and sundry problems, concentrating during class or following along.
One problem I've encountered with inclusivity, different from those that have been mentioned, concerns the use of different devices all the time.
There are some software like Rhino for example, which have a different interface between Windows and Mac. This is a barrier for many students in being able to follow along and keep up.
I always try to point out the differences between the interfaces but often this leads to slowdowns and misunderstandings on projects.

Learning outcomes
Since the digital part is not separately assessed, and it is not mandatory, I do not have a way to verify that all students learn what is being taught.
I always ask students to send the exercises done in class, to analyze them together and see how they use the process, usually out of 80 students less than 5 send them.
That's because they know they're not being graded on what they've done anyway and it won't affect their final unit grade.
The only time I see their work is the days before submission where there are usually a lot of tutorials and I get to see who has followed along and processed something.

There should be a change in the way the teaching of these subjects is perceived, not as an optional fringe thing but as an essential criterion to be demonstrated.

I thank many for these insights and questions raised, this will help me in the process of improvement by making changes to the way I lecture online.