PGCHE Reflective Commentary

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Introduction

When I look back at my time as a student I recall two things, firstly, a module entitled 'Telescopes and Microscopes', and secondly, the module 'Politics of the Permissive Society'. 'Telescopes' remains the most tedious subject I have encountered. All I recall is how badly I did in assessment, and how, when I asked for help, the teacher criticised my note taking. I remember no content, who was in the class, what we studied, or even the point of the module. In contrast, 'Politics' has stayed with me, and when I think about the 9.15 Thursday morning seminar, I am filled with knowledge and confidence, clearly recalling the lecturer, Dr Mark Roodhouse, and how he engaged the students, shared knowledge, and encouraged even my 'hung over' classmate to declare he was 'on it for some history'. It was the module I scored highest on in my degree, and I remember to this day the opening quote I used in a closed exam, as well as the theme of my formative assignment, despite being fifteen years ago.

Good teaching resonates; it is more than the content, it is a combination of passion in the teacher, and their interaction with you – their supportive challenge. A good teacher doesn't speak at you, they engage you, creating a learning community in the classroom. The approach in 'Politics' speaks volumes to me about teaching; how to teach effectively, and how to create that 'deep' learning – the bigger picture learning that stays with you over a decade. In contrast, you remember a bad teaching experience just as, if not, more vividly. Importantly, the teacher for the 'telescopes' module was a PhD candidate – a 'student' teacher, like me. As a GTA I am new to teaching, learning my own specialism, and that of teaching, as I go. The parallel I draw here between these two modules is significant, as a teacher I want to engage and support my students, to check understanding, and ensure no-one is, as I was, silently lagging behind, feeling lost, still to this day unsure what was wrong with my notes.

Research has shown how university teacher's individual approaches are connected with their own teaching (Lindblom-Ylanne, 2006); thus, reflection is essential for new teachers, who go through five stages of development, 'early idealism, personal survival, seeing the difficulties, hitting a plateau and moving on' (Pokorny, 2017 p. 212). Yet, no-one can prepare you for the transition into lecturing; we learn from experience (experiential learning), and, as shown by the brief reflections above, we bring all our previous thoughts and experiences into new learning situations – cognitive constructivism. The challenges of the PGCert course have not only guided me into the first year of teaching, they allowed me to understand what my students are going through –time constraints, challenge of content, and how family, health, work all impose on your initial intentions when starting the course. This, in itself, has allowed me to be, at the very least, a compassionate and understanding teacher.

This reflective portfolio will focus on three history modules: the second year module 'Hands on History' (AIH2019), the final year module 'Mindsets, Madness and Institutions' (AHH3214) and dissertations (AHH3053). To cover the three elements of the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) this reflective commentary is presented as a series of critical incidents which link into key theory, separated into sub sections, for, 'if we only learn what we experience, we may learn little' (Avis, 2014). Critical incidents, 'incidents or daily experiences of significance to the practitioner' (Tripp, 1993) offer an insight into the key events that have informed my practice, and I use critical incidents as a lens through which to illuminate key developments, my knowledge of pedagogical theory, and my reflections to allow me to move forward as a practitioner.

Critical Incident 1: First Teaching Session

'Hands on History' was my first lecturing experience. Filled with early idealism, I was exceptionally nervous. I had spent the weekend preparing for the Monday 14:15 – 17:15 session despite thinking this was *only* an introductory session; introducing the content and assessment, visiting Heritage Quay, and introducing key themes of history from below. My use of the word 'only' is significant here - despite thinking I was adequately prepared, I had not planned holistically, and the session could have been delivered better. I planned to provide a range of information, but despite having the best of intentions, I had not considered the desired learning outcomes, and how I could evaluate these. Subject specialism is only one aspect of teaching; teaching holistically is altogether unique, and I needed to prepare for teaching a unique range of individuals, rather than simply introducing a myriad of details.

Ten students take 'Hands on History'; it is a small group. Much has been written about class size, and the benefit of smaller groups (e.g. Ramsden, 2011), yet, small groups also offer significant challenges (Race, 2015). Essential in smaller groups is 'getting people to work together well, in carefully set up learning environments' (Race, 2015). Yet, my nerves meant my only real engagement with the students was in asking names. I forgot strategies used to open sessions, such as asking why students had chosen the module, or whether they were interested in working in heritage. I became overly concerned justifying my position being there, teaching. I felt an imposter. 'Imposter syndrome' is something many teachers feel. Clance and Imes (1978) discuss the gendered element of this phenomenon and how many women feel they are simply pretenders in HE, feeling 'intellectual inauthenticity' (Fruhan, 2002).[1] Certainly, lack of confidence has been a significant, reoccurring, feature of for me.

Initially I failed to appreciate how unique 'Hands on History' is. Notably different to others on the Level 6 History course, combining practical and theoretical aspects of history/historiography while providing skills for employment, 'social functionalism' (Lea, 2015). Considering this, I could have spent longer focusing on scaffolding knowledge and developing dialogue, rather than on information giving. I stood rigidly at the front of the class. Movement around the room is important for engagement and behaviour (Pedota, 2007), as you never isolate yourself from learners (Pokorny, 2016). The layout of this teaching space does require some movement as students spread widely around the mid-sized room of 6 tables without a central display. The session was quite hectic; moving from introduction, with largely me speaking (without adding much to help the students to understand expectations), to archives for a talk and explanation of how archive practice and storage works, before returning to the classroom to split into groups for planning. Even the description here seems fragmented. The amount to 'get through' ignored the need for emphasis and repetition of key points. Repetition is important in teaching (Briggs, 2007) especially with regards to key points and threshold concepts, and learning to make the same point in different ways, ensuring you leave no one behind, as everyone learns in different ways. Theories of learning styles (e.g. Honey & Mumford, 1992) suggest individuals have different styles of learning, (e.g. visual, auditory, read/write, and kinaesthetic learners), and differences can be understood by their dominant/preferred style. While aware of learning style theories, I don't consider them particularly effective in understanding the unique idiosyncrasies of my students, and there is little evidence to support the use of learning styles (Newton & Miah, 2017, p.2). Coffield (2004) found that 'a person's cognitive or learning style' is 'adaptable to the context' thus, we should aim for 'whole brain learning' instead (Petty, 2007).

[1] Imposter Syndrome is not limited to women, but consideration of this is beyond the scope of this reflective commentary.

However, we need awareness of how people prefer to learn, for example, some prefer sequential, step by step approaches, while others learn holistically, preferring to get a feel for the topic and see how it all fits together (Petty, 2007). We are working with individuals, so our teaching must reflect this.

Linking back, one characteristic of 'imposter syndrome' is individuals can be unduly hard on themselves; actually, not all the session was unsuccessful. I was able to change the dynamic during the Heritage Quay visit; for years I worked within archives, so public history and conservation are passions of mine. When showing the students the store, I became a different person; at ease with the students, clear in my explanation of the what, why and how of archives, and speaking at a level the students understood. Students asked questions, told me of their interest in working in the field and were fascinated by the unique setting. This set an excellent precedent for the final part of the session, starting to look deeper into possible themes and archival resources. The first teaching session for any new teacher is significant, and many new teachers get the balance wrong (Pokorny, 2007), however, this enabled me to get back on track.

Developing a positive relationship with students is essential to good teaching; the knowledge students bring affects how they deal with new knowledge, if you don't know what you're working with, there is a chance the teacher 'is building on sand' (Laurillard, 2005). Hence why lack of engagement with them was not a good start. Ramsden (2003) asks, 'to who do people like to talk' to make the point students are more likely to answer or ask a teacher questions if they like and trust them. My enthusiasm for archives, and knowing why and how some of the elements of this sector can be confusing meant I was able to cover key 'threshold concepts' with the students, both in the archives, and back in the classroom, helping develop a relationship of mutual respect (Ramsden, 2003).

A major component of the module and part of the assessment is the curation of a public exhibition based on the broad theme, 'Colonialism' (appendix). For this, students were asked to choose a partner. Among the group I had a pair who are in a relationship, two 'high fliers', four 'middle ability' friends, leaving two, forced to 'clump together through any lack of alternative' (Race, 2015). I immediately realised my mistake; one appeared isolated from the group - sitting alone, remaining isolated during the archive visit, looking downtrodden as pairs were decided. The other student, the most outspoken, stood up and commented 'end of the bench'. It was awkward. Pairing the quietest with the most outgoing could have been mutually beneficial, however, the partnership did not work, furthermore, his poor attendance and lack of engagement left her without a partner for the majority of the module. While I developed provision to support her through this, it did cause undue problems; she needed support with planning, and was permitted to choose less items for the exhibition, instead using extracts from an oral history. As she has a PLSP and struggles with some content, this seemed like a reasonable measure to have in place but one which could have been avoided if I had considered the pairings before the session. Students find colleagues failing to pull their weight 'one of the things they like least about working in a group' (Macfarlene, 2004), but I did not anticipate this, so, in future, students will work individually, linking into a group, with a more direct theme.

How students learn

Learning is a process of individual transformation (Ramsden, 2003), but it is not something that just happens; a teacher cannot impose knowledge or learning on a student, rather, it is an internal process (Taylor, 2008), which remains personal and situational (Fry, 2007). There are numerous theories on how students learn, and most agree that teaching methods determine the type of

learning. For example, if a teacher focuses on themselves or on 'transmitting' knowledge students will focus largely on reproducing knowledge. For Biggs and Tang (2011) this is teacher centred learning which leads to what is considered a 'surface approach to learning' (Postareff et al, 2007). Here, students do no look at a subject holistically; they 'skate along the surface' remembering disjointed facts' (Marton & Calijo, 1976). This learning is 'sufficient for the day' (Race, 2014). This year, I have seen students taking a surface approach, waiting to be told exactly what they need to know, having no confidence, or ability (as yet) to think about the subject as a whole. In opening 'HOH' with a didactic style, it would be easy for students to think they can just sit and wait for information to be given to them, then, should they memorise this, they will succeed. Actually, we should aspire to 'deep learning', learning which goes beyond the surface, looking at the deeper meaning.

This corresponds to constructivism; which suggests we learn by 'fitting in' new understanding and knowledge by 'extending' and 'supplanting' old knowledge (Fry, 2007). While there are different forms of constructivism, they all suggest learners construct knowledge in terms of the schemata they have already developed. Furthermore, 'phenomenography', suggests learning is not a result of the teachers intentions, rather, it is determined by the learners perspective (Biggs & Tang, 2011, pp.22-23). It is the centrality of the learner, and understanding their prior, everyday experiences in meaning construction that is important (Hoidn, S. 2017; 2016). It is clear, teachers are never working with more/less able students, rather, interaction with the teacher/teaching activities brings about learning, and the type of learning we see.

For all of this, an effective learning environment is fundamental. Linked to the work of Piaget, it is the notion that intelligence/learning is established because of the relationship between individual and environment. Teaching should be 'learner centred, structured, personalised, social and inclusive' (Istance and Dumont, 2011). You need to know what the aim of the session is, whether the students are clear on this, and how you can evaluate success in aligning the aim and outcome. The study of history naturally links to educational theory; 'the emphasis is not on learning outcomes, but on changing the learner's perspective, or the way the learner sees the world and on how learners represent knowledge' (Prosser & Trigwell, 1999). Interestingly, teaching within HE should lead to 'a qualitative change in a person's view of reality' (Ramsden, 2003), this is similarly what we aspire to in teaching history, developing objectivity, reason and judgment to enable more effective representations of the past.

Critical Incident 2: Assessment and Feedback

Assessment in 'Hands on History' is diverse; students are assessed using presentations, written assignments, a reflective essay and annotated bibliography, and a public exhibition, encompassing archival resources chosen by the students, written labels for the items, and the 'impact' of their exhibition case. While supporting students with different strengths the range of assessment is challenging. My biggest concern was the exhibition production; a new activity/form of assessment for the students. Gibbons et al argue that university knowledge must address itself to experiential knowledge if it is to remain relevant to the way knowledge is 'actually used in society' (quoted in Laurillard, 2005), so, despite the challenge, activities such as this are fundamental to the decision to make part of the assessment an output.

To support the students, I used constructive alignment, (Biggs, 1999), this is alignment between 'what the teacher intends learners to be able to do, know or understand, how they teach, and what and how they assess' (Fry, 2007). I prepared relevant tasks and activities to scaffold knowledge on how to develop an exhibition, including spoof assessment (Petty, 2014) of other exhibitions and cases, inviting guest speakers, and visiting archives. Despite being challenging, the exhibition cases were excellent, and feedback unanimously showed they enjoyed the practical element. Initially students were concerned about the exhibition and as no other element of assessment caused this reaction I knew it was something to focus on, after all, it is the role of a teacher to know when learning is occurring, or not, so they can intervene to support (Hattie, 2012). In my first critical incident I focused on relationships, I emphasise this because I only knew my students concerns because of my relationship with them. They were forthcoming and honest with me, and as such, I could respond to their needs, introducing issues surrounding access to archives, intended audience and spatial factors. Hattie argues teachers need to see themselves as evaluators of their effects on students (2012), and in this way, I feel I was able to ensure there were no surprises when it came to exhibitions, students knew exactly what was expected of them.

When assessing the formative exhibition display, I utilised peer assessment, inviting students to provide feedback about each other's cases, noting points for improvement, and what worked well, akin to the medals and missions activity (Petty, 2014; learning set). The students were largely supportive without having points of suggestion, so I guided them, asking, "What would you do differently". This invited constructive discussions about choices of documents and labels, allowing everyone to make some amendments, and increasing accessibility for visitors to the exhibition. For Boud (2010) students should be involved in assessment more intimately, 'to become more effective continuing learners and practitioners' (Quoted in Race, 2015). While peer assessment did not form part of the final assessment, it is important for peers to offer feedback and opinion, and is a strategy which appears to increase student's confidence about their own work.

Hattie (2012) asks 'what can a student do as a result of teachers actions?' This section, on assessment and feedback, has largely focused on preparing students effectively for assessment; but surely that is the point. Assessment is no different from teaching, and actually, if you have taught well, scaffolded learning, and made it student centred, then it amalgamates into the teaching experience. This is clear when comparing the exhibition to the reflection/annotated bibliography. The exhibition included verbal feedback, written feedback and peer assessment, and were a joy to mark, with David Smith of the archive service agreeing. In contrast, when assessing other assignments, I used only written feedback. While making every effort to provide detailed, constructive feedback, it is not enough, and I received a large number of emails asking for additional help and guidance (appendix). Furthermore, many of the same patterns from summative assessments appeared in formative writing. Clearly, written feedback does not guide students in the

way it should, with evidence suggesting written feedback isn't often acted upon (Gibbs & Simpson, 2004). As such, 'questioning, feedback, sharing criteria and self-assessment' (Black, Harrison & Lee, 2003, p. 30), along with peer assessment, should be utilised. Many students struggle to conceptualise what good writing looks like so next year I will use modeling (Pokorny, 2017) on past work (with permission of the students) to help students contextualise this. This will work well for the annotated bibliography, as while some only 'study what they think will be assessed' (Ramsden, 2011), no two exhibition themes are the same, meaning students will be able to utilise methods, rather than the context, preventing the risk of plagiarism.

This year I have used Brightspace, TurnItIn, and Grademark for assessment and feedback; these are effective tools which allow you to check similarity, and make relevant comments on the document, rather than just completing a summary. I now offer all students an appointment to speak to me about feedback, to ensure that they fully understood where and how they could improve. This is simpler with only 10 students, however, despite the time constraints, offer appointments to all my students. I have also learnt to 'feed forward', by emphasising points for improvement and development, rather than what has been done wrong (Race and Pickford, 2007, p. 95), as well as sandwiching this in positive feedback. All feedback should be forward looking, positive and constructive (Petty, 2014), but, if the students don't understand, or even read the feedback, there is no chance for them to improve, suggesting more needs to be done to improve overall assessment processes in HE.

Quality assurance in Marking

This year, I have first and second marked dissertations, possibly the most significant piece of work for history students. Many of the dissertations I assessed, however, do not fall under my area of specialism, making me question how effectively you can mark work outside your research specialism. To address this, I sought guidance from senior colleagues, Professor XXXXX and Dr XXXXX. Both reassured me all are second marked, and moderated (appendix), however, it nonetheless remains imperative that you work closely to assessment criteria. Particularly so, as marking and feedback are a frustration for both staff and students; students frequently cite assessment and feedback as the least satisfactory element of their HE experience, while academic staff are overwhelmed by the volume of marking each term, some only allocated 20-30 minutes per assignment (Race, 2014).

This inevitably leads to considerations of fairness and quality assurance for many reasons. The first, is the close relationship I developed with my dissertation students, the second, is highlighted by marking within areas outside your subject specialism, and finally, the increasing pressure for teachers to 'produce' students of 1st and 2:1 standards. Despite endeavouring to remain as objective and fair as possible, many markers, simply 'get a feel' for the grade they believe a student should receive, and work from there when grading (Bloxham et al, 2011); others often use a comparative approach, by which they may up/down grade another students work based on the work of others whose work they are marking. As such the university has procedures in place to ensure marking is as fair and objective as possible. In marking dissertations this year, there was disagreement on two pieces of work. The first was a student I graded 70%, where the second marker believed it was worthy of 72%, and in the second instance, the first marker graded a student 58%, where I believed, using the assessment criteria, that the student deserved 60%. Using the assessment criteria, and outlining the reasons why in both instances, my colleagues and I were able to agree on a final mark – 72% and 60% respectively. In both cases, XXXXXX was notified of the disagreement, so she could look over the work to ensure fairness before sending for moderation. Considering the university

targets which could mean an inclination to generously grade students ensuring higher results, however, I believe more needs to be done within the university to ensure quality assurance by training all new staff and ensuring all have an experienced mentor. Potentially having student work anonymised, could help improve objectivity.

Critical Incident 3: 'Representing Madness':

Historians seek to reconstruct and represent the past, enabling us to envisage 'socially just futures' (Hunter, 2018). My session 'Representing Madness'[2] links to this ideal. It was a session my mentor asked me to devise this year as rrepresentations of mental illness are an important element of study; debates about the past often find their way into media headlines and become the subject of public discussion (Cooper, 2017), introducing questions of the breadth of historical inquiry. All teachers work 'to counter stereotypes and closed thinking, to promote accountability of the person as responsible agent and to promote critical thinking and the importance of dissenting voices' (Hattie, 2012), and this is central too for historians.

Yet, while fascinating, it is a far reaching subject, representations of any theme go far beyond the scope of one seminar which is both exciting and daunting when building a 3 hour seminar from scratch. The Dearing Report (1997) explicitly outlined the significance of learning outcomes, that is, what students are meant to achieve (Biggs & Tang, 2011). So, for a new session, in such a broad area, a substantial amount of time was spent in planning and preparing. I sought to encourage an all-encompassing session; one that was inclusive of all learners and encouraged group work and debate, so theories of social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978) influenced the planning. I am happy with the content and delivery; the breadth of teaching historical representations of madness is key to why it worked so well; no historian has written extensively, or explicitly, on the subject, providing endless scope for discussion and debate. Each epoch has represented mental illness differently, and linking to threshold concepts, allowed students to understand the failings of key schools of thought (e.g. Whiggish approaches) – something the students had hitherto struggled with.

I was confident, having run through this with my mentor prior to the session, and was able to link back to student work earlier in the term. In the first session, the students were asked to note key words related to the history of mental health; most chose words such as 'chains', 'straightjacket', 'torture' etc., (representing a gothic representation of mental illness rather than a historically accurate or informed reading of the past). Linking to these initial thoughts, we started to deconstruct various representations, using a range of material, from film and television, to historical and modern newspapers, literature and art, allowing students to see how much their perspectives had changed, or at least, be able to justify why they had stayed the same. It allowed the students to interpret contemporary representations of mental illness, and existing stigmas surrounding those living with mental health difficulties, Ramsden (2003) describes how deep learning is a transformational process, and sessions such as this, which encourage sensitivity and understanding towards realities of mental health, and the way society represents it, are vital.

It is a student-led session, as they are the ones who need to 'reconstruct' their worldview. Yet, I had not planned for the engagement I received, and I lost track of time, allowing the students to run on with activities, going far over the time allocated, while the students stayed on task throughout, less

[2] Madness is an anachronistic term, and one that is addressed in the course with the students. 'Mental illness' and 'madness' can be used interchangeably, to stay in line with the historiography of relevant periods, however, to stay true to resources and literature, the term madness is used. This is addressed with the students at the start of the course, to ensure they understand the significance of terminology and its historical use.

time should have been dedicated to this activity. This is one of the risks of activity based, student led classes, and I did not facilitate effectively. In how students learn, we see learning comes about through the relationship between the individual and the task, not because of any innate characteristics (Ramsden, 2003) which is why activity based learning is so important, and why I use tasks/activities. They are designed to give student ownership, allowing them to make sense, rather than simply remembering (Briggs, 2007). They are inclusive, along with a task list, I provide a range of resources for the session, alongside resources to support assignments and document analysis (appendix). Students are invited to approach the task in any way they choose, so group work works well, accommodating dialogue, which can deepen understanding (Biggs, 2003).

Once students had represented madness, a creative task which some students liked while others struggled, they were asked to position their representation in the historiography, and then align themselves with a key historian, or school of thought, to ground their representation in theory. Linking their personal ideas to historical thought was a challenge for the students, but encouraged independent critical thinking, about their own thought and the wider context. 'When students are given freedom to work through…learning material in their preferred way, they exhibit a wide range of routes… demonstrating that learner control might be more effective than program control' (Ramsden, 2003). Yet, due to planning too much, I lost key elements in the teaching. Also, while this is a final year module, I felt that at times I spoke at too high a level for the students, including some complex theory which needed more time, but due to the amount of content, I wasn't able to effectively deliver on these elements, leading me to sending additional information and resources after the session. It would have been worth sending more information prior to the session or using online resources (Novak, 1999), and working from this rather than introducing the ideas, and then hoping that the students followed up with the resources sent following the session.

Many tasks are 'operationalised in a way the teacher may not expect' (Laurillard, 2005), and I did not anticipate the range of interpretations students created; one group drew a series of film images (appendix) and I was unsure how to respond, so when it came to linking the image to historiography, the group were stuck. I perhaps should have been prepared for a myriad of representations, because the students had done what was asked, and I perhaps 'spoon fed' them answers when they struggled. Still, in linking the ideas to sociology and even media studies, to explain why following weeks of historical study, their prevalent image was one from contemporary popular culture, we found an important discussion point, so being taken aback by student responses and opinions can be a positive experience, with students working together, in a form of problem-based learning. These problems act as the driving force for learning (Fry, 2009), and by solving a problem independently learners engage themselves in the learning process (Slavin Bladen, 2004), moving them closer to the deep approach to learning.

I have not yet fully utilised student led approaches, and oscillate between teacher led and student led teaching. Next year, I will utilise more flipped classroom based activities, more student led facilitation and with a greater focus on debate, discussion, and documentary analysis to move forward with this style of teaching. The challenge is time; but with the summer to prepare the documentation, and present this to students using Brightspace, I know that I can develop a diverse portfolio of activities and resources.

Blooms Taxonomy and Teaching History

Teaching is intended to bring about learning outcomes (Thomas & Pring, 2004). In supporting and guiding students towards these, it is helpful to consider Bloom's *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* (1956) and *Revised Taxonomy*. While there are limits to the *Taxonomy* for historical pedagogy, for example Bloom focuses on cognitive skills, rather than psychomotor, affective and interpersonal skills, key forms of learning (Fry, 2007); it remains valuable when considering learning objectives and outcomes based learning, and for me this year, in developing successful activities and tasks for problem based learning and group work.

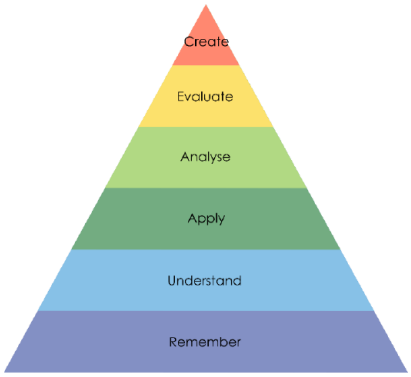

Figure 1: Bloom's Revised Taxonomy, (Anderson et al, 2001)

Bloom's taxonomy includes six categories of cognitive skills; creating, evaluating and analysing demonstrate the highest level of understanding, 'higher order skills' (Adams, 2015). In contrast, simply remembering, understanding and applying show a lesser understanding. Using the skills as tools, they enable practitioners to classify strategies and learning activities, and to evaluate what the student does as a result of these (Krathwohl, 2002).

Each week, students complete a series of tasks/activities within my teaching session (see appendix). These have included creating a workable asylum, representing madness or outlining research. One key element of teaching history is the development of argument and debate. There is no historical truth; all content is subjective and so being able to establish and defend historical interpretation is central to the learning outcomes of the subject (Carr, 1986). Yet, not all students in the group are able to process the content and develop their own positions on the subject within the space of the teaching session. As such, the activities were designed to allow students the time and creative space to be able to begin formulating their arguments, and to internalise what they have learnt. Analysis and evaluation are fundamental; but historians consistently need to create; whether in publishing, writing an assignment, or developing exhibitions/public history displays. By asking students to 'create' in activities, they demonstrate understanding in a relaxed, enjoyable way, one linking to constructivism and social constructivism, linking cognitive skills with interpersonal and affective, as students also develop their ability to work as a team, sharing ideas and discussing key theory.

Use of technology

The recent implementation of a new VLE, Brightspace offers an improved online experience for students and staff. The system allows you to develop an online learning community, with discussion boards, a quiz function, which can be used informally or as part of assessment and also space for a range of learning resources. These facilities allow integration of principles of the 'flipped classroom' (King, 1993; Novak, 1999) into teaching practice. The flipped classroom is where students complete work/activities prior to the teaching session, meaning teaching sessions immediately delve into deeper levels of discussion with less time spent on background.

Prior to the 'Representing' session, I did this in a number of ways; sending a range of resources, some primary, some secondary, and asking that they watch films in advance of the session. Realising this would not be possible for all, (recognising also some would simply not watch the films), I organised a series of film screenings, which included some key resources, discussions and guided learning. Petty (2007) has demonstrated how watching a film is a low level strategy for teaching, unless combined with direction and so key questions and points of observation were outlined as a guide, while preconceived ideas were investigated before the session, to see how they developed. This is 'blended learning' and while definitions vary, here I refer to the narrower definition, the 'integration of online and face to face strategies (Hew & Chueng, 2014). By sending resources, films,

online links and guides, etc. for at least part of the learning students have autonomy, able to engage at any time/place they chose. This method has been shown to improve student learning outcomes, as well as improving student to student communication and allowed a range of material to be considered prior to the session, ensuring we could focus on content and discussion in class.

Linked to strategies seen in blended learning, is 'Just in time teaching' (Novak, 1999), the idea that classed should focus on difficult concepts, or what students struggle to understand. Using resources sent through blended learning, students know the issues they find most challenging before the session, leaving the teacher time to prepare. This also gives students the chance to feed-back to the lecturer, which is an essential component of a successful classroom (Petty, 2014). Often, we only notice the centrality of technology when it fails (Race, 2016) yet, it can be used as a key pedagogical tool, providing invaluable resources to students. The use of technology in this module could have been better integrated, but it is clear 'online learning provides additional structure and information to support campus based learning and provides more flexibility to meet the needs of students' Ramsden, 2003).

Critical Incident 4: Supporting Students

As a GTA supporting students is a central element of my role, along with supporting those on my modules and dissertation supervision, I lead supported learning sessions, peer mentoring and the MHM PAL scheme. Access to HE has changed in recent years; the 'Robert and Susan problem' represents this, and students who traditionally would not have entered university are doing so in order to gain better jobs (Biggs, 2003) leaving fewer students at university solely for love of their subject. Widening participation, and the lift on the cap on student numbers has added pressures, with increased student numbers and less teaching staff, 'the practical difficulties of responding to student needs on an individual basis pose a major challenge' (MacFarlene, 2004).

The GTA role is a response to this, focused on improving retention and attainment. As a result of the TEF (HEFCE, 2016), the University developed 'Intervention for Success' (funded by HEFCE, 2017), among the strategies was the GTA role, and a programme called 'Flying Start' which I coordinate within MHM. Consequently, I vary the support I offer; and my dissertation support is significantly different to general student support, which includes elements of academic skills, and pastoral support, all of which is designed to foster a sense of belonging, and develop engagement among students.

Outstanding teachers have a belief that they can and do enhance the lives of their students (Hattie, 2018). All teachers should focus on why they choose what they do; what and how come after this. I am passionate about helping students. I am fortunate that my school, is keen to develop teaching excellence, as 'good teaching is as much a function of institution-wide infrastructure as it is a gift with which some lucky academics are born' (Biggs, 2011). However, despite having the support of the department, I believe I came into this teaching year with an unrealistic idealism about teaching, thinking I could help everyone achieve the highest grade possible.

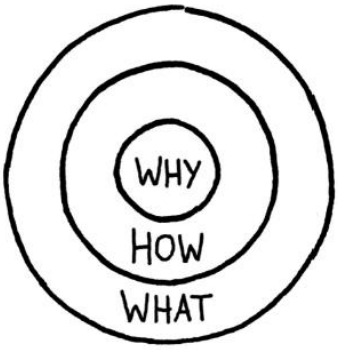

Figure 2: The Golden Circle (Hattie, 2018)

Dissertation support

One student allocated to me this year was interested in researching women's experiences of mental illness in the 19th century, a key area of interest for me so I believed this would be an 'easy' supervision. However, this student was struggling with all aspects of the degree, her highest mark to date had been 53%. With only a vague research idea and no clear idea of what the dissertation would involve, how to finesse her research ideas and how she would go about writing such a substantive piece. Her low grades affected her confidence, understandably, and she was unsure what to do to improve. As a new supervisor, I sought guidance from my colleague Richard McCulloch, an experienced dissertation supervisor. I have much to learn, and 'educational expertise is a product of exchange and cooperation' (Hattie, 2018) so looking at good practice offers an in valuable frame of reference, particularly as relationships with peers offer important alternatives to those with conventionally defined mentors (Kram and Isabella, 1985).

John Hattie notes that good teachers believe all students can improve, building relationships of trust for learning to occur in a safe space (Hattie, 2018). Thus, for my student, I wanted to make it clear to her that we were working together, and adopted blended learning techniques; sending recommended links, guides, and archival collections online, and setting clear tasks for her to complete. My aim was to enable her to come to the dissertation supervision meetings with the knowledge she needed, to enable me to work with her in coaching and guiding her in her research rather than in trying to teach her the subject content, which initially I feel she believed would be the case. Following Richard's guidance, we mutually agreed targets and goals, and I reiterated what was discussed in meetings in follow up emails.

Clearly, there are parallels here with mentoring; in both, you are there to guide and support, provide SMART targets and use experience/expertise to enable another. While there are fundamental differences, the ideas of support and guidance, inherent in mentoring, are useful for supporting students. One particular technique is the push/pull strategy; when working with someone confident and ready to move forward, you take a more assertive, challenging position; yet, if you are working with someone lacking confidence, who needs additional support, you use a pull strategy, which allows you to guide them more gently, setting more manageable tasks. Using Clutterbuck's Integrating Role Grid (Clutterbuck, 2002), you can consider whether you are working with someone with more of an intellectual (academic) need, or more of an emotional need. To put this into context, one of my students is quite a 'high flyer', not having received a mark below 71 this academic year. Her writing is exceptional. Yet, she suffers from severe anxiety, has a challenging home life and numerous responsibilities outside of university. She is also a mature student. I receive numerous emails each week, and have seen her each week for support. As my role of GTA means I act as student support as well as supervisor, I have to be careful that I use discernment when supporting the student, but, really, it is confidence building, and helping to manage the stress of writing that has been my most prominent role. In contrast, the aforementioned dissertation student was lacking core knowledge, even a sense of what she wanted to do. Keen to undertake any task that I asked her to, or ideas that I suggested, my support focused on developing autonomous learning where initially she demonstrated attributes lower on Bloom's taxonomy. Whether mentoring or supporting students, not one size fits all (Brounstein, 2000), and linking student support to mentoring can offer helpful tools to support students as much as possible.

Motivation and Student Support

One problem I have found is it is the students who don't need additional help and are already 'deep' learners that utilise support. By nature of surface learning, many who would benefit the most don't attend supported learning or one to one appointments. Students referred to me are often described

as ‘unmotivated’, yet, this simply links to the ‘blame the student’ theory of teaching’ (Biggs, 2003). Actually, I have not seen a single student lacking motivation to learn and achieve this year, however, students who consistently receive low (or lower than hoped for) grades, start to feel frustrated, and lose interest.

One theory of motivation is the expectancy – value theory of teaching (Petty, 2007), the suggestion motivation is simply expectancy multiplied by the value. One mature student, who is passionate about history, did not list ‘Mindset’s’ as her module choice, however, her first choice module was cancelled, leaving this as ‘the best of the rest’. After receiving a low 2:1 grade despite a great deal of effort, she came to me to tell me she ‘hated’ the module and ‘didn’t want to do it in the first place’. Here, the value of the learning was low, and following what she considered to be a poor assessment mark, increasingly became distant in sessions. To help her, I discussed the possibility of using her fascination for class based history as a tool to interrogate different aspects of the treatment of those suffering from mental illness. Perhaps to established researchers, finding such links is obvious, yet, for those frustrated, or unhappy, we need to be as patient and understanding as possible. To help further, I offered to give her feedback on 1000 words of her draft formative assignment (permitted by the History department), which we would then go through. This helped her significantly (Appendix). Clearly, we need to focus on the individual: anyone can succeed with the right support!

Critical Incident 5: Madness Abroad

My experiences teaching 'Madness Abroad' had far reaching implications for my development as a lecturer. It was at this point everything I had read/learnt about teaching fell into place, and I not only knew but understood the importance of good teaching. While not the high point of my teaching year, I learnt how to recognise lack of interest, the significance of working with students and ensuring they are actively engaged, how to rescue a session, and also, how while research led teaching is important, it is not enough. This was the penultimate seminar for 'Mindsets' and my mentor suggested that I invite a PHD student of his to teach a section on his subject specialism, Madness in India. The plan was to work together, team teaching, with the PhD colleague delivering India specific context, embedded within the session looking at parallels and points of contrast in colonial/non-colonial settings when compared to the British model we had herein explored.

Numerous studies have described the importance of enthusiasm in a lecturer (Ramsden, 2003, Petty, 2007) alongside creating a supportive environment for students (Petty, 2007), as such, inviting a specialist seemed logical, particularly considering the relevance of research led teaching, and the idea the curriculum should enable students to learn content that reflects current research in the discipline' (Pokorny, 2016). However, the session started to go wrong quickly. Rather than working with the agreed lesson plan, my colleague decided the session would work best if he delivered all the content, preferring not to use the presentation. This was concerning; I had planned a number of activities, and some brief but key points on the presentation, so I noted that sticking to the plan would be best. Nonetheless, he immediately stood and started to talk about India, moving away from the background planned. He was inaudible, talking 'at' rather than engaging, and within ten minutes students had their phones out and were starting to shuffle. I had to intervene, and quickly, to take ownership of the session without marginalising my colleague, or making this obvious to the students.

Schon (1983) differentiates reflection on and in action. You need to be able to think on your feet. Reflection on action, is reflecting after the event, 'in action' means at the time. My realisation that the session was not going well paralleled my first teaching experience, so I understood my colleagues' situation, and I stood up, linked his point back to key historiography, then using this as a springboard to introduce the first task. At this point, students were able to talk, and were offered a short comfort break, so I could speak to my colleague in private about how we would approach the rest of the session.

Hattie (2012) has noted that when teaching, 'almost everything works', all you need to do to enhance achievement is something. This is helpful to remember; as soon as the students returned from the break, and I had spoken to my colleague, we were able to return to our original lesson plan, bringing energy and student focus. While it was not the most successful session, it emphasised the importance of student led teaching. Not only do you need subject knowledge, you need to combine this with discipline specific pedagogy and general pedagogical knowledge (Fry, 2009). There should be a triangulation of subject content, pedagogy and history specific pedagogy.

Here, it was relatively simple to return to student centred learning; due to the nature of teaching history, activities such as documentary analysis and archival research are embedded from the outset, so there are a range of relatively simple to integrate activities that teachers of history can use, even last minute. History is a public discipline, by nature informed by social constructivism, enabling us easily to develop a learning community (Hooks, 1994); to debate, discuss and share ideas.

Team Teaching

Team teaching is not new to me; it has worked incredibly well throughout the Hands on History module, with colleagues from Heritage Quay and the West Yorkshire Queer History Society involved in delivery. It is an effective and dynamic way of teaching, and 'can be wonderful, as both faculty and students are 'surprised by joy' when they make hitherto unseen connections' (Plank, 2011). During the Mindset's module, Rob Ellis and I team taught the session on 'Gender and Madness' and two very different historians with distinctive interpretations worked very well; with the students the most engaged and analytical I have seen them. Of the 30 students, 21 said it was their favourite session demonstrating their shared view of the success. Of course, the content and background is fascinating, yet shows what an impact successful team teaching can have.

Team teaching is not 'easy and nor does it save time', in fact 'the opposite is almost always true' (Plank, 2011). The session for 'Madness Abroad' took a substantial amount of preparation; as the student lived in York, having completed his PhD earlier in the year, meetings took planning, and correspondence was not always quick, it also meant a lot of 'pin balling' emails. This disjunction perhaps hindered the success of the session, and a better use of preparation time would have been considering the threshold concepts of the study of madness abroad. Threshold concepts are 'key ideas, concepts or processes in a discipline that need to be understood by students before they can understand other parts of the subject that follow them' (Fry, 2007). As some students struggle to find the 'keystone for a particular arch of knowledge' being constructed (Biggs, 2003), it is important that teachers work on the core, and often difficult concepts, rather than the pieces of information that are easier to find and interpret. In this session, for example, it would have been key to look at the relationship between 'orientalism' and theories of 'the other', as well as linking it to challenging theories in the study of mental health, such as those of Michel Foucault, whose work most students used in their work, without showing a deep understanding of the concepts.

Conclusion

This year has been immensely rewarding; at the outset, I lacked confidence, unsure whether I would have sufficient teaching to be able to complete the course, let alone the ability to teach. Since then, I have taught two modules, delivered a range of lectures for additional and successfully supervised a range of dissertation students. This course provided me with confidence, in myself, and my teaching, and has changed me fundamentally. The learning sets provided me a platform to raise real and serious issues, from the sexism I was experiencing as a female GTA, to excessive workload. Without the course, and the support of my peers and Set leader, it is possible I would not have achieved all I have this year, and I am excited to begin planning my next year of teaching.

Still, it has been challenging; I never realised imagined the amount of work involved in teaching, assessment, planning and evaluating, and while I have shown enormous improvement over the year, I still have much to learn. This will happen naturally to some extent, but I will continue to develop my pedagogical knowledge, as well as continuing to work with my mentor, to continue progressing as a teacher.

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