*Extract one:*

*This is from the journal of a full-time student on a PGCE (Lifelong Learning) course.*

**Monday 11th November**

My mentor said this morning’s lesson was OK. The content was good and that all I need to do is slow down a bit when I’m talking – and I agree with that.

I’m not sure how nervous I looked, but I felt like the students would be taking more notice of my signs of nervousness than of anything I was saying. I felt like I’d planned the content OK, but I’m not sure I made myself understood very well. I did talk too fast, and I didn’t put things in a very good order. I need to be surer about what I want to say. And I need to relax a bit instead of trying to drag the lesson along.

I found myself talking to the whiteboard a lot...But I did feel that I got as much response to my questions as (my mentor) usually does. Very difficult to tell whether they’re actually listening though, or whether they couldn’t care less. I suppose at the end of the day there’s nothing I can do to make them pay attention or write things down. Next time I might allow more time for them to ask questions.

**Tuesday 12th November**

I spent hours and hours getting my head round some of the theory last night ready for today’s lesson. And I kept thinking, how am I going to be a teacher if I’ve got to teach the students to get their head round this and I can’t even do it myself? But it’s strange really because [my mentor] told me that today’s lesson is the best one I’ve done so far. And then I made the connection. Because by having to spend so much time struggling to learn something, I ended up in a better position to teach it because I knew the bits that caused difficulty, and I wouldn’t assume any prior knowledge, so I wouldn’t leave anything out. Actually, in terms of planning, I thought it would take a lot longer to teach this than it did, and I had time at the end of the lesson to go over it and ask questions.

All in all I think it was a success, and I feel really good about it. This is what I’ve heard some of the others describing – that you leave the lesson feeling a real buzz.

**Wednesday 13th November**

This is really strange. Taught the same thing to the other parallel group and it felt totally different. Yesterday’s group are much more up for discussion, and were happy to take notes from the Powerpoint even though it took a long time. Today’s group don’t show the slightest interest in involving themselves in the lesson and are really slow and reluctant about taking notes. Moaned every time a new slide went up. The girl who usually gives me grief was worse than usual – never stopped – sighing and putting her head in her hands and all that sort of thing. But I’ve found that the best way to deal with this is to ignore her. She wants attention, I think, and maybe she’ll just get bored and give up trying if I don’t give her any. She’s not malicious, really, so I don’t think ignoring her would make it escalate.

But it’s really weird how yesterday’s group can focus and today’s can’t, even though it’s the same lesson done in the same way.

**Thursday 14th November**

I’m going to have to be a bit more assertive. I’m going to have to tell [the reluctant group] to do things, rather than ask nicely, otherwise they’re going to keep taking advantage. I think they need to know where the boundaries are and I ought to tell them outright, rather than leaving it to them to test them all the time. They’re too used to being given leeway. I’m not sure I’m skilled or confident enough yet, though, to take a different line. Some of them just aren’t learning. I give them plenty of opportunity to ask questions, and I go over the stuff several times, and so if they aren’t taking the opportunity to learn I don’t see there’s a lot else I can do.

*Extract two:*

*This is from the journal of a full-time lecturer who has been teaching for just over a year.*

**February 2nd**

Am getting very stressed about the Advanced class. Seems like there’s been no attempt to try and run this module correctly and there’s no support and I’m finding it more and more difficult to find new material and assessment methods. I’m losing confidence about taking the class at all, and there’s no support. Every time I approach [the section head] he doesn’t seem to have any real advice (though he’s always friendly). He just seems to leave it to me so I’m back at square one.

There never seems to be an end to it. You finish one class and you’re worrying about the next and planning for the next. Though if I’m honest I have got some really good classes and a nice rapport with some of the students. It does help when you’re all on the same side. I’m glad I’ve got the insight to sum people up fairly accurately and quite quickly. It lets me feel my way around how best to present things to the class. The Level Two group were brilliant today. Asked lots of questions and responded really well. I like it that I can make it seem easy.

**February 8th**

Go into class this morning and only one student there! Another rolled in about 20 minutes late. Should’ve been 15. I’m going to concentrate on disciplining the ones that miss lessons or turn up late. It’s no good them being nice and treating me like a friend and then doing this. I had to change my plan when there were only two of them, so all that time spent planning was wasted. I just made them sit in silence and do their assignment. Then afterwards when I saw [the section head] and told him, all he said was that the assignment should have been a report and not an essay. This wasn’t explained before. It’s the old familiar problem – I only find out afterwards when I’ve done something wrong. No support. And also I’m fed up with the register never being available – somebody not putting it back where it should be. And I know who. So it means I’m not keeping a proper record. I meant to ask [section head] about internal verification and also about me seeing the External Verifier, but he’s always rushing away and I didn’t get chance.

Adapted from:

Wallace, S. (2009) *Teaching, Learning and Training in the Lifelong Learning Sector*. Exeter: Learning Matters.