

WHAT WORKED FOR ME

EXPERIENCES FROM A SECOND YEAR TEACHER

By: Noah Kim

Noah Kim is beginning the 2nd year of teaching after graduating from RMIT Brunswick in 2017

Congratulations on finishing the first semester of the year! Hopefully you feel settled in by now and have established some great routines for yourself and your students. With a semester completed, this also means that students have progressed with their learning and requires you to make **consistent** and **informed judgements** about their achievements against the Victorian Curriculum F-10 Standards. Whilst reading the Department's resources on [Teacher Judgements](#), the specific key words 'On-balance, evidence-based and defensible judgement' accurately portray our responsibility when reporting student achievement. We need to be certain that we are accurately portraying students' learning progress relevant to their specific level.

Being 'data literate' is a key skill needed to give you the most accurate and true information about your students learning. This means regularly collecting data, analysing/questioning the data, and making adjustments to your teaching and learning program accordingly to achieve the relevant standards.

An area that I have continued to practise and hone is anecdotal notes and how to accurately track my observations and conferences with students. Here are some tips I recommend doing when taking your anecdotal notes:

Create a conferencing timetable:

This is something that can be applied across all curriculum areas and ensures that you are maintaining regular interactions and checking a student's progress. Make these evident in your planners, so you are prepared for the conference and know exactly what notes you will be taking.

Establish anecdotal note-taking routines:

When will you take them? How will you take them? Where will you store your data to promote regular analysis and reviewing? At Featherbrook College, we have a school-wide anecdotal notes and goals

template that we utilise to write our anecdotal notes. This is extremely useful as it allows me to monitor and make adjustments to the learning program where needed.

Give specific student examples and dates of achievement:

I find it helpful to record what the students have said, as this further supports whether or not a student has achieved a standard or is not quite there yet. A key aspect of anecdotal notes is to continue to build as much evidence of achievement as you see necessary. For example, a student would need to be able to show me success more than once and on different occasions.

Does this student require further teaching with X concept?

Asking myself this question has significantly helped me to confidently make decisions when analysing anecdotal notes and other data I have collected.

It is important to note however, that the anecdotal notes are one form of data, and in order to make comparable and consistent judgments, it is crucial that we have a triangulation of data.

Something that we do throughout the year is moderation of assessment tasks and work samples to maintain consistency with our teacher judgements and reporting. For example, I assessed my students' writing against the standards and then collaborated with my Professional Learning Team (PLT) to challenge, discuss and review the judgements we had made. A protocol you might want to try is:

Working in pairs or triads

- Choose 2-3 pieces you are unsure of.
- 3-4 mins - Everyone in the pair/triad makes notes on the work and names what they notice using post it notes (What does the student do? What stands out?)
- 3-4 mins – Each person elaborates on what they noticed within the work.
- 3-4 mins – This is time to now challenge and probe each other. (Can you tell me more about this? How did you make this judgement? Have you considered...?)

This process of moderation allowed the team to clarify any misconceptions and understandings, as well as strengthened our ability to make consistent and comparable judgements for reports. [Teacher Tip: Use moderation to make consistent decisions about student learning and assessment contains a step-by-step guide to moderating. There is also a link on the same page that will take you to the Department's Professional Practice Note on Assessment Moderation and a second case study, Hume Central Secondary College.](#)

Now that reports and interviews are finished, sit down and reflect about your assessment practices. Think about what went well, what difficulties you had and what you could improve on. Have a discussion with your mentor about your reflections and create some goals for your assessment practices in term 3 and 4. Ensure you have some time to get these ready beginning of term 3.