# Record of Observation or Review of Teaching Practice

Session/artefact to be observed/reviewed: Object-based learning workshop on sensory fashion and textiles

Size of student group: 9

Observer: Danielle Radojcin

Observee: Dayna Tohidi

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?

*The purpose of this workshop is to introduce Elizabeth Kutesco’s first-year Courtauld students to the CSM Museum & Study Collection and the experiential pedagogy of object-based learning, so they know how to use our valuable resources from the beginning of their course: Sensory Encounters with Dress and Textiles. Elizabeth hopes it will get them excited about studying fashion and introduce them to our approach of archiving and handling objects.*

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

*This will be my first time working with Elizabeth’s first-year Courtauld students from this course. However, I have delivered similar sessions for her CSM BA and MA Fashion History and Theory students before.*

What are the intended or expected learning outcomes?

* Introduce students to the CSM Museum & Study Collection
* Explain to students the various ways they can engage with, research and use our collections
* Introduce students to the field of object-based learning and get them to analyse their allocated object using Jules Prown’s forensic reading methodology
* Gain new knowledge and references about historical and contemporary fashion through the curator’s reveal of the objects on display

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

*The students will physically engage with their allocated object in accordance with our museum handling guidelines and be required to complete a Prown forensic reading of their object as part of a smaller group.*

Are there potential difficulties or specific areas of concern?

*As with all my workshops, I generally teach new students each time, so there are always potential difficulties that I encounter on the day. Most of the time, this can be tardiness, but sometimes, it can be students with neurodiverse conditions that require extra support. Occasionally, it is cultural or language barriers that come with teaching a large proportion of international students.*

How will students be informed of the observation/review?

*I notified Elizabeth in advance to the session, who will inform students directly.*

What would you particularly like feedback on?

*The timings of the workshop. It is very difficult to get through all the content I would like to share in a 1 hour or 1.5-hour slot, but it is often necessary in order to teach an entire cohort in one day. I don’t want the students to feel confused about how to use our museum services or feel they don’t have enough time to do the object-based learning activity or not have the opportunity to ask questions about objects after the reveal. My time keeping is generally quite good and students don’t feel rushed, but a big factor that can affect this which is out of my control is tardiness at the start of a session. No matter how much myself and the tutor warn students to arrive five minutes early, some students are always late and it can throw the workshop off course.*

How will feedback be exchanged?

*In-person after the session ends and then virtually through the feedback form.*

## Part Two

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

Dayna Tohidi, CSM Museum & Study Collection Curator, taught a class at Central Saint Martins, to a group of eight students who were visiting from the Courtauld BA. Dayna had not taught them previously, and they were history of art students, rather than fashion students. The idea was to get them to engage with some fashion items through object-based learning, based on the Jules Prown method.

Dayna went to collect the students from reception, and then brought them into the teaching space, where the objects were laid out on a table, disguised in wrapping.

One of Dayna’s concerns in her pre-class notes to me was student tardiness; she says it is something she suffers from as she loses out on valuable time. Sure enough, the students, unaccustomed to the layout of CSM, had got lost on arrival, and the delay meant the start of the class was delayed. Dayna was also concerned about not having enough time to finish everything she wanted to achieve in the class. As it is, there is not enough time in her session to teach everything she wants to.

As a result of this, the first part of Dayna’s class, which was a presentation on the screen explaining among other things the background of the museum and its aims, was slightly rushed. Dayna did not appear phased by this setback, nor by the noise from the exhibition being installed in the room adjacent. It didn’t impact on the quality of the class. After the class, Dayna and I discussed the tardiness issue. One thing we thought about was setting the start of the class 15 minutes earlier than planned, to give the students space to be late, get lost and so on. Another idea I would add here would be to communicate with the students, via their teacher, to reiterate several times ahead of class to show up early.

After Dayna’s short presentation, which covered the history of the Museum, its contents, and how they are stored, the students were put into pairs, each assigned an object to analyse. They were deliberately not told anything about the object in front of them. Once the objects were unveiled, the students became visibly more animated. Their task was to observe and analyse the objects and take notes. During this time Dayna walked around the classroom stopping to talk to each pair of students, asking them questions and providing thought starters.

After discussing the object and writing down their thoughts in pairs, Dayna invited each pair of students to present back their thoughts on the object. She actively encouraged the quieter students to participate, by asking them a leading question. This demonstrated her awareness of the different needs of the different students, and a sensitivity to the quieter members in the group; it gave them the confidence to overcome their shyness and add their own opinions. She praised the students’ comments, which clearly inspired them to feel more confident to add further comments and insights.

After the students had shared their thoughts on an object, Dayna then provided the factual notes of the object. This pleased the students to the extent on several occasions they broke into spontaneous applause. They also applauded Dayna at the end of the session!

The questions from the students at the end were manifold, and surprising in their number, thoughtfulness and range – everything from the impact of a smell of the object to how the museum chooses the items it archives, to dealing with pests. They demonstrably felt comfortable enough with Dayna to ask questions.

Overall, its was a thought-provoking, fun and absorbing class with lots of student feedback and engagement. Dayna was authoritative and warm and inclusive throughout, making an effort to make the class diverse, interactive and inclusive.

Constructive suggestions:

1. Tell the students the class begins 15 minutes earlier than it actually does, to minimise the chance of tardiness.
2. Trim the amount of information you want to share, to avoid the stress of feeling as if you have to rush
3. Provide notes and further reading to the students with anything you are unable to cover in class, due to time constraints.
4. Consider removing some of the information from the presentation and including it in a document for them to take home at the end – for example, while it is interesting to see photos of the storage rooms, it wasn’t until after the students had handled the objects that they became interested in the broader elements of the Musuem.
5. One of the most engaged-with moments in the class happened when you started talking about pest control – perhaps because it’s something everyone can relate to. Maybe that’s something to bring into the presentation at the beginning, to pique their interest?

## Part Three

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

Danielle’s feedback has been even more helpful and insightful than I anticipated when we were initially briefed about the teaching observations.

I like how Danielle meticulously reflected on each aspect of my workshop and gave actionable feedback for areas I expressed concern, such as tardiness. Going forward, I will improvise on Danielle’s suggestion of telling students the class starts 15 minutes earlier by telling them to arrive 15 minutes earlier instead. I will also send a direct email to my students covering the key information and reminders that I usually ask tutors to tell students to save time repeating this in my workshop.

Moreover, I am going to edit my workshop plans and presentation to remove information I can give at the end of sessions to save me time and give students more time to engage with the objects during the workshop.