**CASE STUDY**

**Section A. What are the most common issues regarding this case study focus student?**

Jane is a Year 11 student who attends a Public all-girls school in Sydney. There are between 300 and 500 students in the school and a very small percentage are Aboriginal. Jane is the oldest of her other siblings and there is a lot of family pressure for Jane to succeed in her education. She is expected to complete her senior education and hopes to pursue a career in youth work. Her mother was unable to complete her schooling because she had Jane at a young age. She works full-time at an Aboriginal organisation sponsored by the federal government.

Jane’s father didn’t finish high school either because it meant leaving home. He recognises the relevance of school, as he doesn’t have many skills and has been stuck in the same job all his working life. Unfortunately, her mother has minimal contribution towards her learning at school; which has made it difficult for her to build confidence in her own ability, as she feels that her only interaction with her educational learning is with her teachers.

Schooling is also difficult for Jane, as she has often had to miss school to care for her younger siblings while her mother works. As a result of her lack of attendance Jane is struggling to catch up with missed school work and now has fallen well behind the rest of the class.

Her lack of literacy and numeracy skills are now impacting significantly on class performance. Her class situation is not ideal as they are quite large and the teachers are unable to spend any extra time to assist Jane.

Most of her teachers are also managing classes with many disruptive students, which also contributes to some learning barriers between her and the teacher. Various teachers have commented on her positive attitude towards her work, her cooperation and willingness to learn.

Compounded with her learning difficulties, Jane is also very shy and appears to lack the confidence to ask questions in class in order to share her responses or feelings with the teachers. Jane also feels an additional sense of isolation from the school curriculum, as the school is highly diverse with a vast amount of ethnicities and religious cultures, causing her to feel less important and what she represents in her own culture. Her strengths are that she has motivation and willingness to learn, but there is a lack of funding for learning support teachers. Afterschool sessions are available but her parents have told her to come home straight after school to care for her other siblings.

The possible concerns are how to strengthen better family support, by allowing more responsibility and interaction for her parent’s involvement in Jane’s education. This will require a better interaction with parent and teacher. A reconnection with the Aboriginal Community by including group curriculum work with other Aboriginal students in the school would also prove beneficial in order for Jane to develop her identity and thus improving her confidence and self-esteem.

**Section B. How can I now put into practice what I have learned?**

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| **Syllabus outcomes:** |
| 5.1 performs repertoire with increasing levels of complexity in a range of musical styles demonstrating an understanding of the musical concepts |
| 5.2 performs repertoire in a range of styles and genres demonstrating interpretation of musical notation and the application of different types of technology |
| 5.3 performs music selected for study with appropriate stylistic features demonstrating solo and ensemble awareness |
| 5.4 demonstrates an understanding of the musical concepts through improvising, arranging and composing in the styles or genres of music selected for study |
| 5.5 notates own compositions, applying forms of notation appropriate to the music selected for study |
| 5.6 uses different forms of technology in the composition process |
| 5.7 demonstrates an understanding of musical concepts through the analysis, comparison, and critical discussion of music from different stylistic, social, cultural and historical contexts |
| 5.8 demonstrates an understanding of musical concepts through aural identification, discrimination, memorisation and notation in the music selected for study |
| 5.9 demonstrates an understanding of musical literacy through the appropriate application of notation, terminology, and the interpretation and analysis of scores used in the music selected for study |
| 5.10 demonstrates an understanding of the influence and impact of technology on music |
| 5.11 demonstrates an appreciation, tolerance and respect for the aesthetic value of music as an artform |
| 5.12 demonstrates a developing confidence and willingness to engage in performing, composing and listening experiences |

**- 10 activities samples in connection MI/Bloom blank matrix**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **The eight Intelligences** | **REMEMBER** | **UNDERSTAND** | **APPLY** | **ANALYSE** | **EVALUATE** | **CREATE** |
| **WORD** | 5.9 - Students are asked to write a small critique from a recording relating to syllabus topics using at least five musical terms from a given list.  Students research quietly on electronic devices with headphones. |  | 5.7 - In groups students apply research around a particular artist or composer, (can be specific to students’ culture) representing musical facts of the chosen topic. Students research on electronic devices with other group members with some discussion. |  |  | 5.12/5,1/5.2/5.3 – In group’s students are required to create lyrics or a story around a theme they would use for a composition or song, in connection with performance composition. Students allowed moving around in groups practice in areas of classroom. Responsible and careful use of instruments |
| **LOGIC & MATHS** | 5.8 - Listening to recording excerpts from syllabus topics, students apply what style or period the music is from through in class activities. Students are required to be silent through listening process. |  |  |  |  |  |
| **SPACE & VISION** |  |  |  | 5.9 - Choosing a focus music area, students draw a mind map of musical terms and concepts that relate to a focus area. Student’s work individually monitored by teacher supervision and assistance. |  |  |
| **BODY** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **MUSIC** |  | 5.11 - In groups, students choose two music works from the syllabus and write a comparative reflection on stylistic differences. Students discuss in groups in seated positions from technology research. |  |  | 5.4 -In groups, students choose ten songs and write music facts on why they are popular or better and are asked to improvise or play music on an instrument of their preferred choice. Student’s work in groups allowed playing on instruments, discussion allowed. |  |
| **NATURALIST** | 5.9 - Describe what musical affects describe elements in nature, by sharing ideas in groups and notate affect and terminology, share with class. Naturalistic theme can address all cultural inspiration. |  |  |  |  | 5.5/5.1/5.2/5.3- In groups students, create a composition on any instrument using musical ideas or effects that describe elements in nature. Group discussion, active playing on instruments, don’t disrupt other groups, be responsible and careful when using instruments. |
| **PEOPLE** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **SELF** | 5.12 - Students describe their experiences with music and what they know about music, and what instrument they would like to play. Silent writing in seated position. Paper shared with teacher or class. |  |  |  |  |  |

**- Two benefits of a differentiated unit of work.**

Considering Jane (case study student), I have realised that incorporating Aboriginal culture is an important factor to create a sense of appreciation, Self-esteem, relevance and motivation to a differentiated unit of work, this is recognized by (Atkinson, Nelson & Atkinson, 2009) asserting the importance of what Aboriginal elders represent within the educational system, by their traditions, stories and connections with children and the community and how developing knowledge of their place in history and empowering their sense of identity and belonging will expand opportunities for aboriginal students. Implementing specific programs more designed for them and ensuring full access to a vast range of curriculum areas will also create a sense of equitable placement in the primary and secondary classroom settings (Atkinson, et al., 2009; Guilfoyle, Saggers, Sims and Hutchins, 2010, <http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/jobs/statement-of-equity-principle.html>).

It may also be required to personalise individual learning plans for Jane. This will be based on an analysis of needs and consequently providing a flexible, collaborative and challenging learning environment that she feels comfortable managing. This will reinforce a better relationship with both the teacher and student, removing any barriers to learning and encouraging more verbal input. Methods of differentiation through individual learning plans will involve learning styles by introducing a higher use of multimedia apps that enhance engagement that facilitate higher productivity in assisted reading sessions and encouraging more group activities around cultural interest that will increase a higher use of oral language opportunities and confidence in verbal practice of standard Australian English. (Investing in Focus Schools Initiative, Local Activity Profile <https://inghamss.eq.edu.au/Supportandresources/Formsanddocuments/Documents/investing-in-focus-schools-initiative.pdf> )

**Section C. How will I differentiate a lesson for my whole class with adjustments and assessments for my case study student?**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Lesson steps for whole class** | **Smart outcome** | **Adjustments** | **Assessment Task** |
| Step 1 - Students create a composition depicting elements of nature, or write lyrics, story around a theme (from the syllabus) they would use for a composition or song (research through technology. (15min)  Step 2 - Students choose instruments of preference. E.g. piano, keyboard, voice, experiment and notate ideas on paper, manuscript or composition diary. (20min)  Step 3 - Students notate or write musical ideas at least Twenty-four bars long, using a logical sequence and cohesiveness. (15min)  Step 4 - Students perform item in class as an assessment task.  Step 5 - Students complete program notes relating to their composition (containing musical features, source of inspiration) (15min) | Student should have successfully communicated with group and contributed what ensemble format, what theme and what instruments they will be using to create their composition or song. (Research through technology) (15min)  By the end of the lesson, the student has developed an understanding of musical knowledge through applied practical skills relevant to music concepts, by means of playing an instrument, self- expression, creativity, and application of music notation or symbols within a solo and/or ensemble format. (20min)  The student has contributed some music words how they would describe the theme for composition. (15min)  By the end of the lesson the student has proven to work harmoniously and attentively within the group. | Step 1 - Student creates musical sounds that depict a specific theme that optionally relate to them culturally. (Dream time in Aboriginal culture, case study student) (15min)  Step 2 - Selection of instrument choice could be something more specific to there background e.g. didgeridoo, clap sticks. Followed by practical experimentation. (Aboriginal culture, case study student) (20min)  Step 3 – Optionally, lyrics could be more specific to their first language if English is a second language.  Step 4 - Notated music can be simplified, optionally be represented by individual graphic symbols created by the student to describe produced sounds. (10min)  Step 5 – Program notes can be ten words that would describe their composition. (5min) | In groups students create a composition at least twenty-four bars long that depict a theme around elements of nature, relating to syllabus topics which will be performed on instruments or lyrics as an assessment task. A graphic representation of musical ideas that relate to the composition, and program notes (at least 100 words) indicating background information of music ideas and thematic inspiration must be given to the teacher on the day of assessment performance.  **ASSESMENT RUBIRIC (25%)**   * The student has successfully communicated musical ideas to the group. (5/5) * The student has verified an understanding of music concepts by notating ideas on paper. (5/5) * The student has shown ability on playing an instrument with some level of competency through practice and assessment performance. (5/5) * The student has suitably depicted a theme by means of playing music in an ensemble setting. (5/5) * The student has successfully worked harmoniously and attentively within the group. (5/5) |

**Section D. Reflection on Learning Group process?**

When researching the outcomes and conclusions of group learning in an educational context, an overall representation of my own experience became more evident, in the sense that peer collaboration in an academic framework has numerous potential benefits. I felt that group learning created more pressure for me to listen and contribute to a discussion with my fellow peers building an overall satisfied feeling, this could be further supported whereby group work develops a better sense of achievement, improved problem solving, increased self-esteem and learning attitudes (Burdett and Hastie, 2009; Colbeck et al., 2000; Goldfinch).

Regarding the required workload within in my group learning experience, each member was responsible for individual work outside from class, where they would have to further represent in the following week, a summary of the required reading to the other group members. I felt that this process could be ideally realised by Burdett and Hastie (2009) asserting that individuals were more satisfied with group work when they perceived greater workload equality, resulting in a more valuable learning outcome. I was also satisfied by the personal approach of reporting information back to smaller groups, as I felt members were able to relate more affectively and observe more attentively when in a smaller group setting, where each member were able to reflect meta-cognitively with positive interdependence, individual accountability and face to face interaction (Teaching making a difference, Johnson pg 272)

Aside from the times when each group member related information from outside study back to in class group members, I was also required to take part in many in class group activities, where I was allocated in groups with other class mates different from our initial group members. The preference of other group member’s was based on a common subject area in teaching. By allocating groups based on a common interest, made me feel even more motivated to learn as we shared that common interest. This can be indicated by research explaining that it may be more beneficial to pick members for groups based on desirable individual characteristics such as personality (Colbeck et al., 2000; Humphrey et al., 2011). This also allows better monitoring of participation and encouraged quieter members to contribute. (Teaching making a difference, Johnson pg 273)

All these outcomes made me consider about the importance of group learning when I prepare for my own lesson plans as to when I am ready to teach in the classroom. Considering the vast diversity in schools, encouraging and explaining material to smaller groups could be a very important and an affective learning tool (Giangreco, Dennis, Cloninger, Edelman, & Schattrnan, 1993). By embracing group collaboration of student diversity In cooperative small groups, students are required to learn from each other through their interactions and relationships, which improves attitudes of students of different races, ethnicities and academic abilities toward one another, overall having a positive affect on achievement and in particular promoting conceptual and higher-level learning. (Classroom tips working with cooperative small groups). From my own experience being part of cooperative group learning, my ability to observe and listen was reinforced, which I believe in a classroom setting will encourage observational peer learning. This can be highly beneficial towards children with developmental disabilities, and although observational learning levels may differ, according to (Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice) learning in a small group arrangement was found to be highly effective as future practice.

**Section E -** **Reflection on strategies in practice**

**1.Male. Lives with mother, who escaped from Rwanda, and older brother. Loves art. Has learning difficulties.**

Before implementing co-operative learning strategies when teaching someone from Rwanda or similar background, it would be paramount for the teacher to understand this student is from a different cultural background and adjustments in communication will be required. It is also important to understand the personal biography of such a student as a learner in continued education. If he is experiencing learning difficulties it could be highly probable that English is his second language. Before using co-operative learning strategies in the classroom the teacher would have to ask some key questions when teaching this student. Firstly as to whether this student is able to make meaning of what is happening in the classroom and secondly if this in any way connects with the student’s prior experiences. With this recognition in mind, co- operative learning will encourage positive interdependence, face – face interaction, individual accountability, interpersonal small group skills and group processing. (Teaching making a difference pg 176)

The co-operative learning strategy will be particularly beneficial and will require this student to learn to work with others, which are an important skill for later on. This strategy will be important to adopt pedagogy on multi literacies promoting application of different cultural experiences, new ways of critical thinking to articulate communication in the classroom which is largely based on diverse characteristics. (Valuing diversity pg 243)

It will be also important for the teacher to realise that it is misleading that other languages function similar to English. Not only will they ‘pick up’ vocabulary but they will observe how peers learn and solve problems, and share the correct context between speaker/writer/listener and reader removing any cultural ambiguities. (Valuing diversity pg 239).

**2.Male. Has Down Syndrome. Lives with parents and talented brother. Loves sport. Is very social.**

It must be acknowledged, when teaching a student with Down Syndrome, certain considerations must be realised, if learning success is to be achieved, as they have particular strengths and weaknesses associated with their learning development. Firstly it must be noted that the teacher must familarise what special needs is required and to adopt and modify materials and procedures to what best helps facilitate their learning (Pearson Pg43).

Research indicates there were large significant gains in expressive language and literacy skills for those educated in mainstream classrooms.(<http://www.down-syndrome.org/reports/295/>) Although, there is a significant relationship between communication and behaviour difficulties, the expressive language ability of Down syndrome students may be the result of the frustration of not being understood. By embracing cooperative learning strategies with other students, will create better social independence skills, more friends and more involvement in activities both in the class and outside, resulting in better speech, language, behaviour and social development, creating an overall better academic record. (<http://www.down-syndrome.org/reports/295/>).

From co-operative learning, a student with Down syndrome will be given an opportunity to share and contribute, and be encouraged by the other students to stay on task. To facilitate a more accessible implementation of the lesson objectives in class, appropriate instructional and monitoring materials must be used in identifying the student’s objectives, strengths, and weaknesses. The teacher should complete initial lesson plan and subsequent lesson plan templates, supporting materials arranged into tabbed sections for lesson components, progress monitoring sheets and motivational materials (e.g. point sheet system, stickers, and small prizes) must be readily available to assist the whole process of teaching Down syndrome students. (<http://www.bsnpta.org/geeklog/public_html/filemgmt/filemgmt_data/files/VOL.36NO.4MarApr2004_TEC_Al_Otaiba36-4.pdf> )

**3.Male. Gifted and talented in most academic areas. In wheelchair after car accident. Loves sport.**

Based on the theory of multiple intelligences, identifying gifted children can sometimes go unrecognized, so when working most effectively with gifted children, their talents must be first identified. In this case study, the teacher would firstly need to collaborate with the student and plan learning objectives and activities while considering his physical disability. Encouraging cooperative learning strategies can promote peer interaction and encourage the other students to communicate with this student. Co-operative learning strategies will also providing opportunities to be challenged and involve critical thinking.

However, as gifted children like to work alone it would be considered to allocate groups where gifted children can work with other gifted children (middle and secondary school students: Addressing cultural diversity pg 47)

Tasks will therefore need to be pitched at the level of these students such as Think, Pair, Share’ and encourage the developments of the students leadership skills. (<https://www.teachervision.com/cooperative-learning/resource/48649.html> )

Another co-operative learning strategy that would prove suitable is the ‘Three Step Interview’ strategy which would be suited if the students are to solve problems that have no right or wrong answers and to share hypotheses. This would suit a talented student, as it would be an opportunity to be challenged. Other strategies such as the jigsaw strategy would involve the acquisition and presentation of new material, to review and have an informed debate and where he is given the opportunity to become an ‘expert ‘on a selected topic. (<https://www.teachervision.com/cooperative-learning/resource/48649.html> )

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**4.Male. Is very sad and tries to self-harm. Family very concerned. Was once high achiever – now failing.**

When depression is recognised early and when professionals provide therapy treatment, young people can experience improved mood and function better in school and life. Teachers and other school staff must also be aware about depressed students because the disorder can seriously impair academic and interpersonal behaviour at school (Hammen & Rudolph, 2003). (<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/oct10/vol68/num02/Responding-to-a-Student's-Depression.aspx>)

Depressed students often give up more quickly on tasks and refuse to attempt academic work they find too difficult, they doubt their ability to complete academic tasks or solve problems individually. Therefore, Co-operative learning may be a useful tool as it provides an opportunity to engage and express their feelings and social interactions more affectively. Some initial guidance by the teacher should be embraced by giving frequent feedback on academic, social, and behavioural performance. Cooperative learning activities should be designed to accommodate and respond to the student's mood fluctuation, or side effects of medication.

Cooperative strategies focusing on problem-solving skills should have assisted coaching in ways to organise, plan, and execute tasks, with frequent monitoring of whether the student has suicidal thoughts.

Communication systems with parents and family should be in place, by involving them in classroom events and deadlines, offering an area for problem solving, and reporting on progress (Davern, 2004). (<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/oct10/vol68/num02/Responding-to-a-Student's-Depression.aspx>)

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American Federation of Teachers, afl-cio 555 New Jersey Ave. N.W. Washington, DC 20001 202/879-4400 Item no. 39-0090G

**Classroom tips working with cooperative small groups**

[**http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED516932.pdf**](http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED516932.pdf)

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