

The National Professional Standards for Teachers: Standard 1 and 2 Reflective Commentary and Action Plan

The National Professional Standards for Teachers states that teachers should be able to differentiate teaching for specific learning needs of their students. All students learn differently at different speeds and have different starting points. Therefore it is important to differentiate lessons appropriately to meet the learning needs of your students.

There are many different strategies to differentiate the curriculum or the instruction of a lesson but the one I mainly use in the classroom is tiered instruction. In my maths classroom at SHS the variation of ability was substantial that it was imperative for effective teaching to differentiate instruction. The ability of students ranged from very weak (not knowing their times tables) to quite strong. There were a handful of students who I felt should have been in the 'Path Finders' based on their maths ability but I was not sure on how they performed in other subjects.

The lesson plan available on the website shows in detail how I tiered the instruction but I will give a quick rundown on what I did. There were four levels of questions: General questions, additional questions, extension questions and brain teasers. All students start with general questions and progress through the levels at their own pace. The students with a higher ability will progress quicker into the more difficult questions and so all students are being challenged and are working at their own pace.

In science instead of differentiating instruction for individuals I identified classes as weaker than the others (8.03) and one class more able (8.02). For 8.02 I was able to increase the pace of learning allowing more time for consolidation and expansion outside of the requirements of the term planner. For 8.03 I used more time in explaining concepts, more visual aids, props and analogies. This is not extra time but I didn't extend 8.03 as much as the other classes, also, 8.03 had many students who were regular truants and so I was always playing catch up with students as if they had missed a few lessons, they would find themselves at a different starting point to the rest of the class.

The National Professional Standards for Teachers states that teachers know the content and how to teach it. It also states that teachers can organise content for effective teaching and learning. I have achieved this as can be seen by the term planner I have produced as can be seen on the website (In standard 3). The term planner show content, sequence, experiments and resources for the term. As I grow in experience and become more familiar with content and resources I hope to be able to expand my repertoire of resources and experiments.

The National Professional Standards for Teachers states that teacher's use ICT's to create learning opportunities to students. I have done a whole unit on implementing ICT in the classroom at Murdoch University. While teaching maths I incorporated every Tuesday a computer program called IXL. It is a program completely aligned to the Australian national curriculum and is based from preschool to year 10. The students really liked this program and it was a good way to spend the last period of the day in which it is usually a struggle to get students to become engaged. This is one ICT I used regularly and I defiantly will try to use in the future. Other ICT's I used included power points, chemistry websites, YouTube, videos and many more. One video I have used is 'Bill Nye the Science Guy'. He covers all sorts of content in science and is sponsored by the Disney channel. It is a bit of

fun while very educational and the students engage with him as he breaks concepts down really well.

In the future I plan to create a website, as I have done in the past (there is a link to the website from this website), with links to other websites so students can easily access some of the better sites. Also I want to make some revision activities which can provide feedback using programs like 'Question Writer 4' which can be published onto websites. I got this idea from university experience where we as students were able to complete revision questions online and gain instant feedback. Some great maths programs I want to implement in my classroom include 'GeoGebra 4' and 'maths 300' in which I have had experience with at university and want to implement such programs at schools, however need to look into the costs of such programs for school use. There is no time frame for becoming more efficient with technology, as it is something you add onto as you progress as a teacher and times change. In maths though I do need to become up to speed with 'Class pads', the modern graphics calculator and make sure I progress with calculator technology as it arises. I have recently bought a 'Class pad' and will become familiar with it before the start of 2013 school year.

For standard 1 in The National Professional Standards for Teachers it states that teachers should use strategies to provide participation and support for learning disabilities and difficulties. I would like to learn more about strategies of including and supporting such students as I believe the degree I have not covered this topic enough to be outstanding in this area and all teachers want to be outstanding in all areas of teaching. I have been reading good articles on such matters, which have provided strategies but have also stated that professional education for teachers into this issue is essential for effective teaching in this area. Therefore I endeavour by the end of 2015 or sooner depending on the students in my classroom, I wish to be competent in this area by completing multiple courses for multiple disorders I am likely to come across as a teacher. The lengthy time frame is because it is irrational to think that I could do so many courses in my first year and really build on my teaching practice in an effective way. I wish to complete many course as I have read that there are courses for professional development for individual disorders specifically, because strategies vary greatly for different disorders. I am also looking into doing a Grad certificate on inclusive education offered by Murdoch to increase my expertise in this area. I want to be competent in this area because I want to teach in the country where the resources provided to teachers such as EA's may be scarce if present at all and so I want to be prepared to give my students the best opportunities I can.