

EPR782: Building Capacity In Professional Experience

***Assignment 1:
Concept Mapping & Reflections***

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Tutorial Group

Jack Bennett, Monday 2pm seminar, Burwood

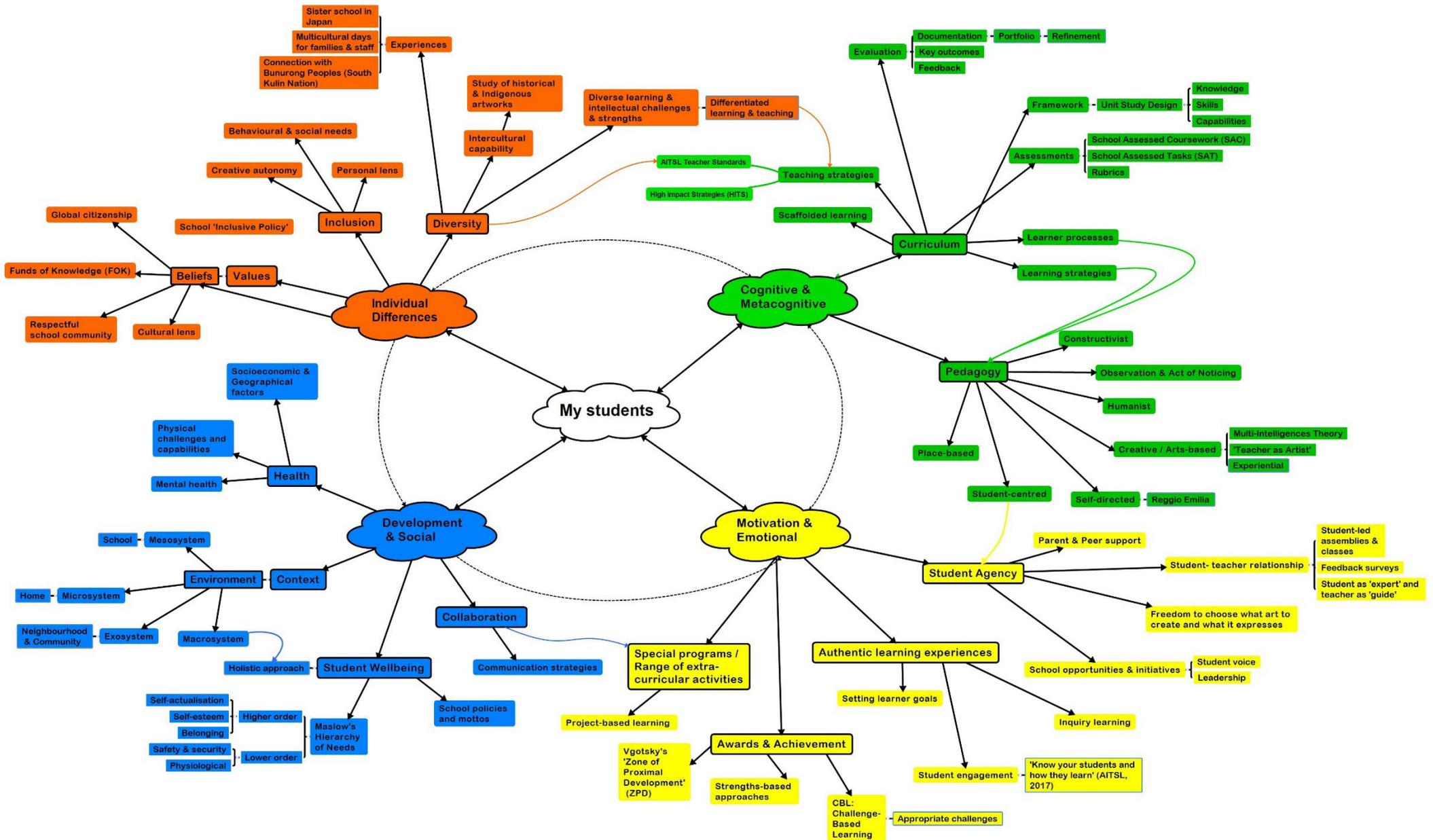
Word Count

Expected: 2000 or equivalent Actual word count: ~2200

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Concept Map



Key Concept 1: Pedagogy

Churchill et.al (2022) defines quality of teaching by a teacher's competency to develop strong pedagogical content, theory skills and knowledge to influence their practice within the context of the Australian curriculum.

Drawing from the Constructivist pedagogies of Montessori, Piaget, Vygotsky, and Bruner, we can scaffold student learning and the collaborative knowledge by considering multiple roles and perspectives through real-life application (Baird & Love, 2003). Self-directed and student-centered learning are two key pedagogical constructs that aim to develop student capacity for proactivity and adaptivity which are fundamental for living and working in our rapidly changing world (Morris & Rohs, 2021). As part of self-directed learning, the teacher encouraged students to interpret their own learning objectives from VCAA's study design; giving them the autonomy to focus on subject matter they felt passionate about whilst tailoring goals to their learning needs. Consequently, students are motivated in taking responsibility for directing and evaluating their own learning process (Garrison, 1997). The synergy between observation and practice was observed in the classroom through peer-peer feedback, individual meetings with the teacher to articulate their ideas, and annotated self-reflection in their portfolios.

Arts-based learning, with its inherent visual and kinaesthetic qualities, naturally complements Humanist and Experiential Learning pedagogies. (Kong, 2012). These approaches emphasize students learning through 'doing,' processing their experiences, and connecting activities to relevant contexts and knowledge through focused reflection (Darling-Hammond et al., 2001).

Visual Arts is perceived as a personal extension of an individual's identity. Therefore, the teacher engaged students by drawing on personal experiences, inspired by the philosophy that 'teachers teach who they are' (Palmer, 2017). By illustrating concepts as part of their practice, the teacher aimed to create an authentic learning experience (Brookfield, 2017).

These pedagogical approaches align with Rousseau's progressive belief that adolescents can draw their own conclusions from experiences and that education should adapt to the learner's needs rather than the learner adapting to the school (Darling, 1994). Cultivating the connection between school and society can lead students to become democratic citizens (Dewey, 1963) by giving them agency to advocate civic skills and responsibility (Smith & Knapp, 2010).

Question for mentor:

“What role does constructive interventionist teaching play in developing critical thinking and communication skills through an arts observation curriculum?”

Key Concept 2: Student Agency

The school is a member of The Alliance of Girls' Schools Australasia, who's aim is to be the leading voice for the education and empowerment of girls and young women (Gender Equality Council, n.d.). This cultivates a learning approach underpinned by

valuing each student's academic success, tacit knowledge, and voice to achieve self-confidence, self-discipline and self-respect.

Holistic pedagogies such as Reggio Emilia that can be applied in classrooms to promote a student's sense of sovereignty, choice, and citizenship within their world (Foucault, 2010). Student-agency cannot exist without teacher agency, therefore by dismantling the traditional power dynamic between student and teacher, teachers can be mediators in guiding the students to explore ideas meaningful to them within a communal framework. (Foucault, 2010). Developing a thorough understanding of a student's strengths and weaknesses beyond their academic performance in the classroom lays the foundation for mutual trust and fosters greater learner autonomy.

Teachers can uncover a student's knowledge and skills by providing opportunities for them to be the 'expert' (Esteban-Guitart, 2014), thus handing them the responsibility to examine their own art, clarifying their intentions towards the central themes in their work and developing higher-order thinking skills (Khattak et.al, 2012). Barton et. al (2015) affirm that students can become empowered tellers of their own stories by engaging with documentation processes that encompass the tactile, visual, oral and spiritual facets that are enabled by creative practice. The very act of creating enables learners to hold ideas in their minds as they visually voice their own unique experiences as young adults (Clay, 2001).

Question for mentor:

“What pedagogical and teaching strategies do you utilise in your classroom to foster learning autonomy, mutual trust and student voice?”

Key Concept 3: Learning Environment

The school advocates for an environment which aims to push students' boundaries and build higher order thinking of creative skills and problem-solving abilities. This is reflected in its smaller class sizes and multidisciplinary classrooms that cater to student individual needs and capabilities. Churchill et.al. (2022) emphasises the education systems' move towards more integrated learning spaces given that learning is a social process. Learning spaces integrate social, theoretical, and emotional elements to encourage and sustain students' motivation to achieve their goals. (Ambrose, 2010). The unique environment of an open space art room has potential to cultivate a classroom culture of inquiry based on the idea that learning is a social praxis where students can learn from each other as part of a 'Community of Practice Model' (Mattsson, 2011).

AITSL's Graduate standards for teachers is to 'create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments' (AITSL, 2017). A teacher's beliefs about how their students best learn are reflected in the classroom culture they have co-constructed together, which Rorrison (2008) asserts is the intersection of content, process and theory within a learning environment. Integrating Place-Based pedagogies can allow teachers to bring awareness to how an environment can shape a student's identity, thus being significantly influential to their own teacher identity and practice (Winch et.al, 2020).

Gibson's learning theory emphasises that the individual and the environment are intimately related, thus the environment can guide movement and behaviour (Barrable & Barrable, 2024); therefore, it is pivotal teachers develop a democratic classroom

context that actively engages students regardless of their abilities or interests. Positive, ethical learning environments promote inclusion through respect of rights, social justice, agency, and participation (Howell, 2014) to shape well-rounded adults in the future.

Question for mentor:

“How can integrating Place-Based pedagogies influence both student and teacher identities within a learning environment to create a democratic classroom for authentic learning experiences?”

Key Concept 4: Inclusion & Diversity

The Australian curriculum highlights that classroom practices need to be responsive to student diversity (ACARA, 2014). Understanding how relevant cultural and social factors relate to a student's identity can help them overcome prejudices (Oakes, 2018). With Australia's multicultural society becoming more diverse, it is pivotal we work towards creating a safe, inclusive learning environment that promotes equity through students' learning opportunities and shared ethnographic experiences.

Sen's (2009) capability approach contends that inclusive education should focus on equality and quality, valuing framework and a just society, and placing the wellbeing and agency of students at the core of the educational process.

Through engaging with phenomenological inquiry, teachers can use methods to understand the “perspective of the participants who have experienced it” (Bonyadi, 2023, p.1) and build the students’ intercultural capacity. The school’s ‘Inclusion and Diversity Policy’ and ‘Bullying Prevention Policy’ support the national framework on Educational Goals for Young Australians (MCEETYA, 2008) that explicitly positions the role of education as building socially cohesive societies through the teaching of democracy, equity and justice (Churchill et.al, 2022). Maslow emphasized that our sense of self-worth as individuals only emerges when we are firmly connected to a community (Kunc, 1992). Guided by the United Nations’ nine features for inclusive education, this policy commits to students learning in a safe, tolerant, supportive environment which is free from discrimination.

The school’s array of co-curricular activities exposes its students to a spectrum of contexts to foster appreciation and respect for diversity as a sense of global citizenship (MCEETYA, 2008). Examples of these are student-led cultural celebrations, the creation of a Multicultural Support Hub, and affiliation with Koorie Engagement Support Officers and links to the local Aboriginal community. These are initiatives that promote the socially inclusive belief that all students bring value to the learning space as active and informed individuals regardless of their backgrounds and encourages bonds through collaborative activities (Auld et. al, 2020).

Question for mentor:

“How would you design school-assessed coursework and lesson plans to achieve equitable student outcomes through an intercultural lens?”

Key Concept 5: Student Wellbeing

Adolescence is a critical period for developing health and wellbeing behaviours, particularly when students experience differences in structural systems, lifestyle, and emotional responses based on beliefs and values (Viner et.al, 2012). Caring for student wellbeing is an important source for professional commitment (Shavard, 2023) that involves knowledge of sociological theories, curriculum and policy frameworks, and local and global contextual factors. The school's teachers are encouraged to evaluate how well they are meeting their student's needs through professional development workshops, conducting initial enrolment meetings, facilitating Student Support Groups, and developing tailored Individual Education Plans.

Teaching a visual arts class provides the opportunity to nurture creative thinkers who have agency to be independent problem solvers when facing obstacles in life, through student-centered learning rooted in wellbeing as a multifaceted construct that encompasses mental, physical and spiritual dimensions (Amerijckx & Humblet, 2014). The school's mottos emphasise the concepts of "her wellbeing" – promoting positive body image and self-love, and "her safety" - promoting respect and that the school is no place for inequality and bullying. These pivotal values are evident in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Kunc, 1992) which teachers can integrate into their teaching practice by considering the influence that lower-level needs (physiological, safety and security) and higher-level needs (sense of belonging, self-esteem and self-actualisation) have on their students' wellbeing and development (Kunc, 1992).

The health and wellbeing benefits of arts engagement has been widely established through studies showing how it contributes to alleviating stress, depression, anxiety whilst informing self-regulation and self-esteem strategies (Fancourt & Finn, 2019).

Furthermore, Morris et.al (2023) asserts that teachers embrace individual and developmental differences when assessing students' work as they are crucial towards a student's cognitive, metacognitive, emotional and social learning experiences.

Question for mentor:

“Which learning theories and curriculum frameworks do you refer to that promotes your student's wellbeing, development and individual needs?”

Appendix A: Context Table 1

School Context – diversity, values and learning support of the school and community

School name/pseudonym	Bayside Secondary College
School motto	<i>"Courage and Work"</i>
Location	Major city geolocation: South-Eastern bayside suburb of Melbourne
School Type	Government Secondary Yr.7-12
Enrolment	963 students
Socio economic factors	School ICSEA value: 1091 School ICSEA percentile: 82 7% Bottom Quarter 58% Middle Quarters 34% Top Quarter
% Born in other countries (ABS data)	70.4% Australian 6.4 % European countries 4.6 % Asian countries
Special programs <i>"Our co-curricular programs put a focus on preparing students for a changing and globalized world; encouraging creative thinking; and nurturing mind, body and spirit"</i>	STEAM Instrumental Music and Band Programs Performing Arts Outdoor education Intensive English Language classes Homestay program International cultural programs Enhancement program (higher-order thinking: English, Mathematics, Humanities and Science) VET studies (Vocational Education & Training) Aerobics Program Interschool Sports The Alliance of Girls' Schools Australasia
Language(s) taught	French Japanese Victorian School of Language Chinese
Diversity <i>"Our school promotes respect, understanding, independence and celebrates our student's cultural diversity"</i>	0% Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander 97.3% non-indigenous 5% international students
The traditional owners of the land	Bunurong people of the South-Eastern Kulin Nation
Community Aboriginal sites	Derrimut Weelam Gathering Place Kingston Koorie Mob Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Cooperation (BLCAC)
Local Aboriginal community relationships	Council initiatives include: Voice and Truth Telling Forum events Community Reconciliation Action plan 2022-2024 Cultural Heritage Management Plan Registered member of Aboriginal Party (RAP)
Other features as important to context	91 teaching staff, Average class size of 21 students

Appendix B: Context Table 2

Classroom Context – diversity and strengths of the learners in my classroom

Grade/Year Level	Year 12
Learning Area/ Subject/ Topic	Visual Arts Creative Practice (VCE Unit 3)
Number of students	12
Ratio of boys/girls	100% girls
Cultural diversity	2 international students 7 European backgrounds 3 Asian backgrounds
Languages spoken	25% languages other than English 74% English-speaking
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	0%
% Languages other than English	25% languages other than English
Diverse learning/intellectual challenges and strengths	1 student with dyslexia Anxiety
Diverse behavioral/social challenges and strengths	Few students with neurodiversity – Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) , Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
Diverse physical challenges & capabilities	Low motor skills and neurocognitive abilities for one student (due to a stroke)
Diverse socioeconomic/geographical factors	Urban metropolitan area with good infrastructure Good access to health and community services 35.8% of locality achieved Bachelor degree and above f educational attainment 66.6% of locality in labour force 61% work full-time (29.6% professionals) Median weekly family income is \$2604 42 year is the median age of locality

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