10 TIPS FOR TEACHING

1. Make the students use their whole brain to learn!

2. Keep students engaged

3. Education IS a fundamental human right

4. Culture is a factor

5. Social interactions are important

6. Every student learns at a different rate.

7. Movement is important

8. Classroom management

9. Provide feedback

10. Provide scaffolding and encourage critical thinking

Vygotsky states that children learn in a 'zone of proximal development' (ZPD). This theory relates to the amount of work that a child is capable of on their own, in comparison to what they can achieve with the help of others (Krause, 2003, pp. 71). I will ensure that in my class I am aware of my students levels of ability and I will provide them work that will be challenging but not overwhelming. If students become overwhelmed with work in the classroom they will lose their intrinsic motivation and may lose engagement in their learning. On the other end of the spectrum, if work is too simple for students they may become bored and again will stop focusing and engaging in the lesson. In my classroom I will engage students in the skills that are within the higher end of Bloom's Revised Taxonomy (n.d). This includes the ability to analyse and evaluate which allows for critical engagement in the lesson. The highest skill on Bloom's Revised Taxonomy (n.d) is creating. Students will be involved in this higher order thinking when they are working collaboratively or individually, to create their own work. By ensuring that work is within the student's ZPD, then the students will be able to complete the work competently and confidently. As a result of this, students will feel a sense of achievement and self-efficacy (Churchill, 2011, pp.79).

I, as the teacher, will provide explicit instructions to my students regarding the assessment goals and expectations in each lesson. In doing this, the students will be aware of the standards that are required of them in their learning. By constantly providing feedback to students you are both allowing them to develop self-esteem and self-efficacy in the classroom. It will also allow students to improve their weaknesses and give them the capacity to self-regulate their efforts and participation in class work (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick). The students in my class will complete a self-evaluation when submitting an assignment. The teacher will collect this and review how the student thought they went in comparison to how the teacher thought the student went. When assessing themselves, students fall into three categories: those that over estimate, under estimate, and accurately estimate their ability (Ng & Earl, 2008, pp. 40). The teacher will provide feedback within a week of an assignment being submitted. This will mean that the student will be able to reflect on their learning and compare their self-assessment to the teachers. This will enable students to understand what areas they are doing well in, and what areas of their assignment need work. It also allows for teachers to start a relationship and communication with the students. The teacher will use the information gathered from the students' feedback and their own feedback to shape the information and skills that will be taught to the class depending on their needs.

By starting the lesson with a simple exercise or brainstorm about what they learnt last lesson, students will stimulate the dendrites in their brain and create a pathway for the new information (Kagan, 2009). Without doing this, students will put the new lesson into their short-term memory where only about 7 new facts can be retained at a time (Cowan, 2000). In doing this sort of exercise students will remember the work they completed in the last lesson, and will see the new information as part of the whole unit. The students will gain meaning from the new content and link to previous content as associated knowledge. While traditional education practices, which use the left-mode functions of the brain, still have their place, the lesson will be more effective if the learning technique can stimulate the right side of the brain as well. The right side of the brain is more active than the left mode when we are; listening to music, drawing, absorbing colour, graphics, movement & rhythm. The left side of the brain however is what mostly controls our understanding of the linguistics of language, a task that requires a lot of storage (Kusch, Greenberg, 2008).

I will keep all students engaged in lessons by catering to their diverse backgrounds and individual learning needs and styles of my learners. Felder and Silverman (1988) argue that there are three types of learners in the classroom. They include: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. All students have a different primary style of learning and most students will respond to a combination of styles. Churchill (2011, p. 129) argues, each student is an individual and has different needs; therefore there is no all-purpose method that will motivate all students. In order to engage all students I will use a pedagogical practice that connects the content of my lessons to real world events that are relevant to the students. This will help all students connect, particularly those from disadvantaged and minority backgrounds who have a different value and respect for education (Zyngier, 2008, pp. 1776).

The United Nations Conventions of the Rights of the Child states "all children have the right to primary education, which should be free." The Conventions of the Rights of a Child was developed and then ratified or acceded by many Countries around the world (United Nations, 1989). In Australia, public education provides a free education for all children until they finish year 12. The law was changed when all states and territories agreed to the National Partnership Agreement on Youth Attainment and Transitions (2009), which states that children must attend school or engage in 25 hours of work per week until the age of 17. Therefore we have a responsibility to provide education to all students, finding ways to allow everyone to participate freely. I will encourage all senior students in my classes to participate to their full potential while at school so that they have the social, economic, political, and cultural skills they need to be an active member of society (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 2000, p. 5)

A key to effective behaviour management is to have a classroom that has structure. Having a solid routine and explicitly stating rules will decrease behavioural problems. I will also use hand gestures and verbal cues to engage my students when I want their attention. Pavlov conducted an experiment on his dog in which he found that the dog became used to the routine of hearing a bell for food (Krause, 2003). This experiment showed that with time, a specific action stimulated a response in the dog. Skinner notes in his operant conditioning theory that organisms will respond in certain ways to achieve or avoid outcomes or consequences (Snowman, McCown, Biehler, 2009, pp. 227). This theory also relates to the classroom where students develop learnt responses to specific situations and activities. This conditioning of students will help manage disruptive behaviour as students know what is expected of them.

"Numb bum= numb brain." If students are sitting still in their seats for too long they will lose their concentration and alertness. Kagan (2009) notes that by moving around, students will have larger amounts of oxygen and glucose going to their brain. The brain constantly needs one quarter of our entire oxygen intake, so by increasing the amount of oxygen we are breathing, the brain will get more. The oxygen levels will be increased by doing an activity like 'mix, pair, share' (Kagan, 2009). This activity involves students leaving their seat, walking around the room to music and when it stops they will find a partner closest to them. The teacher will say a question and the students will think about it and answer to their partner. I will ensure that my classroom is an active and structured environment to ensure students stay alert and engaged while they are learning.

Piaget lists the different stages of development that children will go through to mature to adults. These include: sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational, and formal operational (Churchill, 2011, pp. 76). In a high school I will be dealing with students that are at the concrete and formal operational levels. Piaget notes that at a secondary level, teachers need to be aware that not all students will be able to think hypothetically and that some students may require a lot of help to develop this skill and move up to the level of formal operational (Krause, 2003, pp. 63). Remembering this will allow me to think about the individual learning abilities of my students and to ensure that I differentiate my lessons to teach equitably.

Vygotsky believed that children learn much more about their world through social interaction (Wolfolk and Margetts 2010). Vygotsky believed that children learn to think and act through social interactions first, once this has been developed socially then children will internalise the process in their mind only (Krause, 2003). Much of Vygotsky's work revolved around a child learning from the 'outside – in' (Krause, 2003). The theories that Vygotsky develop demonstrate the importance of social interaction and the role this plays in a child's cognitive development. I will ensure that my classroom has many activities that will engage students in social interaction with all other members of the class. Gillies and Ashman (1995) note that when students are working in groups, peer learning will occur and students that had not understood information previously may find it easier when their peers provide the information. Gillies and Ashman (1995) state that peer learning will increase a student's intrinsic motivation to learn.

Vygotsky's believed that culture and cultural settings could not be overlooked, and that human beings and their behaviours and activities could only be understood while looking through their specific culture (Woolfolk 2010, p 51). There has been much debate over many years as to whether nature or nurture played a more crucial role in influencing how a child develops. Healy (2011) states that the research has been summed up and it has been agreed that there is a 40-60 split. However, what has not been agreed upon is which side is 40 and which side is 60. Healy (2011) also notes that the recent emerging themes focus more on nature plus nurture, more that nature vs nurture. This is a critical point to remember in our classroom, we as teachers must not rush students to develop if they are not ready to. We risk ruining the prior knowledge if we do and they were not ready to learn the new concept.

Elise Bernard
– u3005483

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