



## MACQUARIE CHRISTIAN STUDIES INSTITUTE APPROVED UNIT OUTLINE

### 1. Unit Code and Title:

MCSI 132 Classroom Landscapes: Exploring Christian Schools

### 2. Credit Points:

1 credit point

Contact hours: 1 hour workshop each week plus field component (4 days in-class observation)

### 3. Name of Unit Convenor and Key Teacher/s:

**Dr Neil Holm**, Dip. Teach (CSU), B.A. (Hons)(UNE), Ph.D., MACE. Academic Director and Senior Lecturer in Education Studies and Christian Formation, Macquarie Christian Studies Institute)

### 4. Unit Description / Calendar Entry:

When we reflect on a landscape, we consider its appearance, the shapes, forms, colours and elements, and the ways these components combine distinctively in particular localities. In this unit we look at the landscape of classrooms, especially those in Christian faith-based schools. We also explore the inner terrain of classrooms: their character and the relationship between teachers' inner and outer realities. Students will engage in reflective observation of classroom practice in a Christian faith based school for 4 days. They will be placed with an experienced teacher who will assist the reflective process. The student is not required to undertake any teaching.

### 5. Alignment with the MCSI Vision:

This unit helps students to connect Christian faith with an understanding of classroom processes. It helps students to develop a critical perspective on the complex nature of classroom life that might inform choices about working in Christian faith-based schools or sending their children to these schools. By increasing understanding of the inner life, it has the potential to empower students to become teachers able to guide students on their inner journeys towards more truthful ways of seeing and being in the world.

### 6. Pre-requisites / Co-requisites / Exclusions

None

## 7. **Expected Outcomes:**

By the end of the unit, students will be able to:

- 7.1 Demonstrate an understanding of the benefits, problems, and techniques of using observation schedules in the classroom
- 7.2 Describe accurately some aspects of the classroom landscape and the way in which Christian faith is affirmed or denied
- 7.3 Discuss teaching as an intellectual, emotional and spiritual process
- 7.4 Discuss the relationship between their inner landscape, their own schooling, their faith, other life experiences, and their perceptions of life in classrooms
- 7.5 Describe the methods and benefits of keeping a professional reflective journal
- 7.6 Reflect thoughtfully on some Christian principles that might influence classroom processes and the alternative processes that might ensue
- 7.7 Discuss whether teaching in a Christian faith-based school or other school might be a vocation.

## 8. **Unit Content / Workshop Topics**

- 8.1 Exploring the classroom landscape through observation and reflection
- 8.2 Teaching from the heart: the soul of the teacher
- 8.3 Teaching courageously: showing how
- 8.4 Teaching Creatively: imagining how
- 8.5 Teaching wisely: knowing how
- 8.6 Teaching morally: the ethic of caring
- 8.7 Facing Ourselves facing the unfamiliar: multiple vulnerabilities
- 8.8 The joy of teaching: a portrait of possibility

## 9. **Assessment:**

This unit is graded as pass or fail. A pass grade requires satisfactory completion of all of the following assessment activities:

- 9.1 Reflective Journal: Students will maintain a journal of at least 1,500 words. The journal will detail their reflections on the required readings, observations made in their classroom, and inferences concerning student learning made from these observations. The reflections will include personal feelings about learning situations, as well as professional understandings that relate to these situations.
- 9.2 Classroom Observation: Students will complete an observation schedule for each observation day.
- 9.3 Portfolio: Students will develop of a portfolio of relevant classroom materials e.g. class timetable, teaching resources, curriculum guidelines. A minimum of 8 items is required.
- 9.4 Teacher Report: The classroom teacher will report on how well the student fitted into the class.

## 10. **Details of Presentation:**

The unit involves a workshop of one hour per week over 13 weeks. Students spend 4 days (28 hours) in a classroom in a Christian faith-based school. With the assistance of an experienced classroom teacher, they engage in structured observations, reflections, and other guided activities.

## 11. Bibliography:

### 11.1 Required Text:

1. Durkha, Gloria. *The Teacher's Calling: A Spirituality for Those who Teach*. New York: Paulist Press. 2002

### 11.2 Additional Reading:

2. Ashton-Warner, Sylvia. *Teacher (with a new introduction by Dora Russell)*. London: Virago, 1980.
3. Cole, P.G. & Chan, L.K.S. *Teaching Principles and Practice*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: Prentice Hall, 1994.
4. Connelly, F.M. & Clandinin, D.J. *Teachers' Professional Knowledge Landscapes*. New York: Teacher College Press, 1995
5. Edlin, R.J. *The Cause of Christian Education*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Blacktown: National Institute for Christian Education, 1999.
6. Good, Thomas & Brophy, Jere. *Looking in Classrooms 9<sup>th</sup> edition*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2003
7. Groundwater-Smith, S., Cusworth, R. & Dobbins, R. *Teaching Challenges and Dilemmas*. Sydney: Harcourt Brace, 1998.
8. Holly, M.L. *Keeping a Professional Journal (2<sup>nd</sup> edition)*. Geelong: Deakin University Press, 1997.
9. Killen, R. *Effective Teaching Strategies: Lessons from Research and Practice*. Wentworth Falls: Social Science Press, 1996.
10. Marsh, C.J. *Handbook for Beginning Teachers 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*. Melbourne: Longman, 2000.
11. McInerney, D. & McInerney, V. *Educational Psychology Constructing Learning*. Sydney: Prentice Hall, 1994.
12. Palmer, Parker J. *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998
13. Pollard, A. & Tann, S. *Reflective Teaching in the Primary School: A Handbook for the Classroom 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*. London: Cassell, 1993.
14. Pollard, Andrew & Triggs, Pat, *Reflective teaching in secondary education: a handbook for schools and colleges*. London: Cassell, 1997.
15. Schwen, Mark (ed). *Everyone a Teacher*. Notre Dame, Ind: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000.
16. Turney, C., Halton, N., Laws, K., Sinclair, K. & Smith, D. *The Classroom Manager*. St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1992.
17. Van Brummelen, H. *Walking with God in the Classroom*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Seattle: Alta Vista Press, 1998.
18. Wagner, Melinda B. *God's Schools : Choice and Compromise in American Society*. New Brunswick : Rutgers University Press, 1990.