Reimagining Classroom Practices:
How Can We Create Better Learning Environments for Our Students?

Are all teaching practices equal? How can we enhance student learning? What classroom practices lead to student learning and what practices create barriers for student learning? These are some of the questions that will be raised during this workshop. Participants will be encouraged to review and critically engage with their own teaching/learning contexts and imagine alternative approaches to teaching/learning that can be implemented in their context. Participants will leave the workshop with a deeper understanding of the relationship between teaching and learning and how they can use this understanding in their own contexts.

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Outline for the day

• Role-play

• Critiquing current educational practices in higher education

• Introducing the Sydney School Teaching & Learning Cycle

• Thinking beyond the workshop

Theorizing approaches to pedagogy and instruction

Sydney School pedagogy:
The teaching learning cycle

Based on Bernstein 1990
Hammond & Gibbons ‘What is Scaffolding?’
Adapted from Mariani, 1997

Challenge

- Demands too high; failure likely
- Low motivation; boredom and behaviour problems likely

Extension of learning and capability

Support

Value of joint construction

- Process of crafting a text
- Extending semiotic choices
- Making resources visible
- Building and maintaining students’ trust and confidence

Teacher guided learning

SCAFFOLDING Bruns 1986
Independent learner performance with no contribution from teacher

LEARNER PROGRESS Vygotsky (1934-1978)
Potential performance

- Diminishing contribution from teacher as learner’s independent contribution increases
- Significant contribution from teacher to support dependent contribution from learner

- Learner’s entry level assessed by teacher
- Existing independent function

Zone of Proximal Development

Sydney School approach to learning

‘guidance through interaction in the context of shared experience’
(Halliday & Painter)

Pedagogy (how to teach)

- introduce students to target texts before asking them to write on their own
- always in the context of shared understandings of what would be written about (embedded literacy)

Curriculum (what to teach)

- embedded (vs generic) literacy program
- genre-based approach
- nature of discipline considered (horizontal or vertical)

Feez, 1994
The SLATE approach to embedded literacy