



TQF Domain 1

Prepare yourself and team for teaching and student learning

Preparing yourself for teaching (Foundation)

Felix's Challenge

Felix learned from his School mentor that he should aim to start documenting his professional learning as a teacher. While he is a willing and eager participant in learning and teaching events and training, Felix wants to know how to evidence his professional learning beyond attendance and participation, particularly all his efforts to prepare well for student engagement.

1. The Context

Felix has been a sessional teacher in the humanities at the university for just on 4 years and recently secured his first full-time academic job post-PhD as a Level A. He is a passionate and skilled teacher - likely, a teacher at heart - and he cares deeply about his students, their learning, and success. As a sessional teacher, Felix was always enthusiastic and grateful for any opportunity to learn about teaching and looked for occasions to engage with the best teachers around him. He completed the sessional staff mandatory university training each year he was funded to participate. He remains good friends with a number of sessional tutors in the discipline, and because of their support, Felix now has a suite of peer developed teaching resources and materials in his toolkit, which they all use and update in their subjects.

Now 18 months into his new position, Felix is just about to complete all the requirements for the Foundations of University Learning and Teaching (FUL) program, including a scholarly project on supporting students to better engage with reading texts. As a sessional, he noticed students were attending class without having read the key texts, and while he is skilled enough to devote class time to it, for his project, Felix ran a series of student focus groups to try and understand this situation a little better, including reading a lot of key studies and talking to colleagues. He is aware that this is a live issue for many teachers in the humanities, and because of that, has just agreed to present his FUL project to teachers in the School where there may be a chance to expand the collaboration into other subjects and contexts. Felix is particularly keen to highlight the data from the student focus groups and to show how it is informing his judgements about classroom activities. He is looking forward to the feedback and the chance to improve his practice.

2. The Evidence

Felix has made a list of the evidence he has been collecting since he was a sessional teacher, and uses Brookfield's (1995) four lenses to organise it clearly and concisely.

Evidence Lens	1. Educator/Self (intention, strategy and materials)	2. Students (co-inquiry, engagement, feedback, outcomes, artefacts, improvement)	3. Peers (co-design, feedback, observation, review, recognition, adoption)	4. Scholarship (research-informed, engage in research, outputs, practice sharing)
What Felix already has	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of professional learning (sessional and FULT programs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Focus Group data re: FULT project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration on teaching materials with sessional colleagues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scholarly FULT project (reading texts) • Presentation on FULT project to School colleagues
What Felix may need to consider		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement - LMS analytics, attendance, feedback • Experience - SFS, SFT focused on teaching quality • Outcomes - grade data / patterns across years 		

3. Integrating Evidence into a Claim: an example

After 4 years of sessional teaching across 3 universities, I am now 18 months into my first ongoing academic appointment as a Level A with a 60% teaching allocation. I consider myself a (com)passionate teacher - the result of wonderful transformative learning experiences that I encountered as an undergraduate myself who struggled with first year of university. I know how important it is to have teachers who are prepared, who care about student success, and who challenge and push students out of their comfort zones. Those 4 years of sessional teaching taught me that basic teaching skills go a long way in meeting students where they are at, but also, that basic teaching skills are not enough. I needed (and wanted) formal knowledge about university teaching as part of my preparation, accompanied by a desire to better engage my students.

I endeavour to prepare thoroughly and thoughtfully for my teaching - currently, a second year core subject, and a third year elective. I aim to find opportunities that make me a better teacher, and one who is aware of School and University's education priorities so I can connect my development goals to them. I have completed two iterations of sessional teacher training, and will complete the year-long FULT program shortly.

During FULT, I was fortunate to develop a scholarly project that picks up on my own observations that my students are not reading the set texts and as a result, arrive in class unprepared to engage with the goals for the class. For that project, I read widely and carried out 6 student focus groups (n=42 students) where students were frank about their reading and preparation habits. I have used that data to: reduce the amount of reading; better explain the purpose of readings and to connect them together; design pre-class activities that link the reading to assessment; and I provide a space to address collective confusion in tutorials. There is still more to do. I hope to expand this project as I discuss the findings across my School, and I plan to actively track students' ideas and experiences of reading in my second year subject, especially, so that I can better engage them as learners.

I value my colleagues' expertise as I develop preparation practices each semester. I continue to draw on the resources and materials co-developed with my sessional teaching colleagues who continue to be a source of inspiration.