

# Mrs Russell's Classroom

'You are the reason I am here'

Edmodo

May 2  
2014

## Superclasses Part 2!

So, I have survived week 1 of Term 2 and I thought I better continue writing about our '**superclass**' **journey**.

**Steven Heppel** states that 'all teachers report the sheer pleasure of working with other colleagues and seeing their fresh effective approaches in action,' and I agree that you definitely get to that stage, however there is no denying that it does take a leap of faith and a lot of support and understanding from all parties along the way.

Working in a 'Superclass' situation also means finding a way to compliment each others personalities, views and pedagogies. Teachers generally have a way they teach, that they know works, and a classroom that they are in charge of. We have found that if there is good will and trust, then you can make it work. In the early stages, we needed to have discussions about how we would normally run our lessons and how we could incorporate a little of all of our teaching styles in to each of the lessons.

Before I move on to nuts and bolts of the timetable and how you manage 90 students, 3 teachers and 5 learning spaces I would like to mention some of successes that I am extremely proud of.

I can honestly say that all of our students feel like we are one class and see all three teachers as 'their' teachers. Students will give notes to, ask for help from, discuss their weekend/ new pet/ holiday

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- [May 2014](#)
- [April 2014](#)

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- [Education](#)
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with any of us. We do not identify with 'our' 30 students any more than the other 60.

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We are all under the umbrella of Area 51. We have year 6's & 7s, approx 90 students and lots of different personalities, however we are one big family. We found that once we mixed the 3 classes, behaviour of individual students actually improved.

Working with two other teachers is like being on professional development every day. We are constantly reflecting on what we have taught, how we have dealt with situations and discussing really cool teacher ideas that we found online the night before. Each of us have our different skills set and pedagogical bag of tricks.

Initially, the planning took weeks. Teachers can be very territorial about what they teach and how they teach it. As we built trust and built a mutual respect for each of our teaching styles it got easier to let go. Our planning session for Term 2 took less than half an hour, as all we needed was an overview of what needed to be taught and then we delegated the topics/ weeks/ mini lessons/ homework and revision. Rather than planning everything we went on holidays knowing what we individually needed to have planned for Term 2.

Working closely with 2 other teachers requires flexibility. As all teachers know, there is often many school activities that compliment/ get in the way of the teaching and learning program. Incursions, excursions, carnivals, special days, student jobs, worm rangers, recycling helpers, the list goes on! You need to know where you are heading, however also be willing to accept that something may need to take place tomorrow, or next week. We have a nice flow going. Even though we have a set plan in place, we are comfortable enough with each and our students to be able to try something new or teach something 'at the point of need'. An example of this is when we realised that there may have been some bullying going on within the classroom. We stopped the daily program so that students could participate in a reflective circle and anonymous sharing. Based on the information we gather we felt that there was need for intervention. The next day we ran with a 'Challenge-Based' style **session**, where students explored different types of bullying and took action against it. This type of flexibility is how you would run your own class and it is essential that the same flexibility be apparent in a 'superclass' setting.

That is all for now. Time to settle into the weekend. The next blog post will focus on the mechanics of a lesson with 90 students.



All three teacher desks are central to the main classroom. This is how the students designed it and we love it.

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