

Thank you for the privilege of being able to take a close look at the term 2 unit plan and assessment tasks. Thank you also for taking the time to try the validity checklist and give us the additional information about how you are planning for critical and creative agency. It was very helpful.

The QUT team members each reviewed the unit plan and assessment tasks separately and then we were able to meet together and share ideas. We each come from different areas of research expertise - English curriculum, Inclusive education and Assessment - and so there were ideas we all agreed on and others where we had different ideas from one another. I have synthesised the main ideas onto this page, and will send you through copies of your documents with our various annotations. We hope that they are useful to you in your own discussions. We certainly learned a lot from you. At some stage early next term we would like to come up for another interview and hear your feedback on the feedback.

### **Overall thoughts:**

The assessment task sheets were clear in their layout. We could see how you had adapted the layout from your validity checklist, and the assessment task sheets seem less cluttered and easy to access. The syllabus concepts and 21st century skills were clearly identified. It was terrific to see the opportunities for peer review embedded into the unit plan, along with options to connect regularly with the themes.

### **Content validity:**

Learning experiences weeks 1 - 3.

We had some good debate here. You may agree with either of us or neither of us...

Jill's thoughts - In order to link to the students' worlds, I wondered if you could highlight the core themes (integrity, community, the author positioning the audience) by beginning with analysis of some representations of community that would be immediately recognisable to students: Eg: Lamb Australia commercial, Shaun Tan's picture books, some front pages re immigration from various view points. How is the audience positioned in each?

Linda disagreed - She thinks that this can be confusing for some students who may have difficulties with recognising what is the main point for the unit, and that beginning with The Crucible is a better way to begin for these students.

From this discussion, even though we did not reach agreement over the best way to introduce a unit, we did agree that it would be helpful to narrate the architecture of the learning to the students. How do they know what the big ideas are that you are following through the unit?

Making the development of the big ideas clearer:

From the unit plan, there seemed to be a lot of good ideas, but it was not as easy to see how each idea built on the next one, and which concepts were the first order priorities. This becomes important when looking for the construct validity with assessment, but also for equity purposes to enable students to know what is important.

When we went looking for the big priorities we found a few -

The unit intent mentioned exploring the world and human experience and building a shared understanding of human experience.

Focus of unit as identified in first dot point in learning experiences was "representations of personal integrity; representations of community".

Task 2 emphasised the skills of analysis and evaluation of character and theme.

Task 3 emphasised themes of personal integrity, mass hysteria, witch hunts, revenge and discrimination and the excellent prompt question about "How does the transformation position the audience in a new way?".

To cross check the content validity, I asked Kylie to colour code the unit plan to check where students would have the opportunity to learn these main skills and ideas.

The themes and characters seemed to be identified throughout the unit.

There did not seem to be any opportunities where students were going to learn how to evaluate (needed for task 2) and only one place where they were learning about how authors position an audience (needed for task 3). These would seem to be two important concepts that would enable a student to achieve a quality result, and so would need to have greater emphasis during the teaching.

We had a few suggestions to help strengthen the content validity:

You helpfully list the subject matter descriptors from the syllabus that relate to each task in the front part of the unit plan. Instead of dot points, we suggest you number these. You can then directly relate the subject matter descriptors to each unit activity task using the number. You can then do a cross check of which numbers are taught frequently or which may have been missed. It might also help a teacher who is new to the unit work out the important intent of the activity. This way the depth of subject matter is not overlooked in favour of getting a task completed.

Consider elevating the prompt question that you include in task 3 to be the overall unit inquiry question: "How does the author position the audience?". This is a challenging question to answer well, and so it would need to be modelled many times by the teacher. At the moment it did not seem to be modelled more than once. It enables the analysis and evaluative skills to be modelled each time as well.

Give some subheadings to the learning sequence to group the learning activities. This would help teachers who haven't been involved in developing the unit recognise the logic behind the development of activities and ideas, and share this logic or architecture with the students.

#### **Construct validity:** Assessment task 3:

It was helpful to see in your validity checklist that the story seeds are often chosen by students who struggle, and they may not demonstrate the link to the main text. We also wondered about this, and to strengthen the construct validity, we would suggest that:

Both options need to build on a key theme from the play.

Students should include one character from *The Crucible* in their short story.

This would help keep the alignment strong for both options particularly with such a short time limit for the task.

We wondered why it had to be completed in a 90 minute exam block when the idea for the new syllabus was to enable it to be completed over several lessons. We realise it may be a condition of the current work program, but we thought we would raise it as a possibility to consider if it was not. The longer time frame enables students who need additional processing time to have more success.

#### **Consequential validity/Differentiation/Opportunities for critical and creative agency:**

Consequential validity is a challenging aspect to consider. It is hard to predict which students may not experience success as we don't know your students like you do. One suggestion we have for helping you to self-evaluate consequential validity is to pre-empt the question students love to ask: 'Why do we have to do this?'. Aside from needing a good mark in senior assessment, what will the consequence of this learning be in their lives?

We suggested above that the inquiry question "How does the author position the audience?" may be a logical inquiry question for this unit, based on current assessment tasks. You may see a more relevant question to organise the unit around, or ways to make this question more exciting and student friendly, but we do suggest using a 'big question' to frame units of work as being an excellent way to articulate a learning objective that has consequence for students' current or future lives.

It was great to see the point about pre-warning students that there would be an interrogation of others' beliefs.

The general differentiation strategies that are written into the unit plan are good reminders for general approaches. We wondered whether there were more specific strategies that come to mind with this cohort of students - what would be the greatest barriers to success? Can some of the learning be designed to remove those barriers for everyone? Eg: All students given access to the play and video ahead of time to enable those students who need more time to pre-read play.

It was helpful for us to read your identification of the opportunities for critical and creative agency. These seem logical and link to the task and learning activities. To help lift the learning beyond the limits of the unit and assessment task, we wondered what strengths do the students already have that they bring to this work? Do they contribute as role models for integrity and help create community in other ways? Are they terrific at FTV? Social media mavens? Footballers or netballers? What could they do with their learning beyond the assessment tasks? Could they share some of their insights about the ways authors position their audience with junior grades? We assume at some point this unit will condense to have just one summative assessment task (under the likely new syllabus requirement to have only four assessment tasks across the year). If that is the case, then maintaining creative agency in a unit that may in future culminate in an analytic essay written by hand under exam conditions is something we wish to flag as a future priority. Just a few thoughts to leave you with.

We hope these ideas are helpful in provoking some more creative thinking about the learning you have planned. It looks like a terrific unit of work. We are looking forward to hearing how it goes, both from you and some of your students.

Jill, Kelli, Linda and Kylie.