ENHANCING STUDENT REFLECTIVE OBSERVATION WITHIN INDUSTRY LED ASSESSMENT & FEEDBACK

EDU110 PGCHE Assignment 2 by Darren Whittington 12/14

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Abstract:

Looking at BA(Hons) Creative Advertising, module ADV320 Advanced Campaign Creation and how students are assessed on industry led briefs at the interim period of completion. This assignment outlines the context in which the feedback is delivered, the problems encountered with an industry engagement that looks at creative outcome rather than student journey and how we can create a better way of generating consistent feedback from industry that is based on the learning outcomes of the module and an experience that is based on the Kolb's theory of experiential learning[1] to help the students be more reflective at the interim stages of a project, create a more formative approach to assessment and accelerate student learning.

Context:

The module ADV320 Advanced Campaign Creation has gone through a redesign to create closer ties with industry, run live briefs generated by advertising agencies, and help them nurture the talent they need but more importantly give the students proactive briefs that are relevant to the industry now, get feedback and assessment on their creative thinking from leading industry figures and placement opportunities from these encounters.

This module runs six live briefs(projects) with six agencies and helps the students build a portfolio that is submitted at the end of the semester. Whilst this module may be summative in it's final portfolio assessment it's feedback and assessment delivered from industry throughout is formative to allow the students to build their campaign thinking for each project with tutor based learning groups that lead to an interim presentation to the advertising agency which can be physically presented in-situ or sent as a self contained .pdf/case film to the agency remotely. The agency then gives feedback to the students to reflect upon and implement for their final presentations to the agency.

The insight:

This interim feedback process in a studio based practice means the tutor can inform the agency representatives to the expectations of their feedback based on the learning outcomes of the module, the process can be informal and very enlightening for the students, giving them clear

direction and a fit for purpose assessment that is "for learning not just of learning". Prof. S.Brown.[2]

However, it has been observed that when student interim creative work is sent for review the quality of feedback diminishes enormously, and becomes purely focussed on outcome rather than student journey. Whilst this is a broad brush comment the reality is that in a studio based situation an individual student can receive c.10 minutes feedback on their project throughout a seminar and also self-reflect on the outcomes of their peers.

The feedback created by remote based interim presentations normally receives a paragraph of some 100 - 200 words, and at worst c.10 words. This feedback can be really useful for the student and when discussed with the tutor to put it into context becomes a pivotal part of the learning journey, but, when the feedback is thin the learning journey is affected and students can become disengaged with the process with the creative output suffering accordingly and doesn't fulfil the NUS ten principles of Feedback and Assessment.[3]

In order to contextualise the feedback, below are two contrasting examples of feedback given in-there entirety on sent presentations within the same semester, to the same student:

Eg.1 (Feedback on a Christmas campaign for a leading DIY retailer)

'There's some good thinking here, but unfortunately when you piece it together it doesn't really feel finished. A forest inside the store is interesting but essentially we're just selling trees. It doesn't have a big digital footprint. It feels like it's a springboard to a bigger idea. There's also aspects of it that make it a little bit niche. What about the people who buy real trees? Real trees still bring some joy. What could make it different is by making each tree unique in some way. How do you make people choose? How do you make them different? The second insight is not an insight and the idea feels a little too helpful. It needs to be more fun. You could do a lot with old decorations, but it didn't feel like this was explored and executed in the right way.'

Eg.2 (Feedback on an Empathy in business campaign)

'Using a carrot felt cliched and not very revolutionary'

The examples show very clearly how the student experience can be effected through this process, the first e.g. however short is motivational, gives clear direction and asks the student to reflect on certain aspects of their creative solution such as audience and the moment of encounter, it helps the student learn what needs to be reconsidered and gives the tutor the opportunity to expand on the agency comments. This feedback resulted in a truly successful campaign because the student took onboard the comments, reworked the campaign and presented it with confidence and in-turn earned themselves a placement opportunity.

The second e.g. is purely demoralising, and ironic considering it was to run an 'empathic' campaign. It neither gave the student or tutor any guidance and resulted in less time being put in by the student because of the flippant nature of the feedback and feeling under valued

considering the amount of effort that had been injected, which highlighted the same issues made in the Higher Education Academy film, 2010[4] by students questioning the usefulness of feedback which couldn't easily be interpreted.

On reflection it is clear that there is a two fold problem with the current interim feedback:

1. There needs to be better guidance from the tutor for the agency to know what is expected from feedback based on the module's learning outcomes.
2. The agency needs to engage in the deeper learning journey of the student not just the creative outcome.

THE 'INTERIM' LEARNING CYCLE

INTERIM PRESENTATION
(Concrete Experience with the industry)

leading to the
final presentations

DEVELOP & EXPERIMENT
(Putting the feedback into practice)

FEEDBACK
(Agency assessed & Reflective)

TUTORIAL/Seminar
(Understanding the feedback)
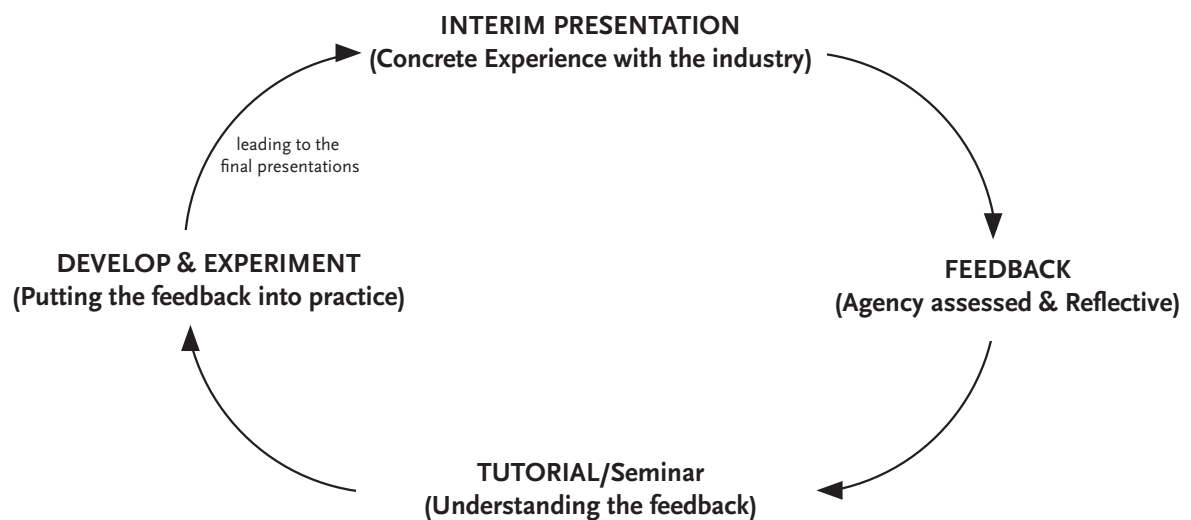
The proposal:

Create a methodology that gives the industry representatives a feedback framework based on the learning outcomes of the module that is simple to implement and takes into account the time poor nature of their business but more importantly focuses the content of the feedback to inform the student in a 'proactive' way to promote deeper learning from the feedback learning cycle based on all ten principles in the NUS feedback charter.[3]

The framework should also enhance the student reflective observation based on this feedback and generate a clearer understanding for the student to develop their thinking and experiment with new approaches to problem solving.

The solution:

A two part formative assessment sheet that integrates the module learning outcomes in a way that clearly steers feedback to help the student progress in the project in a positive rather than negative way.

The assessment sheet is designed to give clear guidance to the industry as to what to cover in the feedback and how it should be delivered. It's is also designed to help the student dissect what areas need more consideration rather than a sweeping statement which is hard to interpret.

Pairing these two parts gives the student the feedback they require from the industry, the ability to reflect on it to deepen their learning, and gain clear guidance from tutor support to understand the best way forward to develop their thinking and approaches.

"Developing students' abilities to peer review and self reflect is an important skill for future employment, as well as deepening their own learning." Principle 8 of the NUS feedback charter.[3]

The assessment sheet can also be electronic, either set up as an online system or interactive pdf and available for immediate review to keep feedback timely.

"Timely feedback is a key concern of students, with the NUS/HSBC Student Experience Report showing that almost a quarter of students have to wait more than five weeks to receive feedback." Principle 4 of the NUS feedback charter.[3]

But most importantly it gives the student a consistent form of feedback that is useable, a trusted point of reference to move work forward, 'help students to make sense of what they have done'[5](Race, 2005) and gives the student a clear indication of how their work will be assessed throughout the module and helps the tutor control the formative assessment process when using industry led briefs/projects.

How the assessment strategy is currently communicated through the MIF:

1. Identify and make use of a range of appropriate research methods and materials.
2. Apply imaginative and productive dialogue between theory and practice.
3. Develop an effective presentation structure, with clearly articulated ideas.
4. Employ appropriate critical and conceptual vocabulary, and demonstrate an understanding of some of the issues and ideas informing media practice in contemporary contexts.

How the assessment strategy will be communicated through the interim assessment sheet:

Part 1. Interim Industry feedback

1. IS IT ON BRIEF?
To help the student understand they are on the right train of thought

2. IS IT WELL TARGETED?
To help the student focus on the right audience

3. IS THE CAMPAIGN EFFECTIVE?
To help the student focus on the desired outcome of the campaign

4. IS THERE EVIDENCE OF APPROPRIATE RESEARCH?
To help the student identify new routes to explore where required

5. IS THE ART DIRECTION AND WRITTEN WORD CONSIDERED?
Pointers to help the student develop their craft skills and enhance the campaign message

6. IS THE CAMPAIGN WELL PRESENTED?
To help the student consider their presentation technique and communication of the idea

Part 2. Student Reflective Observation

1. WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNT THROUGH THE INTERIM PROCESS?
For instance, did you try a new approach or push your craft skills?

2. WHAT WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY?
i.e. Research more about your audience, better time keeping.

3. HOW WILL YOU DEVELOP YOUR WORK?

The 1st draft:

Below is a first draft of the framework put in-situ for interim assessment. It can be paper based or electronically submitted and is aimed at engaging industry to be more forth coming in their assessment of student work and also engage the student in the assessment process because as Professor Sally Brown say's "Assessment is the most important thing we do for HE students".[6]

This is only one part of the experiential learning cycle but with this formative engagement it will encourage a deeper learning journey, student satisfaction and give the industry clear guidance on the way to assess student work in the future.

ADV320 INTERIM 'AGENCY' FEEDBACK
Please use the questions below as a guide to give the student/s feedback on their interim presentation

STUDENT NAME: ....
AGENCY/PROJECT NAME: ....
ASSESSED BY: ....
DATE: ....

IS IT ON BRIEF?
To help the student understand they are on the right train of thought

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IS IT WELL TARGETED?
To help the student focus on the right audience

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IS THE CAMPAIGN EFFECTIVE?
To help the student focus on the desired outcome of the campaign

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IS THERE EVIDENCE OF APPROPRIATE RESEARCH?
To help the student identify new routes to explore where required

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IS THE ART DIRECTION AND WRITTEN WORD CONSIDERED?
Pointers to help the student develop their craft skills and enhance the campaign message

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IS THE CAMPAIGN WELL PRESENTED?
To help the student consider their presentation technique and communication of the idea

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ADDITIONAL POINTERS FOR CONSIDERATION:

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DRAFT 1.

ADV320 INTERIM 'STUDENT' REFLECTION
Please use the questions below to reflect on your interim presentation to help inform a way forward

STUDENT NAME: ....
AGENCY/PROJECT NAME: ....
DATE: ....

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNT THROUGH THE INTERIM PROCESS?
For instance, did you try a new approach or push your craft skills?

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WHAT WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY?
i.e. Research more about your audience, better time keeping.

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HOW WILL YOU DEVELOP YOUR WORK?
Please indicate the steps you would put in place to take onboard the feedback

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DRAFT 1.

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1 Kolb, David A. 1984. Experiential Learning: Experience as the source of learning and development. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall

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