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Teaching portfolio for Melbourne Peer Review of Teaching

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Overview of teaching experiences

Subject	Role	Dates	Students
Introduction to Educational Psychology (EDPSY100)	Lecturer	Sem 1, 2019	95 students in this stream (which is one of three); 2nd and 3rd year undergraduate students
	Tutor	Sem 2, 2018	18 students in one tutorial and 16 in another; 2nd and 3rd year undergraduate students
Motivation of learning (ESPSY250)	Subject coordinator/ lecturer	Sem 1, 2019	Coordinating 2 streams (122 students in total), and lecturing in one of those 2 streams (61 students); 2nd and 3rd year undergraduate students
	Lecturer	Sem 2, 2018 Sem 1, 2018	38 students (Sem 2); 61 students (Sem 1); 2nd and 3rd year undergraduate students
	Tutor	Sem 2, 2017	16 2nd and 3rd year students in one tutorial
Emotional development (CADV495)	Lecturer	Sem 1, 2017 Sem 2, 2016	32 students (2017); 24students (2016); 3rd year undergraduate students
	Tutor	Sem 1, 2016	17 students in one tutorial; 3rd year undergraduate students

Summary of teaching approaches

Overall teaching aim

I want my students to be able to reflect critically on their own positioning, their perspectives and biases. When they move into the field of educational psychology, they'll need to make sure they consider their own students as holistic individuals, and, so, it's essential that my they develop strong critical reflection skills and the ability to consider all possible, interacting influences on the situation.

In addition to this, I also want to make sure that my courses are organised, structured clearly, and that I've set reasonable, but challenging expectations for my students. As a teacher, I want to share my interest in this field and help encourage the curiosity of incoming learners as well.

How my teaching supports effective learning

In order to make sure that students gain the necessary reflection skills mentioned above, I ensure that every single lesson includes the opportunity for self-reflection. In addition, to support students' metacognitive abilities, they set their own goals at the beginning of the term, reassess those goals in the middle, and evaluate their learning after the final assessment. This aligns perfectly with the '**Self-direction**' aspect of the Melbourne Way.

As a teacher, I make it a point to be as clear and explicit as possible. I believe this helps all students, regardless of language or educational background. It also challenges me to make sure I am clear on what I am asking and expecting of the students. Only when this is the case can a teacher properly expand upon the requirements and offer additional, well-structured challenges.

Teaching methods to facilitate learning

In addition to the self-reflection highlighted already, my lessons incorporate a large amount of discussion, self-assessment, and peer review. Whenever possible, each of these aspects is integrated into each lesson. Even in courses where I have not been the coordinator and have not been able to adjust the required assessments, I have integrated these methods into the tutorials or supported the required assessments by including these methods in the lesson sequences. My time management and clarity as a teacher have allowed me to do so, in part because I am able to focus on the most important aspects and to make sure lessons are subsequently streamlined.

Educational objectives

In each of the subjects I've been part of as a member of the teaching staff, I've focused primarily on students' ability to self-reflect; however, this has often been done on top of existing, more specific educational objectives. I'm keenly aware of the need to cover all necessary material, but I also understand that certain educational aims (such as **Inquiry**, reflection, and **Application**) don't get in the way of content learning, but, instead, make content learning more enriched, well-developed, and better understood. Thus, in addition to the individual learning objectives of each subject, it's a priority for me to also help students develop their ability to question, investigate, think outside the box, and reflect on their own learning.

Examples of teaching practice

1: Self-reflection tasks

This example showcases the sequence of self-reflection tasks that students are asked to do in my classes over the duration of a term. Together, the three points of self-reflection prompt students to become aware of their own learning, to take some responsibility for that learning, and then to be able to assess it and monitor it on their own. By making their development explicit, they can better chart (and adapt) their own progress. It also fosters the desired self-reflection skills.

Beginning-of-term prediction task

Answer the following questions and give to the tutor before you leave.

1. When you think about young children (ages 0-6), what do you know already about how they learn? If you don't feel that you know much, consider what you *think* affects the way a child learns.

2. What parts of this assessment will be the most difficult for you? (Think can pertain to either the content, the type of task, or your own approach.)

Mid-term self-reflection

Consider how difficult the in-class review was and take a moment to consider your progress so far. Then answer the following questions.

1. Which aspects of the review task did you have the most difficulty with? Why do you think that is the case?

2. How do you think you might change your approach in the next task?

Self-reflection with final assessment

Answer the following questions and submit this together with your final assessment task.

1. What are the strengths of your assignment submission?

2. How has your submission addressed the specific learning needs of your chosen subpopulation?

3. In what ways has your perspective on this topic changed? Why do you think that was the case?

These tasks are not meant to be time-consuming; instead, they are meant to provide a necessary prompt for self-reflection that will add to students' overall progress, rather than complicate it. By keeping the tasks short, I can focus students' attention on their own progress.

The initial task was designed to get students to consider their own positions and assumptions before commencing the term. It was also intended to have students start thinking about their plan and learning approach. The second task adds upon the first step of the assessment. It gets students to consider their work so far and then to reflect on what needs to be done. The final piece is meant to give students to opportunity to reflect *before* submitting their final assignment. It will then serve as a piece of comparison and opportunity for feedback after they receive their marks. I believe that students who self-assess are more likely to have an accurate picture of their learning to date.

Of course, the terminology and the details of these tasks are adjusted accordingly for each subject, but the foundation remains the same: think about what you're brining to the classroom, reflect on your progress so far, and then consider what you've learned and why.

2: Example of discussion prompts

The purpose of these discussion prompts is to include discussion in lessons that *previously did not require discussion*. They take a highly teacher-centred lecture and turn it into a more student-led lesson. The discussions encourage interaction and learning from others' perspectives, but also offer students' the opportunity to check their own understanding with their peers.

What might be some challenges in utilising this method?

1. Write down your thoughts individually
2. Share your thoughts with your table
3. One representative from the table will share your table's ideas with the class.

Were there any challenges you had not anticipated?

What could you do to better anticipate these?

These two prompts are taken from a lesson that was previously entirely teacher-delivered. They come at a point in the course when students would benefit from a review of previously learned material (the details on a particular technique) but have not yet learned how/when to apply that technique. The previously lesson outline jumped straight into a list of challenges but prompting students to consider some on their own first gives the students the opportunity to **Apply** the concepts and consider the context around them on their own.

> **Before we move on....**
>
> Take a moment to think about what some of the reasons might be for this behaviour?
>
> Decide with your table on the *most likely* cause.

In this second example, students are asked to discuss some possible causes of a hypothetical situation. Rather than simply telling students the multiple possibilities, the prompt encourages students to practice considering all angles themselves. By working together, they will be more likely to consider possibilities they might not have considered on their own. In addition, needing to them decide on one as a team requires explanation, justification, support, and comparison of ideas; doing so helps solidify and expand students' understanding of the concepts.

3: Teaching journal

In an effort to be as clear and organised a teacher as possible, I make sure to reflect on my teaching after each lesson. Sometimes this reflection is only a couple of sentences, but the continuity and frequency are essential. I find it additionally important to self-reflect as a teacher because I expect the same of the students. Below are some excerpts that demonstrate the thought that goes into my teaching, lesson planning, and overall approach to teaching.

> 3 Sep 2017
> The review took too long today. Make sure next week to add a clearer explanation to the prompt.

> 10 Sep 2017
> This second review was more helpful. The group activity worked well and most students answered with thoughtful responses. There also seemed to be no need for the second practice and instead it would be valuable to use this time to check students' understanding of the assessment task for the following week. Also two students mentioned that

> 13 MARCH 2018
> Intro slides were too complicated. Instead, maybe have students self/peer review?