

THE PEDAGOGY OF CHRISTIAN STUDIES

The CSCF is supported by the following pedagogical principles, in which both teaching and learning:

- are characterised by authenticity, imagination, flexibility and high intellectual quality
- are learner centred and future focused
- reflect beliefs about learners, learning and learning communities as expressed in the Lutheran Education Australia Lifelong Qualities for Learners
- are grounded in the theological understanding of the worth and giftedness of each person and the nature of relationship with self, others, the environment and God
- are engaging, dynamic and unfolding
- are inclusive of the diverse needs, backgrounds and worldviews of students and teachers
- reflect the classroom learning environment set within the rich context of Christian education provided in Lutheran schools and early childhood services
- create quality relationships between all learners – teachers and students
- create connections between the mysteries, rituals, languages and practices of the Christian faith and with other learning and other communities
- invite, challenge, support and empower students to construct meaning, grow in spiritual maturity and be transformed in their relationships with self, others, the environment and God
- These principles are now developed further and applied to the context of the learning environment.

Learner centred

Students each bring their unique worldview shaped by their experience of life and prior learning. The pedagogy of Christian Studies must open doors that connect the content of the framework with the learner's world – both the inner life and perceptions of the external world. If learning is to be personally meaningful it is imperative that students own the journey of discovery, that they can ask their questions, that they can articulate, however capably, their growing understanding and that they are free to choose how they will respond to the ideas and concepts they encounter. This approach requires a relationship of trust between teacher and student whereby students can contribute to the shape and direction of a unit of work. Students and teachers acknowledge, respect and interact with the multiple journeys of discovery present in the learning environment. Students are challenged to see themselves as members of various communities – classroom, family, church, local, global – from whom they can learn and draw inspiration and to whom they can contribute and make a difference.

The role of the teacher

Teachers use their knowledge of students – their needs, interests, contexts, prior learning – along with their understanding of the theological map of the framework to make decisions about the most appropriate content knowledge, elaborations, contexts and ways of knowing for students. They select a range of teaching strategies and learning experiences to create meaningful inquiry and learning. They negotiate units of work to engage students on a journey of learning that resonates with students' life questions and equips them with the necessary knowledge and skills to demonstrate the learning statements. Teachers plan for and embed a range of assessment strategies to provide students with constructive feedback and to inform reporting processes. They also provide opportunities for students to reflect on their understandings, attitudes and faith. In the learning process, teachers are reflective, intuitive practitioners who learn, adapt their practice, grow in their knowledge and faith, and model a compassionate life of action.

Approaches and methodologies

Diversity and change are a reality of the classroom, Christian communities, religious traditions and the world of students. Learners need access to a range of ways of making meaning. The CSCF encourages the use of a range of strategies that acknowledge, accommodate and draw on this diversity.

Pedagogical approaches to learning along with the utilisation of, for example, cooperative strategies, thinking skills, multi-modal resources, multiple intelligence strategies, allow students to explore and respond to the concepts within the CSCF in ways that are relevant and meaningful in their journey of constructing understanding. Effective pedagogy promotes the sharing of ideas and stories, links to other learning and provides choice, accountability and opportunities for reflection and action.