

Critical Reflection to Improve Practice

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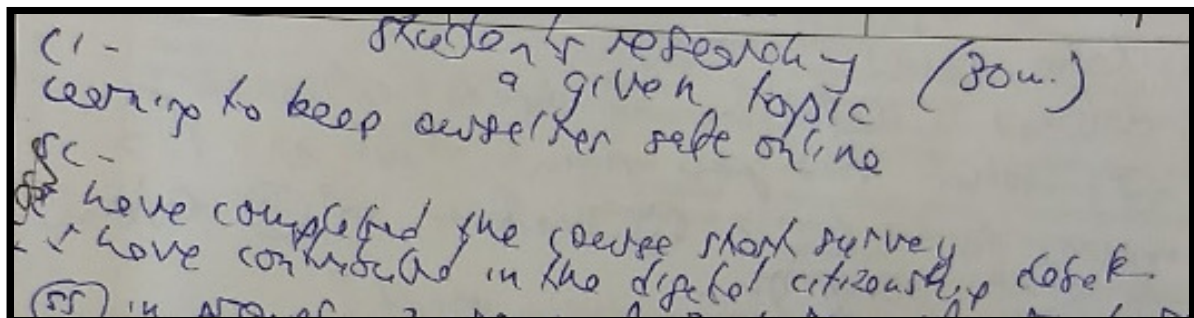
My first year of teaching has allowed me a substantial opportunity to grow and improve in my educational journey, and I feel that I have taken up the challenge well.

Learning Intentions and Success Criteria

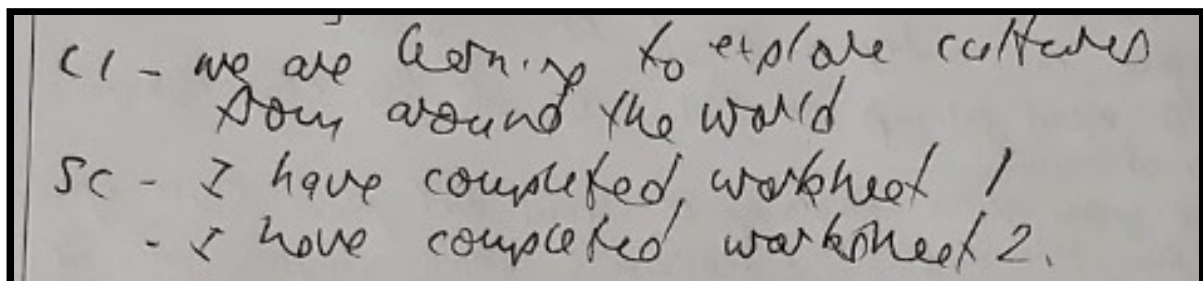
Early Practice

(LO 8005.1, LO 8002.4)

Early this year, I was challenged by the concept of Learning Intentions and Success Criteria. My understanding of learning intentions was that they convey the overall topic of the lesson, and that success criteria was what learners need to complete in order to be successful in the lesson. From Summer initial intensive, I knew that they were important and that there were a number of ways to write them, but I lacked the depth of understanding to implement them effectively.



Above: Learning intentions not clearly linked to success criteria in February 2018 ("ISM Observation 20180228 - Page One", 2018)

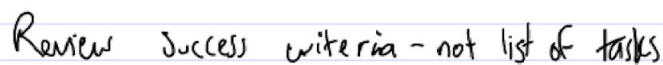


Above: Success Criteria as a list of tasks to complete in March 2018 ("ISM Observation 20180327 - Page One", 2018)

Collaboration

(LO 8005.3, LO 8002.3)

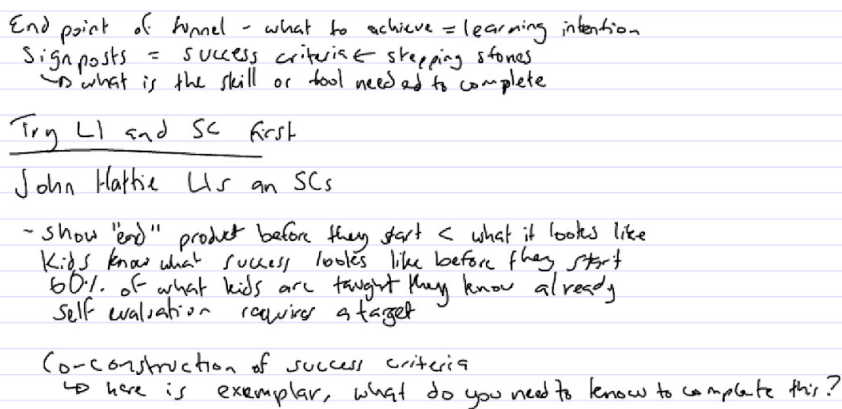
Some of my earliest feedback from my in-school mentor was that my learning intentions and success criteria were inadequate. At this stage, I had only been working with my in-school mentor for about a month, and we were still developing our collaborative professional relationship. I felt self-conscious about sharing my struggles with him. When he confronted me about my challenges in this area, I reassured him that I would look into it on my own.



Review success criteria - not list of tasks

Above: Excerpt from my in-school mentor feedback notes on March 14 ("ISM/page_2", 2018)

It wasn't until April that I felt able to reach out to my in-school mentor for help so that my learners would be able to best benefit from appropriate learning intentions and success criteria. At this point in time, we had been working together for two months and attended a hui, which allowed us to build trust. Our interactions had been consistently mana-enhancing, and he had helped me build up my confidence as a teacher.



End point of funnel - what to achieve = learning intention
Signposts = success criteria ← stepping stones
↳ what is the skill or tool needed to complete

Try LI and SC first

John Hattie LIs an SCs

- show "end" product before they start < what it looks like
Kids know what success looks like before they start
60% of what kids are taught they know already
Self evaluation requires a target

Co-construction of success criteria
↳ here is exemplar, what do you need to know to complete this?

Above: My notes from an observation on 10 April detailing my new understanding of learning intentions and success criteria (ISM/page_4, 2018).

My in-school mentor was very reassuring and together we found resources to support me. This collaboration and mana-enhancing relationship meant that I was supported to better understand the application of learning intentions and success criteria, and provide my learners with clearer objectives and ideas of success. I now recognise that it is okay to have challenges, and now I am much more comfortable sharing my concerns with colleagues than I was at the beginning of 2018.

Literature

(LO 8002.1)

Digital technologies relies on strong learning intentions and success criteria more than other subjects because it is so vast. It is sometimes difficult to be sure of what you have achieved in digital technologies unless explicit goals are set beforehand.

It is crucial that learning intentions and success criteria are clear to learners - or co-constructed with learners - so that everybody can take an active role in their learning. Hattie identifies targeted learning (i.e. learning with an intention and success criteria in mind) as one of his four critical parts of planning, and likens a lesson without learning intentions or success criteria to the concept of driving a car and only being told of the destination upon arrival (David-Lang, 2013). By defining what success looks like, students are able to visualise it and aim to achieve that outcome.

This is useful in digital technologies, as many of the skills can be easily observed through existing software. For example, if the learning intention was “to build a functional website for a stakeholder using hypertext markup language,” it would be simple to show the students an already functional website, along with the code, from the numerous examples on the internet.

Changes to Practice

(LO 8005.1, LO 8002.2, LO 8002.4)

After speaking with my in-school mentor and looking into Hattie’s research, I began to understand learning as a tunnel: the end was where the students will be when they achieve the goal of the learning (learning intention) and the signposts along the tunnel relate to the skills or tools that are needed to reach the end of the tunnel (success criteria) (ISM/page_4, 2018).

My new understanding meant that I could work on improving my learning intentions and success criteria. Over the year, they evolved from lists of tasks and names of assessments into clearer outcomes that better allowed students to contextualise their learning and have a clearer goal.

I also made a significant effort, especially towards the end of the year, to discuss the learning intentions and success criteria for each lesson, instead of just having them visible on the board. This was important to aid in recognition that they were important parts of the lesson, and served to contextualise the lesson.

Learning Intentions:

We are learning to use feedback to improve our work

Success Criteria:

I have given at least three people in the class **EFFECTIVE** feedback about their website

I have **REFLECTED** on given feedback about my website

I have applied the feedback that someone has given me into my website

Above: Improved Learning Intentions and Success Criteria from October 2018.

<p>Linking to LI/SC in class time (only needs to be short - but a good way to get another layer of reinforcement of learning)</p> <p>Above: 17 August 2018 (Li, 2018)</p>	→	<p>Co construction of LIs/SCs and learners designing kahoots for learner agency. Great change in this for Jess. Jess has always had the LIs and SC in her lesson planning but really it was only her that could articulate them. This lesson, the learners were co-constructing what success looks like and creating their own kahoots. There was a notable difference to the engagement and the learning talk around the room.</p> <p>Above: 9 November 2018 (Li, 2018)</p>
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Future Steps

(LO 8005.2)

In order to continue my improvement in this area, I would like to focus on co-constructing success criteria with my learners. Their input and engagement is essential to improving their sense of ownership over learning. I intend to try this for my first database unit with my level three programming class next year as the students involved will already have experience in working with databases. This prior knowledge will benefit them in understanding what they need to learn in order to be successful in the assessment. The co-construction will be based around an achievement standard and I can use their ideas in my lesson plans throughout the unit.

Classroom Management

Early Practice

(LO 8005.1, LO 8002.4)

Classroom management was an area where I felt like I had some strength as I had previously been good at building and maintaining relationships in social settings. Unfortunately, I failed to realise that teacher-student relationships had very different dynamics to what I was used to and I had very little experience in professional relationships overall. This lack of depth in my understanding meant that I was challenged initially by situations with learners that were outside of my comfort zone.

The second situation was in my year ten class. During my round of "two truths and a lie", there was one student in particular who refused to participate. Other students who refused were given the compromise of being returned two after the person who was supposed to follow them or giving three truths instead, but despite giving her these options, she would not speak. I then compromised again and said that we would come back to her after the rest of the class had participated. When we returned to her, she refused again, and only participated when I asked her direct questions about her life.

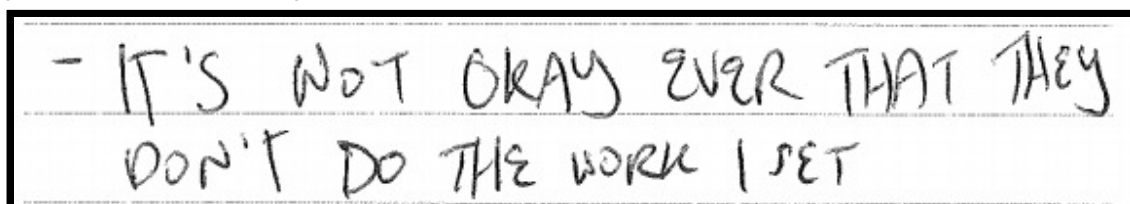
I think that the student was uncomfortable with participating in such a large discussion, and potentially was not happy to share details of her life with the class. I was conflicted because I wanted to make sure that the student felt like she was in a safe environment, but I was warned in summer school about compromising too much and giving students the impression that it is okay to not meet my expectations or follow my instructions. I was wary of upsetting the student, and didn't know how to better handle it since I was mostly stuck at the front of the class taking care of admin and leading the discussion.

Another way I could have approached the situation was by allowing a responsible student to continue leading the discussion for me while I spoke to the student privately. Although this would mean making it very obvious to the rest of the class that I was going to have a discussion with her, which may have made her even less forthcoming. I could have waited until the class was busy with their group work and then approached the student, but in that case I would not have asked her to participate in the group discussion, letting others see that participation is optional in my classroom. I think that the best approach at this point would be to speak to her privately after or during class on Friday and apologise for my actions and ask if there would be anything in particular that I could do to support her in my class.

Above: Reflection on classroom management early in the year that demonstrates a lack of mana-enhancement in an interaction ("Making Mistakes - Week One, Term One, 2018", 2018)

Collaboration

(LO 8005.3, LO 8002.3)



- IT'S NOT OKAY EVER THAT THEY
DON'T DO THE WORK I SET

Above: ("SII Notes", 2018)

During Summer School, I worked with a Teach First NZ alumna who observed my lessons. During one lesson I had an issue with students not completing work. She noticed this, and

advised that “it’s not okay, ever, that [students] don’t do the work I set” (“SII Notes”, 2018). It was my understanding that she meant that I should always expect all learners to complete the tasks I set. At the time I thought that it was great advice. I had always intended to be a teacher intolerant of laziness, and with extremely high expectations. In addition to this, the alumna is someone I deeply respect, so I took her advice and intended to apply it in the future.

I first applied her advice in a situation where a learner was not comfortable speaking in front of the class. I felt uncomfortable as I refused to move on with the lesson until the learner participated, and I recognise now that it was not at all a mana-enhancing interaction for either of us. I should have been more responsive to the student and engaged with them in a more respectful way - something that I could have accomplished while still applying the alumna’s advice.

I have seen other approaches to this method in different schools. For example, during my time observing at a different high school, the teacher I was observing sent students out of the classroom when they did not comply with his instructions for the lesson. These students left the room and distracted the class while the teacher continued giving instructions. When it became clear that the students outside the room intended to continue disrupting the lesson, the teacher went outside and had a conversation with them about their behaviour (“TFNZ/MTEL/page_73”, 2018). This is also the approach that I recall observing during my own time in high school by teachers in many subjects.

I do not think that this was an effective, mana-enhancing way of encouraging students to participate in the lesson. I think that by sending out the students, the teacher called them and their behaviour out in front the class, which served as a warning for other students, but also was humiliating for the students who were asked to leave. The students continued to disrupt the lesson from outside, showing little respect for their teacher and fellow students. This lack of respect could be detrimental to any relationships formed between the teacher and the students, and I feel that the teacher’s behaviour of publicly sending the students out of the room is not conducive to a mana-enhancing relationship between the two parties. This method clearly demonstrated the teacher’s high expectations for his classroom, but in the same way, promoted his authority over the class rather than showing it to be a co-constructed ako-based partnership (Ministry of Education, 2013).

When I discussed my observations at the school with my Learning Area Advisor, she suggested that the atmosphere in different schools are conducive to different methods of classroom management. She suggested that while a highly relationship-based approach like mine works well at my school, other schools in Aotearoa may respond better to other approaches that fit the culture of the school (H. Samvelyan, personal communication, November 13, 2018).

My learning area advisor has recently given me some ideas around better handling situations where students do not want to participate in class activities. In this particular situation, one student refused to complete an exercise. My learning area advisor said that I prevented the

situation from escalating by having a quiet conversation with that student and compromising with them. She did suggest further that I should follow up with the student privately at some point and have a conversation with them about participating fully in the class (Samvelyan, 2018). As a result of this, the student is able to recognise that participation is expected in my class, but also that I will resolve any issues in a way that preserves their mana. In this way, my learning area advisor was giving me the same advice as the alumna had, but in a way that I feel much more comfortable implementing.

Literature

(LO 8002.1)

I decided to investigate my Learning Area Advisor's claims by looking into the effects of school culture and climate on the behaviour of students. In a study published in 2000, a number of researchers found a strong link between perceived negative school culture (indicated by low student autonomy, student conflict, and other factors) and misconduct at school (Dewit, D. J. *et al*, 2000). It is possible that the perceived culture at schools that I have visited differs from the culture at my own school, thus leading to different rates of misconduct between them. I believe that because of this, different classroom management approaches have been utilised to best fit the culture and climate of the school.

As educators in Aotearoa, we have a responsibility to utilise culturally responsive pedagogy in all areas of our practice. Ka Hikitia (2013) supports teachers to focus on a Māori potential approach - encouraging high expectations of all Māori students being able to succeed as Māori, as well as a focus on ako and partnerships. I believe that this is a great way of building mana-enhancing relationships in my own classroom as a form of classroom management.

Changes to Practice

(LO 8005.1, LO 8002.2, LO 8002.4)

Throughout the year, I have been working on mana-enhancing relationships as my primary tool for classroom management. I have rarely had issues with misconduct in my own classroom. When these issues arise, I strive to address the concern with the student in a private, respectful manner.

For example, in October I had a student vaping in my classroom. Their behaviour indicated that they weren't doing it in a malicious way and were simply showing off to their peers. When the student asked to leave the room, I took the opportunity to meet them privately outside the classroom. The conversation that followed was positive and constructive - both of us were respectful and the issue was solved without embarrassment or offence from either side ("Term Four: Week Two - Vaping in Class?!", 2018).

This is just one example of a situation this year where respectful relationships with my students has led to a calm, positive resolution.

Future Steps

(LO 8005.2)

In November this year, I had my first experience with relieving a class that I had not interacted with before. My biggest challenge in this situation was classroom management (“Term Four: Week Six - My First Relief Experience”, 2018). I know that I will have to be a reliever again in the future, and now that I know that I am unable to rely on my relationships with the students in that situation, I recognise that I need to expand my repertoire of classroom management strategies.

I was recommended the book “The First Days of School” by Harry Wong and I intend to read this over the holidays to look up at least three new strategies to attempt in my classes during term one next year.

Teaching and Learning Approaches

Early Practice

(LO 8005.1, LO 8002.4)

During Summer initial intensive, I was given the opportunity to experiment with different teaching and learning approaches such as think-pair-share, class discussions, and small group outcome development. While these activities can be effective in the right context, they were not always easily implemented in the digital technologies classroom. Almost all of these learning activities require some form of prior knowledge, whereas in digital technologies, the vast majority of my lessons had to be focussed on learning new skills. Especially early in units, I found that skills like HTML5 website markup syntax, and initial python programming skills needed to be taught in a way that did not rely on prior knowledge, as almost none of my learners had previously engaged with the content that they needed to learn.

As a result of this, I began to default to what I call the “I do, you do” method. In this teaching activity, the teacher demonstrates writing code and showing as the output of the task. Learners mimic this. Once the class has successfully completed that sample task, they complete a similar task that uses the same skill to solidify their learning. My lack of a range of pedagogical strategies for engaging learners in the digital technologies area meant that my lessons were undifferentiated, unimaginative, and lacked diversity.

35 minutes	More Tags!
	Continue ppt - https://www.teaching-materials.org/htmlcss/lesson2/slides#slide14
	1. Formatted text - <code></code> , <code></code> , <code><i></code> , <code></code>
	2. Hyperlinks <code><a></code>
	3. Images <code></code>
	4. Lists - ordered, unordered - <code></code> , <code></code> , <code></code>

Above: “I do, you do” in DTW2’s lesson plan for Wednesday 7 February, 2018 (“Jess Petersen - Planboard Lesson - Feb 7 2018 DTW2”, 2018)

55 minutes	Work Through and Demonstrate <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. I have created a folder structure for my website2. I have put html files into appropriate directories in my website root3. I have linked my html files together4. I have linked to an external style sheet
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Above: “I do, you do” in DTW2’s lesson plan for Tuesday 13 March, 2018 (“Jess Petersen - Planboard Lesson - Mar 13 2018 DTW2”, 2018)

Collaboration

(LO 8005.3, LO 8002.3)

Once I had realised that there was a significant gap in my practice in regards to quality, diverse learning activities that best meet the needs of my learners, I turned to the internet for ideas. I soon came across “choice boards” on Pinterest. These boards collated a variety of tasks that led to learners all meeting the same learning objective, but allowed them to go about the learning in different ways.

Soon after this, I found Julie Smith’s (2017) blog that shared the benefits of using “digital choice boards” and I stumbled across a podcast that focused on them too. “Hyperdocs” (“digital choice boards”) were exactly what I was looking for to diversify my classroom activities. In the podcast, Jennifer Gonzalez spoke to three experts in the field of hyperdocs (2017). They talk about best practice for implementing hyperdocs in the classroom, as well as benefits, challenges, and provide a number of resources to support teachers in their implementations.

While all of this was indirect digital collaboration, I am very grateful for the opportunity to hear from other educators and experts in the field and develop learner-focused solutions with their support.

Literature

(LO 8002.1)

In my practice, my “I do, you do” lessons relate to the concept of instructivism. Instructivism is a learning approach where all knowledge is held by the teacher and they distribute the knowledge to their passive learners (Gillies, 2015). In my experience, instructivism-based teaching approaches can be useful for initial explanations of content. Direct teaching gives my learners the opportunity to receive unfamiliar knowledge in a quick and direct way. Unfortunately, this approach is not differentiated at all and learners may fall behind if they are not ready for the content, are not interested in the content, or not well attuned to the presentation of content. As a result of this, I looked into differentiation.

Tomlinson, a key researcher in educational differentiation says that effective differentiation is made up of three key parts: learner readiness, learner interest, and learning profile. Learner readiness refers to the prior knowledge of the student and their readiness to take on the specified new knowledge. Learner interest refers to the things that learners are interested in. Learning profile refers to the way that the student prefers to learn. In order to best meet the needs of my students, a differentiated approach is necessary (Tomlinson et al., 2003).

Changes to Practice

(LO 8005.1, LO 8002.2, LO 8002.4)

Throughout the year I tried a number of different activities for learning with my students, with a focus on breaking out of my “I do, you do” loop. This resulted in us trying collaborative coding, whiteboard algorithms, drawing planning tools with sidewalk chalk, and group research activities.




Above: (“DTW2 on Tuesday 7 August, creating gantt chart for a web development project with sidewalk chalk”, 2018)

My most significant deviation from the “I do, you do” format was when I focused on applying differentiation in a hyperdoc approach. The unit that I created taught concepts of basic HTML

and CSS. It utilised learning activities presented in text-format, video-format, and a practice-based format. These activities were applied to a website that each learner made about a topic they chose, and intermediate HTML techniques were provided in a way that catered for differences in learner-readiness, based on my own observations and previous results. Overall, this unit was well-received by students, and when surveyed, 82% of the class enjoyed the unit more than the previous unit about Google Sites, and 88% stated that they felt they learned more from the unit than the previous unit ("Unit Review: HTML/CSS", 2018).


SECTION ONE: BASIC HTML



First Website Tutorial


TEXT-BASED

Work individually or with a friend to create a website, using these text-based instructions as a guide. Make sure that you're



VIDEO-BASED

Work individually or with a friend to create a website, using this video as a guide. Make sure that you're practicing your own skills if you choose to work with a friend!



PRACTICE-BASED

Come to the front-half of the class and work along with Miss P and friends!

Above: A screenshot from the hyperdoc ("10DTG Website Crash Course", 2018)

Future Steps

(LO 8005.2)

Even with a differentiated approach, the teaching and learning activities that I have attempted this year can still be significantly improved. One area that I would like to improve my practice in is contextualising activities in a real life setting, and working with community and whanau to increase student agency. I plan to connect with the South Auckland community in 2019 to find authentic scenarios for website development. This will allow students to engage with a wider audience and contribute to their community, giving more meaning to their outcomes.

Final Thoughts

I feel that I have grown significantly, as a person and a teacher, over my past year of practice. I recognise that there are still plenty of places where I can improve and have plans in place to build more learner-focused, culturally responsive practice in the next year.

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