



TQF Domain 3

Engage students to achieve learning outcomes and support their success

Improve engagement in the classroom (Entry)

Maya's Challenge

Maya is unsure how to evidence the strategies she is using in classes to show that they have improved engagement in her classroom.

1. The Context

In the School of Social Sciences, Maya has recently commenced tutoring as a sessional in a first-year undergraduate subject. Maya is a practitioner in the field and comes with 10 years of practice experience working with young people and limited experience teaching at university.

Early in the semester, Maya notices variation in how students participate in tutorials. Some students readily engage with key concepts and discussion questions, while others are hesitant to speak or seek clarification about expectations. Some classes seem to be more engaged than others. Through listening to student questions and informal conversations before and after class, Maya becomes aware that students arrive with different levels of familiarity with academic discussion, confidence in using disciplinary language, and understanding of what is expected in tutorials.

Maya is keen to learn how experienced tutors create inclusive and supportive tutorial environments and to begin developing her own teaching practice that she can evidence through careful observation, reflection, and feedback. At this stage, Maya's focus is on observing how students engage, learning from the Subject Coordinator and experienced tutors working on the subject, and developing an understanding of how to create a supportive learning environment.

She begins to make small, supported adjustments to how she frames questions and clarifies tasks during tutorials. This approach includes explicitly outlining the purpose of discussion activities and modelling how to engage with key concepts from the readings. Students appear to respond positively to the changes, and the more willing they are to engage, the more Maya feels confident in providing context for the task they are working on together.

2. The Evidence

Using Brookfield's (1995) four lenses as a reflective guide, Maya begins to identify early sources of evidence.

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 Maya already has	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflective notes on student engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal feedback from students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from subject coordinator and teaching team 	
What Maya may need to consider				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readings from the Sessional Introductory program on student engagement

3. Integrating Evidence into a Claim: an example

As a newly appointed tutor in a second-year social sciences subject, I am at an early stage of developing my teaching practice. While my experience facilitating student learning in this context is limited, I have experience working with young people as a practitioner in the field for the last 10 years. As a part of my transition to teaching in the Social Sciences, I have focused on observing how students engage in tutorials, listening carefully to their questions and feedback, and learning from experienced colleagues.

In my first weeks of teaching, I noticed that students responded differently to in-class activities, with some appearing unsure about expectations or hesitant to contribute. With guidance from the Subject Coordinator, I began to make small, supported adjustments to how I framed questions and clarified tasks during tutorials. These included explicitly outlining the purpose of discussion activities and modelling how to engage with key concepts from the readings.

Informal feedback from students suggested that clearer explanations helped them feel more comfortable participating. Feedback from experienced tutors also helped me reflect on how pacing and structure influence student engagement and I am making adjustments each week as I learn more about my teaching practice. Through keeping brief reflective notes after tutorials, I have started to identify patterns in how students engage and areas where I need to continue developing my facilitation skills.

Although my evidence is still emerging, this process has helped me build awareness of how students experience learning activities and how my role as a tutor can contribute to creating a supportive learning environment. By observing, listening, and learning from students and colleagues, I am beginning to understand how to support student learning and success as I continue to develop as an educator.