

Assignment One

The Real vs. the Ideal

by

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for

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EST303 Special Needs in the Classroom

Please access the digital project here.

[Assignment 1 Link](#)

Copied from EST303 Discussion Board Posts.

Week 1

The Real.

During a placement in Darwin at a Senior Secondary Independent School, one student was identified to me, early in the practical, as having extenuating moderation and assistance for his education. This boy was also an Indigenous student. Initially, during the observation period, I had some but fleeting interactions with this boy, coupled with his low attendance record, made it hard to assess his abilities for myself. Towards the end of a 7-week placement, it seemed evident that he has low confidence in social interactions, evident by his low participation and soft-spoken behaviours. There was little to no modification of the content to best suit the student, other than one-on-one tutoring.

The Ideal.

The student is allowed to be properly assessed and diagnosed for any health and behavioural related issues that may be affecting his performance at school. Specific modifications and moderations to the curriculum are made to accommodate preferred or beneficial learning styles. Further, if this student speaks another language, efforts are made by the Classroom Teacher to learn the language or provide contextual applications to the content.

Week 2

The Real.

Students that had low English literacy were participating in Year 10 and Stage 1 Digital Technologies classes, that focused on web-based game design and coding. These students struggled with the content and, when available, a specialised EALD support teacher would be present to assist them; this was about 50% of the classes. I also learned that they were participating in an English intensive program designed to improve their literacy, so they could participate in subjects with less interruption. I also learned, this program was funded and designed to assist Indigenous students

The Ideal.

These students, many were refugees, are provided specific programs and funding that do not detract from other important areas of the school's operations. Also, better access to specialise support staff should be made available, so that students do not get left behind due to their comprehension of English and the subject matter.

Alternative to providing English lessons and participating in the standard school curriculum concurrently, these students complete an English proficiency course before joining the mainstream so that they aren't struggling with literacy whilst learning content.

Also, the content could have been modified to include simpler language for these students or to include some of their native or most fluent language to aid their learning.

Week 3

The Real.

One child in an early year's primary school class, diagnosed with ASD, has difficulty sitting still and possibly has ADHD, however there is no current diagnosis to support this. They are regularly disruptive to the teacher and other students. Disobedience is regular, particularly with tasks that require mental concentration and lack large movement opportunities. This tends to result in devolving behaviour that can become physical.

The Ideal.

This child is provided with an EAP/IAP that focuses on actions by the teacher and the student to remediate behavioural issues that can arise from various activities that "trigger" the student's anxiety. Regular opportunities are allowed for this student to separate from activities before behaviour becomes uncontrollable and allows them to re-join those tasks in an emotional state that is conducive to learning.

Week 4

The Real.

During a recent teaching practical, I was teaching ICT skills to students to use GPS fitness tracking applications, excel, word and other programs. During these lessons, I would stand in front of the class, deliver the content, then allow students to complete the premade worksheet, that they needed for their qualification. I and the other teachers, between learning tasks, would move around the class and assist students' understanding and workbook completion. This method was generally successful in ensuring workbooks were completed with the correct information, however, some students still refused to complete their tasks.

The Ideal.

Many of these students had been conditioned to await answers on the board, rather than taught to research their own answers or solutions. The teaching method adopted was targeting NTCET and VET completion, rather than the full development of the students as individuals through a learning journey.

I was unable to teach in a method that allowed students to fully grasp the content being taught nor engage their curiosity. Ideally, I would have adjusted the content to be more relevant to how the students preferred to learn and toward their interests, which may have engaged them more meaningfully.

Week 5

The Real

During my own research, I viewed the following short film, which shows the story of a primary school aged girl, Libby, that is deaf. The rest of her family have no disabilities. A specialist, Joanne, meets with the family and it is evident that they, especially the parents have low expectations for Libby and do not understand the diagnosis or needs.

As the story evolves, the parents push back on Joanne's progress to teach sign language and make no effort to learn it themselves. When Joanne is finally pushed away by the parents, Libby is sent to a mainstream school with no assistance or adjustment to assist in her learning.

The Ideal

As most children that are born deaf or develop deafness early in life, their families do not have the innate knowledge or experience about living with deafness. Through specialist support, children with deafness can live fulfilling lives. During education and life, accommodations must be made to assist them in their learning journey.

Families and educators can support these students through their own education, including learning sign language. In the classroom, it may be necessary to include an interpreter and adjust the learning material, so that these students can fully engage with the content.

Week 6

The Real

Whilst I was viewing the video between Dr. John Callanan and Dr Bea Staley, I recalled an experience I had during a recent placement. I was specifically trying to catch a student, "Mark" up on work he had missed on the content I had been teaching, due to a medical absence. When I began, another student, "Ben" sat with us and began distracting Mark. I became incredibly frustrated, as I there was little discipline from my mentors with the class and very little, I felt I could do to remove Ben or adjust his behaviour. I ended up moving myself away from both students, giving Mark the option to join me at the front of the class, which he did not take.

The Ideal

Upon reflection, this was a critical opportunity to learn to regulate my emotions and manage my own behaviour to model better behaviour to the students. Further, other methods, as discussed in the video, could have been used to divert Ben's attention more appropriately toward something more productive.

John Callanan on ABC's of behaviour and working with children with autism spectrum disorders
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9mDHGCdRspc&feature=youtu.be>