

**Approaches to teaching and the support of learning that influence, motivate and inspire students to learn.**

**Overview**

Supportive relationships, promoting mutual respect and guiding students to discover their own strengths is not only essential for their personal growth but models to our education students’ the attributes of effective educators (Brendtro, 2020; Egeberg & McConney, 2018). These form the cornerstone of my teaching and in my role as a sessional tutor for nearly a decade, my focus is on helping students find personal success by creating a learning environment that meets their socio economic and academic needs (McDonald, 2019).

**Inspire and motivate students through effective communication, presentation, and interpersonal skills.**

In the Master of Teach education units, my tutorial classes comprise students from a variety of disciplines and backgrounds. Whilst they are learning the same core unit concepts, I incorporate instructional intelligence to engage the learning needs of individual students. I provide tailored PowerPoints, practical and collaborative activities and writing frameworks as well as supplementary readings for interested students. Noddings (1988) posits that caring is an ethic that we communicate to our students through our selection of curriculum, lesson planning, and individual interactions. For the last three years, I have trialed informal drop-in sessions between weekly tutorials to assist students needing extra support or those just wanting general advice regarding teaching. By creating a friendly space to develop rapport with both myself and each other, students feel supported; and the sessions are particularly popular with midyear intake students. This extra assistance is noted in Unit Teaching Evaluation Instrument (UTEI) comments such as *“Tammy’s guidance, scaffolding, constructive feedback, expectations, clear explanations, enthusiasm and delivery of material was outstanding, so I was able to achieve top marks and strive for my goals. I couldn’t have asked for a better tutor”* (2020) and *“Tammy has heart and an incredible passion for what she does. She displays in all honesty the perfect lecturer to me as she is honest, knowledgeable and has a genuine care for those she respects and teaches”* (2020).

**Participating in effective and empathetic guidance and advice for students**

Hoy & Weinstein (2006) state that a teacher’s personal and academic care for students leads to effective teaching. The duration I spend on assessment feedback is based on need rather than time allocation. For students who have failed their first major assignment, I offer individual meetings to discuss feedback, provide assignment planning documents and explicitly highlight areas to address going forward. I am in regular contact until the second assignment is due, holding students accountable for the mini deadlines and action plan we have developed in our initial meeting. Whilst I have a reputation for setting high expectations for my classes, students know it is because I want them to achieve their personal best. *“Thank you for your help throughout the semester, you are without a doubt the best teacher I have had throughout my studies (no one comes close). I have learnt so much from you regarding classroom management and hope to see you around campus in the future”* (Student comment, 2021). This commitment to my units and students is reflected in my high satisfaction rating in my UTEI’s, as seen in the data table below recording my UTEI Summary report from RP2: 2016 to RP2:2020.

<b>1F EDUCATION TUTOR SUMMRY</b>	Mean OS	%AGREE	N RESPONSE
<b>Individual Teacher (all units)</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>100</b>	17
School (all units)	61	83	2887
<b>Individual teacher aggregate result</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>99</b>	285
School aggregate (all units)	63	84	35064
ECU aggregate (all units)	64	85	144482

Guidance and advice extend beyond the completion of the various units I teach into. Students know I am willing to assist if they have any questions regarding programming or teaching strategies. Drama students regularly contact me whilst on Practicum for guidance or advice and this usually occurs between teaching semesters. My commitment to the students I teach extends beyond a contract or unit.

*"I really appreciate the time and effort you have put into the feedback as I have been able to apply it to other units as well. I have found it so helpful and just wanted to send a message of appreciation for also helping me out with Prac" (Student email, 2020).* My commitment also extends out to staff, and I have willingly covered other units with minimal notice to avoid disruptions to student learning. I prepared thoroughly in my own time to maintain my colleagues' high teaching standards and adapted the program and assessments to meet new circumstances. *"You have had to step in and take over teaching when your colleagues have had personal trauma. You never hesitated – you just stepped up and did whatever you could do to help. This is your kind, generous and loyal nature" (Christina Gray, email, 2021).*

### **Encouraging student engagement through the enthusiasm shown for learning and teaching**

I model my own passion for teaching and learning to my students and provide them with additional opportunities beyond their unit. For example, I share my experience as an ATAR exam writer and assessment specialist with the Drama education students by organising open marking sessions. Whilst voluntarily, many students appreciate the chance to develop efficacy in assessment through additional marking practice. I also provide students with networking opportunities through teacher and theatre groups I am involved in to help get them career ready. I believe it is a tutor's role, sessional or contracted, to provide opportunities for students to feel capable, connect, and contribute within our classrooms (Albert, 2003). This commitment to my students outside of my teaching hours has been appreciated by the fantastic staff I work with. *"Tammy exemplified enthusiasm with preparation and delivery of complex concepts. However, it was her keen empathy and passion for ensuring all her students were supported in their learning journey that makes Tammy one of the best educators I have had the privilege to work with in recent years" (Sarah Jefferson, 2020).*

I am constantly reflecting on ways I can meet the E.C.U. strategic goal of enhancing teaching and learning. Based on student feedback and evolving pedagogy, I regularly revise the units I teach. Reflective practice after teaching each unit ensures I address both potential learning gaps and opportunities to enhance student engagement. An example is when taking on the Australian Drama unit, I chose to rewrite the unit to include a greater focus on Aboriginal Theatre and playwrights and then mapped Curriculum links for both this and all the units I was teaching. *"You are constantly reading, researching, sourcing, and preparing new material for your students. You do this because you are dedicated to their learning and are a brilliant role model" (Christina Gray, email, 2021).* To assist other tutors, I also adapted numerous Drama assessment keys when E.C.U. transitioned to online learning in 2020 to ensure students had accessible and engaging assignment tasks to complete off campus. I am presently cowriting two research projects with topics based on the units I am teaching, role modelling to students the importance of being an enthusiastic lifelong learner. I take pride in my role as a sessional tutor and the opportunity it gives me to help support, influence and motivate students in the learning of their pedagogical craft.

### **References**

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