# Record of Observation or Review of Teaching Practice

Session/artefact to be observed/reviewed: Colour Darkroom Induction session

Size of student group: 7

Observer: Carys Kennedy

Observee: Cora James

##### 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 OneObservee 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 Colour Darkroom induction for MA Photojournalism and Documentary Photography students, they will gain access to the facilities to best support their own practice which they can use independently after completion of session.*

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

*This cohort joined in September 2024, and I will have inducted some of them into some of our media photography technical facilities such as black and white darkroom, colour processing, studio, but some I may never have met before.*

What are the intended or expected learning outcomes?

* *To fully understand and apply the Health and Safety compliance expected within the department and how it relates specifically to their use in the colour darkroom.*
* *To have a full understanding of what a colour enlarger is, after an extensive demonstration by technical staff.*
* *To understand what a colour negative is and use them to make a test strip using a colour enlarger.*
* *To examine their own test strips and adjust both colour balance and exposure time, with advice and guidance from technician.*
* *Make a contact sheet & a final print in the colour darkroom.*
* *To be able to use an easel efficiently to create borders on their prints.*

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

*Students will make their own contact sheets and a final print of an image they select from their contact sheets. They will be able to cut and expose test strips, understand exposure times and an introduction to colour theory & colour balancing and make their own adjustments as well as set up their easels to create an even border for their singular image.*

Are there potential difficulties or specific areas of concern?

*The colour darkroom communal area is in low light, and the students will be expected to work in some areas (their own booth and the loading room) in pitch black. This requires a lot of demonstrating in the light what is then done in the dark. There are lots of opportunities for breaks and chances for students to come into the communal area which is in daylight if they struggle with darkness.*

How will students be informed of the observation/review?

*I will email them prior to the workshop and remind them on introduction to the session.*

What would you particularly like feedback on?

*Anything & everything!*

How will feedback be exchanged?

*Email or a quick teams meeting would be great!*

## Part Two

### Observer to note down observations, suggestions and questions:

Thanks again Cora for inviting me to join your colour darkroom session. I really enjoyed the session and was struck by the really positive and engaged atmosphere in the room.

Here is a summary of what I noticed in the session.

* I noticed really positive rapport with the students. You used their names, and remembered them from previous sessions.
* Your session was carefully scaffolded, building on prior learning, and also introducing students to things step-by-step. The session was well-structured, and you signposted students at every step of the way so they knew what to expect.
* Your confidence and expertise was evident in your teaching. You were responsive to student questions, and shared lots of extra details and information. You brought in some vignettes about your own practice which were interesting and I think were well-received by students.
* The students talked enthusiastically between themselves about photography, which was really positive to see.
* You also generated excitement by the way you introduced the colour darkroom, and shared alumni feedback.
* At times, I got a bit lost with some of the more complicated instructions. My impression was that this wouldn’t be the case for the students, because of their prior knowledge (which I don’t have). However, there were one or two moments when things moved quite quickly. This was usually mitigated against by your willingness to answer questions, and the way you reiterated key information more than once.
* Students were busy taking notes while you were doing demonstrations, and I wondered if it was tricky to take notes and watch at the same time – especially in the dark room space. With this in mind, I found myself wondering if there were any resources students could draw upon if they needed a reminder (e.g. written summaries, short videos) in addition to the poster in the main room.
* You had acknowledged at the start of the session that it would be a ‘lot of you talking’, which seemed completely necessary and appropriate in the context of the session – especially as there were key H&S requirements. You balanced your delivery with activities students could undertake (e.g. putting negatives in sleeves) so this felt well-broken up.
* I noticed times when you drew upon students’ prior learning. For example, you asked a student “You’re working on 35mm so what size lens?” and they said “50mm” which you confirmed was right. This was a nice example of eliciting information from students and building on their prior knowledge.

I hope these reflections are helpful. Please do let me know if you need any clarification.

## Part Three

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

Thank you, Carys, for your helpful and encouraging feedback. I always aim to be super positive and engaged so I’m pleased that came across as I am genuinely very excited about introducing students to ‘the world of the colour darkroom’. I like the idea of scaffolding the session, I try to build their skills from prior-learning and using the step-by-step method you mentioned to help make students aware of what they are meant to be doing and when. This can feel rushed (as noted by yourself) as we do have a lot to get through in the first bit, so they can spend the rest of the time making work. I found myself taking longer to explain with you present, so I fear I am usually quicker so it has helped me realise the pace I should be going at.

With regards to written resources, I have thought about this, we tend to not give out printed resources, but especially with something as complicated as colour it would be helpful. I will think about compiling a booklet of top tips including initial darkroom settings and some of the main components of working in the darkroom – thank you for the push on this.

Overall, it is nice to read about my teaching practice as a technician I tend to do the same workshop over and over again, it’s often hard to imagine to the students its their first experience so it’s helped me think about my approach to teaching in general and how I can help facilitate their continued learning journey.

I have taught a lot of these workshops since this peer review – and have noted the difference in how students engage depending on how they prepare for the workshop, so I think we could do lots to improve their prep. Make sure they bring their negatives and that they have the prior knowledge required to complete the workshop effectively.