**Weeks 1-6 discussion board entries**

**Week 1:  
 The Real**

At Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Thamarrurr Catholic College (OLSH), there are 591 enrolments; 584 being Indigenous. Through conversation with my mentor, the school nurse, and other staff and auxiliary at the school, I found that there was anecdotal evidence that nearly half the students suffered from hearing problems (primarily Otis Media). Research shows that poor hearing can impede cognitive development, auditory processing skills, and speech and language development, resulting in poor attention and listening (Burns & Thomson 2013; Williams & Jacob 2009).

**The ideal**

While OLSH is a school with an established bi-lingual program, the nurse did not speak Murrinhpatha. Perhaps an Indigenous practitioner to liaise with the nurses would facilitate support for the young students. Teachers could also conduct regular hearing tests both individually and through allied health companies- however, this would clearly be indicative of funding. Furthermore, all teachers had FrontRow microphones, however, they were often seen forgetting to wear it during lessons. Perhaps a PD day to remind teachers of the importance of them would be beneficial for the students.

**Week 2:   
The Real**

When on my three-week placement, every morning began with 15 minutes of sport. A student in my class was in a wheelchair and I asked my mentor of ways I could include her in the sessions. Her response was, “don’t worry about her. She generally doesn’t like to join in on these sessions”.

**The ideal**

According to the Disability Discrimination Act (cited in Foreman & Arthur-Kelly, 2017), students with a disability must be able to participate in courses or programs without discrimination. The ideal would have been me advocating for this student and thinking of ways to include her in morning fitness games, rather than allowing my mentor to exclude the student.

**Week 3:   
The Real**

On my second placement, I recall an exceedingly bright student with ADHD would always call out the answers during a class discussion, or yarning time circle. It became a big issue, as his peers never got an opportunity to answer questions, and the young boy with ADHD really struggled with not being able to call out.

**The ideal**

After a week of observation, I decided I would try a few changes when it was my turn to take the class. I began using pop-sticks as a to promote randomised selection, encouraging the young student to see that it was not always him that was able to answer questions. With conversation with my mentor, we also implemented whiteboards to write down their answers. This enabled an opportunity for every student to answer the question, and this particular young student never felt left out. These ideas came from the book Reflections in the Classroom (Singal, N. 2008), which I still refer to as needed.

**Week 4:   
The Real**A young student in year 4 presented extreme difficulty with social interactions and would often become withdrawn from lessons; hindering her learning and ostracising herself from her peers. The mentor noted to me that these concerns stemmed from high levels of trauma, anxiety, and depression. The student had currently been removed from immediate family and was struggling with the transition. The student did not have an ISA and was seeing allied health professional’s fortnightly.

**The ideal**In 2003, the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) released the largest and only investigation into the emotional wellbeing of school aged students from pre-school to year 12. The data collected on ten thousand students disclosed a large percentage of students were experiencing social and emotional difficulties such as:

* Forty percent of students said they felt they worry too much.
* Twenty percent of students said they have had feelings of hopelessness and depression for at least a week
* A third of all students said they often lose their temper and can be mean to their peers (bully).
* Half of the students said they had trouble regaining composure after being agitated (poor resilience).

These results show how both academic and social child development are pivotal in education (Cross 2014; Fort et al, 2017). Ideally, pre-service teachers preparing to teach would be aware of these statistics and endeavour to find effective ways of socially and emotionally supporting students.

**Week 5:   
The Real**This week I am going to discuss the video from our lectures- “A School in the Bush”, published by Australian Human Rights Commission in 2013. The video depicts a five-year-old girl with spina bifida, who was eager to begin school. However, instead she became the focus of a national debate about inclusive education. The girl’s application for the school was rejected, with the school saying, “they didn’t think they could cater to her disability”. The school went on to say that it would have caused unjustifiable hardship for the school, and that they couldn't justify having to put in a very excessive amount of money towards building ramps, widening doorways, and training their teachers just for one student. Following this, a complaint was lodged to the Human Rights Commission with the school being found guilty of unlawful discrimination.

**The Ideal**This case was the catalyst for well-needed change regarding education standards developed under the Disability Discrimination Act. The most important change being that all people with a disability can be active participants within the mainstream education system, without deliberation. Foreman & Arthur-Kelly (2017) say that students with a disability must be able to contribute to classrooms and programs without discrimination. Ideally, this student would not have experienced this type of exclusion to begin with, as the school should have known that every child is entitled to a rich and convivial learning environment. Furthermore, the student should not have experienced the generalisations and stereotyping from the school that she did.

**Week 6  
The Real** Top of Form

On my third placement, I was given a student overview of my class prior to my commencement. It entailed a general overview of all the students with any diagnosis’s, special needs requirements and individual learning plans for particular students. In the coming weeks, along with this resource I developed lesson plans that were able to cater to the diverse students within my class. One adaptation and differentiation technique I had noted for a student with ADHD was regular breaks, and when feasible, a quick walk around our classroom block before moving onto the next task. When I showed my mentor, she advised me not to allow the student to   
go for a walk, as he would take advantage”.

**The ideal** Students with ADHD experience high levels of hyperactivity and impulsive behaviours (Wender, P 2001). These students also have trouble following instructions, lack fine motor control (making note-taking difficult) and often have trouble engaging with long term projects both individually and with their peers (Greene, 1995). However, research shows to combat this, teachers can implement a multitude of accommodations to make learning easier for students with ADHD. This can include, but is not limited to specific instruction, refined rules, an optimistic and flexible learning environment, and regular interval breaks.

**References**

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