

Background Information and Teaching Philosophy

The school is based in an area south of Perth City and has got an exterior label of being quite a rough school. The area is a low socioeconomic area. During my practicum as a student teacher I found the school did have its problems, but was a well run school with well developed student services. The school was split into middle school and upper school of which I was based in the middle school area. There were specific areas students could be during lunch and recess and students who disobeyed were seriously dealt with. The school did have problems with older students such as year 10's coercing or tempting year 8's into altercations with each other using false rumours. The school provides specialist classes in football (soccer) and also cheer dance and has had success in both areas on a state level. There was a great diversity in culture from European origins, African origins, Asian origins and there were only a few Indigenous students. The school values include: Aspiration, resilience, innovation, collaboration and learning.

The school (for confidentiality reasons I will call SHS) has had problems with attendance of students and this was observed when I was there with certain students regularly not attending school. The school is working on programs to help rectify this growing problem by incorporating special workshops for these students during class time to motivate their attendance.

The classes I took were all year 8 classes. Three classes (8.02, 8.03 and 8.05) were for science in which the topics taught were chemistry for eight weeks and physics for the last two weeks. The other class was a maths class (8.08) in which the topic was on area, perimeter and angles of shapes. The class numbers were quite high ranging from 28-32 students. One of the science classes (8.02) were being prepped for pathfinders, which is a gifted and talented class for higher years. These students were therefore quite strong and I could extend them. The other classes were general classes with no streaming of students.

Most classes responded well to me but there was one class, 8.03, that liked to push the boundaries and I had to tighten up on them much more than my other classes. 8.05 and 8.08 had challenging moments but seemed to respond well to me and 8.02 were highly responsive and engaged in the lessons.

The year 8's spent most of their time in 'B Block' which was specific for year 8 students and most of their subjects were conducted in this block of classrooms. 'B Block' staff were all together which made it very easy for teachers to communicate with each other and discuss important issues and information. It also made it much easier to coordinate resources, materials and activities requiring joint interaction.

Teaching Philosophy

Being a young man starting my teaching career I can still remember my own school experiences in good detail. These include my experience with multiple teachers and the positives and negatives I found with these teachers. I use these to model my own teaching practice and philosophy and I expect it to evolve even more as I progress through my career.

I put a big emphasis on interest, fun and humour. I find the content of science and especially human biology very interesting; however, I do realise students may not share my interests. Therefore, I spend a lot of time and effort in presenting material in a fun way increasing the interest for the

students. I believe this is important as it is no use trying to force information on students when they don't want to learn it as it will go in one ear and straight out the other. Make the lesson fun and interesting and the student is bound to remember.

I am a teacher who adopts a constructivist and a behavioural approach to my teaching practice. I have found as a teacher that students lack certain knowledge I would have expected at their year level, especially in science. It almost feels like science can be overlooked in primary school and so I am teaching brand new concepts and addressing vast misconceptions instead of building on previous knowledge of students. This is also a big problem in maths.

Literature suggests that students learn with multiple intelligences and every student learns differently and at a different pace. I believe this to be true and so I try and adapt my lessons to adhere to differing intelligences. This is not always possible in one lesson but I try to have a good mix of opportunities for students to use intelligences other than the common literacy and numeracy intelligence which is emphasised most in the curriculum. Students learn at different paces and have different starting points. To give all students equal opportunity curriculum has to be differentiated to encompass learning at different levels and speeds. This can be done through strategies such as tiered instruction which I use frequently in my lesson design.

Equity in teaching and learning is important. Australia is a multicultural society and it is therefore important to encompass content that all students can relate to or vary content to include multiple cultures and beliefs. Curriculum content can be found to be very western based when in reality the knowledge of the world has been contributed by all cultures. In science for example people generally believe that science has been developed by dead white males. In reality that is a vast misconception. Aboriginals have contributed to science, especially with ecosystem knowledge and knowledge of sustainability. Women have made great contributions; a famous example is Rosalind Franklin who discovered the double helix structure of DNA through x-ray studies that cost her her life. The Islamic alchemists and scientists who discovered and theorised much of what we know today such as the elements making up the world. As a teacher I want to provide equal learning opportunities to all students and to achieve this every student must feel valued and included.

The learning environment is important for student learning to occur. If the environment seems hostile or alien to a student there is little or no chance that student will be willing to participate and learn. The student must feel safe, comfortable and happy for meaningful learning to occur. To create a good classroom environment I like to incorporate humour into my classroom. This creates a more relaxed feel to the classroom. I also like to be jovial and animated in class while still keeping my authoritative presence. Getting to know the students is pivotal to the learning environment as it shows an interest in the students who then feel included in the class.

I try to be as resourceful as possible and like to take into account the experience of other teachers to improve my teaching practice. I enjoy using ICT's in the class and believe they are effective in improving learning for students through motivation and access to external materials. Starting out I have limited knowledge of such resources and so like to observe and use technologies advised by other teachers. This is the best way for me to learn about effective ICT's as well as making using the ICT's in an effective manor for student learning.