

STANDARD 1: KNOW STUDENTS AND HOW THEY LEARN

(1.2) Understand how students learn.

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of research into how students learn and the implications for teaching.

Australian Professional Standards for Teachers

(1.5) Differentiate teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities.

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of strategies for differentiating teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities.

Australian Professional Standards for Teachers

During a professional placement at a secondary state high school in Brisbane's northside, I had the opportunity to teach a Year 10 Media class comprising 25 students. Of these, eight were English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) learners, and two were diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The culminating assessment task for this cohort required students to storyboard and film a short music video demonstrating a range of cinematic shot types learned throughout the semester. To ensure the task was inclusive and accessible, adaptations were made to support EAL/D and ASD students (Standard 1.5) while fostering engagement and motivation for the entire class (Standard 1.2).

Pedagogical Strategies and Research-Based Practices

To cater to the diverse needs of the students, a variety of evidence-based strategies were implemented. For EAL/D students, the task was designed to encourage collaborative group work, with groups comprising three to four students, including at least one or two EAL/D learners (Standard 1.5). Research by Dutton and Rushton (2018) highlights the positive academic and social outcomes when EAL/D students collaborate with peers proficient in English, as such interactions provide authentic opportunities for language development.

For students with ASD, visual supports were provided through printed, explicit task instructions (Artifact 1), aligning with findings by Shurr and Taber-Doughty (2017), which emphasize the effectiveness of visuals in enhancing comprehension for students on the autism spectrum. This approach also included consistent, clear communication and structured task sequences to reduce cognitive load and anxiety.

To support all students and sustain their interest in the task, the design was informed by Hidi and Renninger's (2006) four-phase model of interest development. Strategies included incorporating group work to foster collaboration (Cordova & Lepper, 1996) and allowing students to select their music, creating a sense of personal relevance and autonomy.

(Renninger & Hidi, 2002). Furthermore, situational interest was maintained by engaging students in meaningful tasks, such as assigning individual roles and responsibilities within groups, consistent with Harackiewicz et al. (2000).

Outcomes and Reflection

The implementation of these strategies ensured all students successfully met the requirements of the task and submitted their assignments on time. The inclusive and engaging approach facilitated effective peer collaboration and active participation in the learning activities, fostering a positive classroom environment.

Moving forward, I aim to deepen my understanding of differentiation to accommodate a broader spectrum of student needs, including those with visual and hearing impairments. Developing a wider repertoire of pedagogical strategies will require further research, professional learning, and collaboration with more experienced educators. My goal as I transition from pre-service teacher to proficient teacher is to deliver differentiated content that engages all learners in meaningful, high-quality educational experiences.

This reflection aligns with the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, particularly Standards 1.2, 1.5, and 1.6, and underscores my commitment to continual improvement in practice and pedagogy.

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