

JACINTA KYRATZOULIS-FOULDS

Professional Knowledge

It is imperative to understand the physical, social and intellectual development of students. I use a varied range of pedagogies to understand and support student learning. I incorporate student-centred learning in my classes to facilitate independent problem solving and active learning. Active learning is demonstrated in my classes by students participating in activities and assessment that analyse, synthesis and evaluate program content. I took this approach with a Year 10 English class of mixed ability. We were transitioning from studying *Tomorrow When the War Began* to Science Fiction. Students were given a task to transform the blurb of *Tomorrow When the War Began* to Science Fiction, using the information we had learnt in class. This task allowed students to evaluate what they had learnt about *Tomorrow When the War Began* and apply their knowledge on science fiction by analysing and synthesising. Students submitted successful assignments which highlighted a good degree of content knowledge. When teaching history my practice is based on inquiry-based learning. This practice allows students to increase their intellectual development as well as fostering a deep content understanding through a hands on research approach. I implemented this in a Year 9 History Class with successful feedback from both students and mentor teacher.

Part of my teaching philosophy is to create an inclusive environment for all students including those with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds. When planning I strive to achieve an inclusive curriculum using scaffolding and differentiation to meet individual student needs. It is important to use differentiation in task design and curriculum planning so all students can achieve success. When teaching students from an EAL/D background it would be useful to use translation technologies, including *FluentU*, so they are able to fully engage and access curriculum material. It is important to be aware of and take account of student's diverse backgrounds. When planning a unit of work for a Year 10 Gifted and Talented class I changed the core text from *Parvana*, which is set in Afghanistan and the protagonist's experiences in a refugee camp, to an Australian novel *The Divine Wind*. I made this change because there were a few students in the class, and the wider school community, who have lived in refugee camps. The effect of this text change was that all students could engage in class without having to relive their own trauma. It is of the utmost importance that students feel physically and emotionally safe, secure and comfortable in class.

I have a deep and thorough understanding of Information Communication Technology (ICT) and how to implement ICT within the classroom. ICT is a great communicative tool. During my first practicum I used OneNote in each of my classes as a communication and collaboration tool. We had an online class notebook where I would upload links, clips, assignments, class information, PowerPoint slides and any other class document for each student to access. Students each had their own notebook where they would save their work, which only I had access. I also set up and used an online collaborative space where all students could access. I would monitor the collaborative space but students would add their individual ideas on topics but also collaborate in teams. This tool allowed all students to access a multimodal curriculum which engaged students of all abilities.

Professional Practice

During both of my practicums I have planned for and implemented effective teaching and learning practices. Aligning my unit plans and assessment for my Year 9 and Year 10 History classes to the Australian Curriculum allowed students to grow their historical skills, knowledge base and communication skills.

I believe in an inclusive classroom environment where strong parent/teacher/student communication is evident. To accomplish this I would create a private educational blog, such as *Weebly*, where I can publish student achievement, updates and class information including homework and assessment tasks. This fosters open and positive communication between parent/teacher/student.

My philosophy towards classroom management is to implement preventative strategies within the classroom. Kounin's 5 step approach to behaviour management worked well during my practicums. I focused on creating engaging and challenging lessons. I would also explicitly state the aims and goals of each lesson. It is also important that all students be able to achieve the goals of the lesson for each student to feel successful. Providing genuine and positive feedback to students is essential in facilitating on task behaviour. Negotiation of the class rules works well across all year levels and allows students to take responsibility of their own actions. These preventative strategies are small but effective in positively engaging students.

Providing positive, encouraging and constructive feedback is crucial for students to develop their skills. I give students written feedback on both summative and formative work. I also like to debrief with individual students on how they can develop and strengthen their skills. After each task, I benchmark all grades against the SACE or Australian Curriculum exemplars to maintain consistency. Whilst on practicum I reported student achievement data to my mentor teacher in a series of reports in both excel and word which reported on how students are achieving the curriculum standards. This is used to prepare reports, including end of term semester.

ICT is an effective tool to use in the classroom, which allows teachers to engage students in a variety of mediums. It is important for all students to know and understand how to use ICT effectively and safely. During both of my practicums each student had an ICT device in the classroom. I take an active approach to teaching and was constantly walking around the room making sure everybody was using ICT correctly. It is imperative that the classroom is a safe place.

Professional Engagement

I have successfully contributed and attended professional development events. Whilst on practicum I engaged in a professional development day, which allowed me to participate and share ideas with staff from different faculties. During both of my practicums I attended collaborative staff meetings, which allowed me to engage in meaningful discussions with teaching colleagues. Both of these meetings allowed me to receive knowledge and information that improved my teaching practice.

Currently, I work for a Not For Profit teaching organisations and volunteer for two other teaching organisations. These roles allow me to engage with the wider educational community in a meaningful and constructive way.