Steven Johnson
Observation Feedback
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General Observations:

During the session that I observe, I see 8 students, seated in two parallel rows of desks with computers and a further row of desks running across the end of these parallel rows. The majority of students appear to be international students for whom English is probably not a first language. The 'classroom' is an open space – there are no walls to separate this space from the corridor or the nearby lifts and ensuing people 'traffic'. Unless asked by you to do otherwise, students work quietly alone or confer with one another.

Observations:

Pace and Delivery:

In the session that I observe, you deliver a very generous amount of very interesting learning materials and highly engaging drawing tasks, such as the initial tasks given to students – such as the two early 'whole body drawing' tasks standing up- for 10 seconds- (around 13.46) and another drawing task (at 13.53)- or 1 minute. At 14.03 you introduce a task relating to "analogue to digital translation…" and organise the students into groups of three. See my suggestion 3 in relation to this.

This means that, as tutor trying to effectively deliver these materials and consistently engage students, you inevitably generate a fast pace overall. There are moments when the pace could be varied, particularly to ensure deeper engagement by non-native speakers. For example, your subsequent slide shows presented on the digital screen are potentially fascinating and well researched, and you do a great job of explaining the material to the students and you do mention that you are going through the material quickly because it is already online. However, this fast pace has implications for depth of student engagement and the overall 'message' that this sends to them and the values underpinning this, as well as the way that knowledges are produced in the class. Given that many of the students are international students for whom English is not a first language, and that you are teaching in an 'open space' situation, it may be worth considering changing the pace of this part of the session by re-structuring its delivery, possibly including through 'co-teaching' with your students - see my Suggestions 1 & 2 below.

Leaving aside for now the fast pace mentioned above, your verbal delivery is otherwise very strong and clear all times. You are consistent, courteous and kind to all of your students equally, delivering expert knowledges very generously. This is despite the (extreme) challenge of working in an 'open space classroom' – that is, a 'classroom' that has been designed to be built without any walls to separate it off from the corridor which is used communally by any / all staff and students and is also situated quite close to the lifts. I admired how you appeared to remain very calm about this. See suggestion 3.

Structure and Organisation:

The session is very well structured overall. You provide a lesson plan, different kinds of tasks surrounding mark-making and a very richly informed slide presentation on the screen.

You make excellent use of the (limited) space, asking students to physically stand- see my suggestion 3 - for tasks involving mark-making and using the digital screen effectively to present different forms of stimuli and materials in relation to these tasks. Importantly, you continually explains to students what they're going to be doing and what is happening next. This is highly effective in orientating the

students and this is reassuring for them, effectively creating a sense of 'safe space' to work in with you, and this means they respond well to you as you walk around the space to interact with different students individually.

Attention to pace could very positively impact on the already strong structure and organisation.

Interaction and Engagement with Students:

Your interaction with students is very strong and very endearing to see. You are very welcoming and considerate of your students' experiences in the classroom and they respond well to you. There are several warm, inclusive moments when you laugh briefly with individual students and small groups. whilst they are carrying out tasks.

You reassure students by saying things like "Remember it's just a process" and you (more than once) apologise to them for talking (!) saying things like "Okay I've done so much talking I apologise" (14.26), "Okay fantastic" (13.57). There are moments where you do encourage students to share their work with the whole group.

You do give students many verbal rewards / compliments- but see my Suggestion 4.

Knowledge Dissemination and Production:

The majority of the information and knowledges disseminated through transmission- from tutor to student(s), at a very fast pace, especially during the slide talk when you describe and explain some fascinating issues, approaches and themes such as Gestalt, White space, Consistency, Hierarchy of Information, rule of thirds, form follows function, minimal and maximal designs and more.
See my suggestions 3 and 4 about this.

Suggestions

Suggestion 1: Over-providing and feeling an obligation to over-provide, often without realising that this is happening, can create too fast a pace and one-way knowledge production / dissemination, so that learning experiences remain 'transmission' based. I'd encourage you to consider that you are being overly generous and over-burdening yourself with the amount of tasks and materials that you are 'providing' for students, and perhaps question why this is.
I'd suggest you could try varying the way that you disseminate information in order to vary the pace and allow for some slower periods within the session. For example, you could try distributing slide presentations prior to the class and task students with co-teaching with you. This could also extend to deepening the conversations you then have about the wonderful material you have provided, for example, to include discussion of EDI related values – see suggestion 2 below.

Suggestion 2: There are various risks involved in encouraging students to work at a very fast pace; this this could produce superficial learning, effectively degrading the rich research you have taken care to provide. As well as trying Suggestion 1, you could consider extending your already very student-sensitive approach by speaking with them more directly about the fast pace of the sessions and the implications on important values within education and, later on, in industry; in today's context, it is appropriate to encourage students to question the (often) fast paced fashion and design industries, especially in relation to wider but urgent issues that these industries have very significantly contributed to, such as the impact of production on climate change. Students could be encouraged to consider whether slower pacing / varied pacing at work can be realistically and ethically connected to improving industry values.

Suggestion 3: Given the 'open-space' situation you are working in, there is scope to take the idea of bodily movement in relation to drawing, and also small(er) group work further. For example, you could encourage students to work beyond the perceived boundaries of the 'room' that they are (arguably not) in, even to the extent of taking them out of the space entirely, or encouraging them to explore the surfaces and surrounding spaces in a purposeful way. Imaginative interaction with these spaces, or with different groups of three exploring different parts of the wider space (or even outside) could be good for encouraging an explorative approach and mark-making relative to architectural space.

Suggestion 4: There is much scope to increase the amount and depth of verbal rewards given to students when they verbally input in response to your teaching. This will encourage students to say more, and to begin co-teaching with you, rather than only absorb transmitted information and learning.

For example, when you say (14.19) "…does anyone remember?" a student answers and you very fleetingly acknowledge this response. There are many other instances of this. During a class it can be very difficult to remember to pause when a student responds and take time – even a few seconds longer – to encourage and 'open out' more thought and more speech on their part and also from other students. Positively affirming something – anything – that a student contributes increases all students' sense of 'safe space' and can be wonderful for improving students' confidence and self esteem. The more that students see you pause, take longer to praise student input and longer to open this out to the class the more then will be inclined to co-teach with you, effectively distributing and producing knowledges across different group members and to and from tutor, rather than only receiving pre-produced knowledges. For example, you could say something like: "That's such a good idea / point / response and there's a lot we could say about that. Does anyone other than me have something to say about this great point that (name student) has just made?" You are already beginning to do this – but the very fast pace of the session means that you lose the opportunity to use verbal rewards as a form of 'soft structure' for shaping the class dynamic and knowledge exchange.