

Spotlight on tertiary teaching in Canterbury and beyond

Session Two – Lifting your game

Below is an excerpt from Marjorie Manthei's opening presentation:

There are two main reasons for this session this afternoon:

- 1 To demystify the idea of having a personal “teaching philosophy”. This will be done partly by each of you working on your personal philosophy after you hear from the four panel members.
- 2 Secondly, we want to suggest some practical advantages to articulating your own philosophy—
 - (a) it improves your teaching, as you'll hear from the panel members
 - (b) it is helpful when mentoring others and
 - (c) it makes it much easier to prepare promotion applications, job applications / interviews and, of course, portfolios for awards such as Excellence in Tertiary Teaching that AKO oversees. We will ask Peter Coolbear, Director of AKO, to address this last point at the end of the session. Meanwhile, as a member of the Awards panel for three years, I can confirm that it usually is obvious from the portfolios submitted whether nominees have a strong basis from which they work—and it is always the case that successful nominees can clearly describe their philosophy, how it guides their teaching and how it affects their students' learning.

One way of thinking about “philosophies of teaching”—which can sound like little more than an academic exercise—is to answer the question, “What forms the basis of what I do / how and why I do it / and its relationship to learning?” Your answer to that is probably close to your philosophy of teaching.

One of my previous positions at CPIT was Head of Staff Education. Although many years ago now, I still vividly remember three things particularly relevant to this session:

- 1 The impact on the quality of teaching when an electrician, accountant, social worker, nurse....whatever..... started defining themselves as a TEACHER. Many educators think this is the single most important step in becoming a good teacher. It certainly is an important prerequisite to working from a philosophy of teaching.
- 2 I also remember an exercise we did during the Diploma in Tertiary Teaching. We would interrupt a practice teaching session and ask the staff member three questions:

Why are you doing what you're doing right now?
What is it you're trying to achieve?
How well do you think it's working?

Their responses provided valuable clues to their philosophy / beliefs about teaching, and helped them clarify their approach, make changes where needed and, according to feedback, it definitely “lifted their game”.

- 3 A slightly different, but related, exercise revolved around the oft-quoted statement that **the person who does the work does the learning**. This statement contains many implications to teaching and learning—and most closely aligns to what has been my own personal philosophy of teaching. It can make you somewhat unpopular, as we heard from some of the previous speakers—because not everyone WANTS to “do the work”. But my own experience was such that using this as a guide to practice made a world of difference.

That is all from me. I hope you keep these things in mind for the rest of the session—

First, Hearing from four people about their philosophies of teaching
Then, Talking with others about your beliefs of teaching and learning.

By the end of the session, we hope you can see how having a more explicit teaching philosophy—to guide what you do and how you do it—really can “Lift your game”

Hearing from four people about their philosophies of teaching and summarised below

- Tim Wilkinson: Tim provided a short succinct outline of his philosophies:
 - Get the learning environment right and the facts will look after themselves
 - The person who does the work does the learning
 - Evaluate what you do as things often work surprisingly well or surprisingly badly
- Phil Healy:
 - *When you send a message by saying something or providing information, and you have no knowledge of the receiver, then you have no idea as to what message was received, and you can not unambiguously interpret the response.*
- Steven Byers:
- Te Rita Papesch

Talking with others about your beliefs of teaching and learning

Listed below are some of the common beliefs contributed by the audience – the full list follows at the end.

- Learning should be fun
- Passion, sharing personal experiences, understanding and empathy are vital
- Creating an environment for learning
- Engaging the students
- Ethic of trust and good will – belief in student – belief in self
- Be a learner yourself
- Facilitating Learning
- Theory WILL inform practice
- To teach is to touch a life forever
- Respect for learners – value all contributions
- Learning is a joint venture

Full List of ideas and beliefs:

- Learning should incorporate creativity and fun
- Know the students: know their names, background, prior learning etc.
- Lead by example
- Convey belief in success / set expectations high (but achievable)
- Surprise (!) them what they know
- Relevance
- There are no dumb questions – reward inquisitiveness
- Learning is not a spectator sport
- Process-learning and critical thinking
- Include “What is not understood” in your teaching – instill wonder and questioning
- Learning by teaching others: students as teachers, the teacher as facilitator
- Role play (role-playing different perspectives)
- Give every student some “air time”
- Facilitating graduate attributes and life-skills
- Never let your education interfere with your learning (Mark Twain)
- Building a trusting partnership between student and teacher in the educational experience
- The teacher is the facilitator that provides the structure for information management
- Information management is best learnt in context – this helps you sort out relevant information from extraneous information.
- Best education involves practice of the theory – leads to critical reflection of the theory – a circle
- Passion

- Enthusiasm
- Ability to 'sell' knowledge
- Expose your human side, share own personal experiences
- Student to student / peer interaction, learning
- Facilitator of independent learning
- Fun
- Relevance – keeping it real
- Flexibility / Versatility / Adaptability
- Awareness
- Understanding, empathy
- Creating Environment
- Building community
- Ethic of trust and good will – belief in student – belief in self
- Passionate engagement
- “Tamaiti i ākona ki te kāinga tūnga ki te marae tau ana” (A child who learns well at home will stand proficient in the marae)
- Critical interface / learning threshold – learn to plan where student and teacher interested & reverse effort
- Minutes and data rules
- Project based
- Learning to learn
- Collaborative
- Real different roles
- Doing “the work”
- Peer teaching
- Sometimes teacher / sometimes learner
- The value of formative sharing
- Making the assessment meaningful
- Theory WILL inform practice ☺ ☺ ☺
- Modelling
- Sense of fairness
- Sharing expands knowledge – doesn't steal it
- A challenge is exciting if safe deep not too deep
- Achievable but not too easily
- To teach is to touch a life forever
- Have fun! And variety
- Not selling the steak, selling the sizzle rather
- Pitching at the right level
- Meta cognition - Where have I come from?
 - Where am I going?
 - How?
- Learning plan helps with scaffolding
- Getting amongst the group
- Tuakana Teina
- Give the right tools to assist in reflection
- If you are not doing it...you are not using it and learning!!
- Practise! Is Practice!
- Building links and project based learning
- Stories
- Formulative feedback
- Engage – empower – motivate
- Student engagement is paramount
- Facilitate (passionately) rather than teach
- Start with the learner: let it come from them (draw on their knowledge and experience)
- Value who they are / value with respect – nothing said is stupid – it is all valid

- It is ok to say 'I don't know'.
- So what...and beyond it (learning for broader purposes)
- Guiding the learner through the longer term pathways
- Put the theory into practice – make the connection
- Evaluate – solution – apply
- Model the craft / let them do it
- Learning to think is a way of being
- Explaining 'why do I need to know this?'
- Variety of learning delivery methods, resources. Aural, visual, Q&A, examples, context....
- Acknowledge that the learner changes, needs to....And above all believe that they can change and so that you (do) believe this.
- Belief that change is possible and desirable – education a route to that
- Enabling people to learn – How I help
- Fundamental belief (eg) that people should be safe
- The passion motivates the education in us
- Value of the group as a learning environment
- You're not alone, it is safe to share here...
- Validation of their input
- Teaching is a continuum (always learning)
- To teach is to learn twice
- Encourage independent thinking
- A quiet classroom is not a learning classroom
- Bring students own knowledge to the classroom
- Teaching and learning is about relationships
- When you ask a question – stop
- Be accessible
- Be yourself
- Be flexible
- Teaching is about engaging
- Be a learner yourself
- Have a framework
- Keep it real, keep it relevant for the learners
- Provide the ideas – facilitate – discussion – allow the students to complete the project – BE A CATALYST
- Concept of partnership – educator – learner – support to each other
- Give students permission to think – RESPECT TO STUDENTS
- Chance to think outside of square
- Explore, reflect – what works and what doesn't
- To empower students, to engage with relevant strategies, to achieve ongoing learning goals
- How learn how to ask key?? And how to get right answer
- Engagement and motivation
- Challenge students with critical thinking
- Relevant / application to the real world
- Conversations with learners to understand the journey through the landscape
- Respect for learners – value all contributions – show empathy
- Expectations to meet meaningful challenges of the real world (and believe they can meet these expectations)
- Facilitate / guide / interact / be enthusiastic to empower students
- Provide appropriate scaffolding for students to problem-solve
- Build a relationship first – to enable learning to occur.
- Engagement..... passion / presentation – DRAMA / ANECDOTE
- HOLISTIC – not just the subject expert
- Developing a sense of responsibility
- Lack of teaching
- PD around

- Styles / tools / activities for “subject experts”
- To teach is to touch a life forever
- Teach to empower
- Guide people through their own journey
- Teaching as learning, learning as teaching – FLUID PROCESS
- Encouraging students to become self learners – midwifing students through their learning journey
- Finding the point of motivation
- Teaching as curator of knowledge
- Encouragement to become lifelong learners
- Keeping in touch with learners
- Breaking down barriers
- Learning through celebrating learners own knowledge
- Helping students see their potential
- Importance of relationships
- Supportive environment
- Embracing spontaneity the teaching moment
- Acknowledge diverse learning styles
- Multiple intelligences
- Lollies
- Facilitator for learning
- Values life skills
- Enjoying success
- Contextual
- Collaboration
- Empowerment
- Educare
- Relationships
- Extending the boundaries of their own self perceptions of further possibilities
- The past, the present, the future
- Finding which magic key will unlock their potentials
- Tools for learning
- Learning transformation
- Inspiring
- Further possibilities
- Reflection of own practice – thinking out of the box
- The person who does the work does the learning
- Connection with students Respect – treating the students like adults
- Building relationships
- Setting goals
- Establishing student skill set
- Facilitating learning (as opposed to ‘lecturing’) – encouraging students to be enquiring
- Learning process is a joint venture
- Knowing own limitations and being able to push your boundaries.