

For sustained and enthusiastic teaching that creates a positive learning environment and involves, empowers and transforms students through their learning of management theories and practice.

Summary of contribution and context

My approach to teaching and learning focuses on facilitating student involvement to develop the realization that learning is relevant and a life-long process that extends beyond the classroom. It is about providing opportunities for students to experience critical reflection and experiential learning and to recognize their self-worth and value. My philosophy is grounded in the understanding that university is a vehicle to take students on part of their life's journey, a vehicle that can have an influential, dramatic and transformational impact on that journey.

During my time teaching in the discipline of management at James Cook University (JCU), I have taught and developed a variety of subjects across both undergraduate and postgraduate programs. My understanding of business education is that it involves a holistic approach that enhances core skills and challenges students to think about their role as managers, including best practice in business. I endeavor to sustain strategies which engage students individually and collaboratively in pursuit of deep learning which is relevant to the real-world. As a practitioner with years of work experience in various occupations, I bring a wealth of industry knowledge and experience to the classroom. From this I am able to draw discrete cameos of work to spark and promote student learning of the world of management. Additionally, as student of education myself, having completed the Graduate Diploma of Tertiary Teaching and now undertaking a Master of Education, I constantly seek to inform my teaching with contemporary thought, research and best practice in approaches that engage, empower and transform students and promote learning. One of the most effective ways I have found to motivate students is through experiential learning. My links with industry assist me in achieving this goal. Consequently, my teaching is driven by a sustained emphasis on authentic experiences, including students working collaboratively with industry on projects, inviting business managers as guest lecturers into the classroom, and promotion of networking by encouraging student involvement and attendance at relevant functions and events.

Criterion 1: Approaches to learning and teaching support that influence, motivate and inspire students to learn

I am passionate about my teaching and endeavor to continually create positive learning environments that influence, motivate and inspire students to learn. I believe in providing structured approaches to enable learning and determinedly encourage students to promote their own learning through active participation. I recognize that students have prior knowledge and experiences and urge them to draw on their own tapestry and contribute to a shared learning experience. Sessions culminate in analysis of case studies to extend and consolidate learning. The effectiveness of this approach is evidenced in students' comments:

- *This was a very enjoyable subject, allowed room for our opinions and reflection. Jo really opened my eyes to many issues.*
- *Ample opportunity for class discussions allowing opportunities to see other points of view*
- *I have found that every subject with Josephine is always very interactive and interesting.*

A cornerstone of my pedagogical stance is to create positive learning environments which respect and nurture intellectual diversity, build trust with and among students, allow them to comfortably share their ideas openly with others, and assist in developing and sharpening critical and lateral thinking. Contemporary thought on teaching in higher education supports divergent thinking in students (Herrington & Herrington, 2006) and the fostering of student-centered learning. A key aspect of my teaching is to help students develop awareness of analytical thought processes so they can learn to reflect on contemporary issues, critically evaluate them and engage in intelligent and informed dialogue. These skills are invaluable for students and are applicable to all occupations, including business professionals. To effectively achieve this goal, I utilize a variety of activities and assessment tools such as role playing, case study analyses, debating, organization of real-life events, oral presentations, review of current affairs, and collation of industry reports. In so doing, my teaching approach revolves around provocation and evocation of different styles of thinking and learning.

An example of this approach is the weekly debates incorporated in the subject 'Business and Society' (Year 3) where students select from a series of topics relating to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). This activity provokes students to reflect on a controversial issue, stimulates them to research and voice their perspective, and encourages them to consider alternative perspectives. In so doing, it evokes and broadens their outlook and

enriches their learning in a fun and engaging way. To develop confidence in students' abilities to debate, I utilize a scaffolded and deliberate approach which empowers students to learn. In the first week, I outline the formalities of debating and more pertinently, invoke them into public speaking by getting each student to stand up and make a 15 seconds statement on a particular idea, e.g. "If I were CEO of 'Name' (e.g. public transport company), I would . . .". This provokes quick and lateral thinking which is extended in Week Two when students, working in their debating teams of three people, present their proposition to the class, explain it and illustrate its importance by using an example. The need to present evidence stimulates and stresses the need for critical thinking.

This approach to debating is not novel and appears in the education literature but what is interesting is that its use has proven effective in providing students with rewarding, worthwhile and relevant learning experiences that build confidence and self-efficacy. In this way, by the time students are on stage, the debates are vibrant, informative and a not-to-be missed event. This was evidenced by sustained class attendance throughout the whole semester and comments from students endorsed that this activity was well received, evoked awareness of contemporary issues and goaded thinking and learning:

- *I enjoyed the debates. They really got you to look at issues with corporate social responsibility and where to draw the line.*
- *The debates were great and another way to have class interaction. It is also an excellent way to get students to present to their classmates and overcome their nervousness of public speaking – which they will need to do in the business world.*
- *The debates helped me with understanding different topics in depth. It made me think and research a topic that I wasn't aware of.*
- *The debates were a great learning tool. I liked the way we got to express our opinion via our issue evaluation.*

Equally, universities have for some time now embraced the notion of work-integrated learning (WIL). JCU has encouraged educators to utilize WIL approaches and I have incorporated WIL activities in several of my subjects. Often these have come with various challenges, e.g. ambitiousness of the project, varying agendas of different students in the cohort, timeframe, lack of experience of some students, and students' lack of motivation and limited sense of urgency. Nonetheless, I have always considered the advantages of enhancing learning experiences through authentic activities to be of enormous value to students before they graduate. I believe that such activities and assessment facilitates the learning of critical generic skills for those seeking long-term success in their careers. These generic skills include problem-solving, teamwork, communication, understanding of processes, resourcefulness, initiative and development of attitudes (McCann, 1996, Edwards, 2001). Importance of these skills to the professional lives of business students persistently drives my teaching practice and is consistently recognized by students in the feedback provided and my SFTs (see Table 1).

Further, I utilise authentic approaches which provoke students to consider their own values and ethics and reflect on the extent of CSR and ideology of the triple bottom line. An example of how I have tried to evoke this was through a 'community engagement project for 'Business and Society' in which students were required to research and identify ways in which businesses could support initiatives of the local Communities for Children (0-5 years old). To stimulate and develop students' awareness and understanding of CSR and think of ideas as to how local businesses can engage with and contribute to initiatives that improve the welfare of its community members, I utilised a number of parallel activities which included: interactive sessions to brainstorm definitions of CSR, perusing of organisations' websites to evaluate CSR efforts, and compilation of possible CSR initiatives. Simultaneously, the Services Manager (Communities for Children) visited the class to further students' insights. This preparatory work constructed a strong foundation of knowledge and ideas for students to draw on and empower them to learn more about values, ethics and CSR. The rich flow of ideas highlighted the immense transformative power of this authentic activity and how it had enlightened students and engendered an awareness of aspects of community life with which businesses and they as learners, individuals and potential managers could assist the community. This is also reflected in student feedback:

- I particularly liked the community engagement assignment. It was related to real life issues.
- Really enjoyed your class ... I appreciate the effort you put in and how you link the subject to real world issues and what is going on in the local community.
- Enjoyed the subject and got me thinking and looking at business in a different way. Communication of expectations and lecture structure well organized.

As a reflective practitioner and in my continued efforts to promote authentic and transformative learning which provokes and evokes students, I have tried repeatedly to bring the classroom into the real world. This is highlighted in the following example, which was an extraordinary and most rewarding experience, illustrating how significantly one can influence, motivate and inspire students. After a week of theory and visits from industry personnel, students spent seven weeks planning and organizing a real-life event. In response to class dynamics and students' imperatives, students opted to pursue two events. In one group, students worked in pairs/teams with each team representing a department in an organization (e.g. sales & marketing and finance) to prepare for a fund-raising event. The structured approach laid a strong foundation which empowered students. Within the first week it was evident that students had taken on the challenge with enthusiasm and diligence. They worked tirelessly to gain sponsorship and market the event. Various learning strategies employed included: emphasis on communication (e.g. meetings held twice a week); professionalism (e.g. by having more experienced students mentoring those not as understanding of business protocols; development of code of conduct; and cooperation (e.g. teams assisted each other as required). The culmination was a gala event with a guest list that included some noteworthy people from the community and extensive media coverage (the local paper featured a double page spread). Notably, student feedback indicated that the journey was immensely rewarding and enriching, stimulating a sense of altruism that was inspired by the generosity of the Cairns community - the function raised \$22,000 for Angel Flight (in itself a fabulous achievement). In addition, students commented that lessons learnt included importance of teamwork, dependability, communication, task orientation, respect, cooperation, and creativity. Also, the words of a colleague on that night remain etched in my mind and stand out as testimony to the value of such an experience for students: "Jo, you have made professionals out of these students".

In the other group, students pursued the gem of an idea to create a local Young Chamber of Commerce and the success of which can now be read on the website: "Since its inception, the group has developed a strong identity of its own and with an energetic team of six young business people driving it, has grown from strength to strength over the last two years". As a reflective teacher, by observing, assessing and responding to students' needs and potential, I was able to facilitate this significant opportunity for those students.

Sustained impact on student learning

Consistently high results in student responses to JCU's Student Feedback on Teaching (SFT) (Table 1) surveys, present a strong case for the continued success of my teaching practices and its positive impact on student learning. These scores across various subjects and throughout the years show a sustained ability to engage students and provide high quality learning experiences.

Table 1: SFT RESULTS	Subjects→	Cultures & People	Hospitality Marketing		Business & Society		Employee Relations
Question/Year		2005	2005	2006	2006	2007	2009
1. The quality of this teacher's explanations was		4.7	4.0	4.1	3.9	4.2	4.0
2. This teacher's interest in assisting students to learn		4.8	4.5	4.2	4.4	4.5	4.2
3. The structure of this teacher's presentations was		4.7	3.9	3.9	3.8	3.8	3.8
7. The level of feedback provided by this teacher was		4.7	4.2	4.0	4.1	4.0	4.1
8. This teacher's effort to motivate students was		4.8	4.0	4.3	4.1	4.2	4.3
9. The level of interest generated by this teacher was		4.7	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.2
14. The teacher's availability to students was		4.8	4.5	4.4	4.2	4.4	4.0
16. Overall, the quality of this staff member's teaching		4.7	4.2	4.4	4.1	4.2	4.3
AVERAGE		4.7	4.2	4.2	4.1	4.1	4.1

Scale: 1=completely unacceptable; 2=not really acceptable; 3= acceptable; 4=more than acceptable; 5=outstanding.

Table 1 shows that the most striking results were obtained for 'Cultures and People' (2005) with all items recorded responses in the 'Outstanding' range, exceptionally higher than the SFT mean for 2001. A noteworthy point for this result is that for this cohort of multicultural students, I was able to effectively draw on the diversity of backgrounds to enhance a participatory, learner-oriented approach and add richness, relevance and vibrancy to the learning experience. The following comments further support my sustained contribution to teaching and learning:

- *Jo is an excellent lecturer and creates a good environment to learn in. (Culture and People, 2005)*
- *Josephine takes a high level of interest to help motivate and give instructions to students. (Business and Society, 2006)*
- *I really enjoyed her lectures as she always motivated us to be part of the class and discussion. Her explanation including her experiences were interesting and helped me understand the subject better. (Business and Society, 2006)*

- *Dr Jo Pryce is a dedicated, well informed and caring lecturer. I particularly enjoy how she brings the real world into business studies and can approach subjects from a practical point of view as well as theoretical point of view. (Business and Society, 2007)*
- *Jo is warm and friendly and passionate about HR. IR is a very boring topic but she managed to make it interesting.*
- *Excellent subject; excellent and motivational lecturer! (Employee Relations, 2009)*

Equally, consistently high scores in student feedback surveys from my MBA classes for the subject 'Human Relations in the Workplace' reflect the sustained effectiveness of my approach to teaching. From 2005-2008, my results for 'Subject as a learning experience' were between 4.3-4.7 (out of 5) and for 'Overall the instructor was' results were between 4.5-4.8 with comments which supported an approach to teaching which provokes and evokes thinking and learning.

Ways in which the contribution has impacted student learning is evidenced by:

In addition to the student feedback responses noted above, acknowledgement of my sustained efforts in teaching has been recognized in the university community through various channels:

- I was invited in 2006 to join the Faculty Teaching and Learning (T&L) Committee and as part of this represented to represent the school at the Australian Business Deans Council (ABDC) meetings on several occasions.
- Recipient of a Dean's Teaching Excellence Award in 2006.
- Regular invitations to make presentations within JCU to share with academic staff my approaches to teaching and learning. For example, in 2004 and 2006, was a guest lecturer for the Graduate Certificate in Education (Tertiary Teaching) for my teaching approach to facilitating student group work and authentic learning. Similarly, in 2006, shared my teaching practices on flexibility in a JCU T&L workshop and in 2009, on teaching large groups for a Continuing Professional Development Workshop in Cairns.
- Each year since 2007, I have been invited by the JCU Graduate School to present two one-day 'Negotiation' workshops to post-graduate students in Townsville and Cairns, respectively
- Peer reviewed publication: Pryce, J. (2007). Putting on a grand event: Bringing the classroom into the real world as students produce a real life event. Paper presented at 2nd Event Education and Research Network Australasia Symposium in Melbourne.

As my teaching responsibilities have grown over the years and I have assumed coordination of subjects and developed teaching packages, I have shared with colleagues my enthusiasm for teaching and insights into motivating students to learn so as to facilitate their teaching practices and enrich the learning experiences for them and students. At other times, dissemination has been through formal invitations to the broader university community, as noted above. In addition, in 2006 I was asked to present at the regional Australian Human Resource Institute (AHRI) conference. I consistently utilise such links created with local businesses and through being a member of AHRI and working with the regional AHRI chapter and the university's Student Careers and Employment Centre (SCEC) to engage students in becoming professionals. One of the strategies employed is to encourage students to attend the annual regional AHRI conference so as to build their networks and prospects for future employment. Further to this, I worked with the SCEC in organizing a Speed Dating Night in 2008 where students had five minutes to meet and introduce themselves to prospective employers. The event boosted students' confidence in seeking employment and motivated them to pursue promising leads. The evening was so successful that we are organising another one for business students this year.

Conclusion

This application demonstrates my commitment to creating a positive learning environment which involves, empowers and transforms students through their learning of management theories and practice. It shows that through such sustained effort and enthusiasm and a teaching approach which revolves around provocation and evocation of different styles of thinking and learning, students can be encouraged to acquire the knowledge and skills to equip them to become management professionals and lifelong learners. I constantly seek ways of making teaching and learning a worthwhile, rewarding and enjoyable experience for students. On a final note in summing up my teaching and learning philosophy, I am inspired by the words of Martin Heidegger (1968, p. 15): "...if by 'learning' we now suddenly understand merely the procurement of useful information. The teacher is ahead of his apprentices in this alone, that he has still far more to learn than they - he has to learn to let them learn." I am a reflective practitioner and strive to constantly improve my teaching so as to influence, motivate and inspire students.