

Moreland University

Teacher Certification

Module 7, Unit 1, Assignment 2

Summary of 10 Standards for Clinical Practice

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To meet Standard 1, ‘Learner Development’ we, as candidates, need to consider the all-round development of our students, including language, social, emotional, cognitive and physical to ensure that these are taken into consideration in our instruction, and there is achievable and challenging content and activities with regard to each. Key points covered in the Discussion Forum on this included meeting the needs of students who may be studying in a language that is not their first. We have to take this into consideration, helping them develop the language and making necessary accommodations. Similarly, the length of class is something we need to look at to ensure this is appropriate and learning is student centered. I am teaching a kindergarten class of aged 3-4 year olds in China. This being a new age group, I am needed to take the time to understand the development levels of students this age, in particular, with regards to social development for group work, motor skill development for practical work, and language ability, with my students learning English as a second language.

To meet Standard 2, ‘Learning Differences’, we need to create a classroom environment that is values and is respectful to people from all different cultures and backgrounds, and whom may be different in any way. It is about creating the inclusive classroom, where all are inspired to do well. This was the standard I considered in more depth. For me, a first challenges is not developing an attitude of respect and value towards other’s ourselves. Many of us may naturally bring that in as we go into teaching. However, it is ensuring we educate enough about different cultures or backgrounds, and know enough about our students to be able to show it in reality and not make any mistakes. Secondly, developing the attitudes in students who may come from very closed backgrounds, where they haven’t had exposure to different types of people. Afterall, the classroom climate and community is created by the students also, even though the teacher may work to lead it so that everyone feels safe. Other’s in the Discussion Forum shared these views. We all feel that the investment of time to get to know our students is vitally important and knowledge of it should always be at the forefront of our mind in everything that we do. We should continually reflect on what is working and how we can change things, especially around cultural and language barriers. With regards to guiding up attitudes of students themselves to become more open minded, patience and again, respect is required.

To meet Standard 3, 'Learning Environments' we need to work with students and families together, to build a positive and fair classroom environment that nurtures self-motivation and inquiry in our students. Also use technologies, methods of communication and resources to create a learner centered classroom that can meet differentiated needs. Finally a strong presence of norms, expectations and routines that respect all backgrounds and lead to productive students. This was explored in depth in the discussion forum. Key points included remembering the importance of positively framed and respectful norms and procedures and involving students in these. The classroom should focus on the students. This can include practices such as flexible seating and if possible, having areas of the classroom and displays that are meaningful to students and can be used by them. Differentiation should not just be on "ability", but interest and background also, with student choice, and variety in activity and assessment types, as well as grouping strategies. Developing strong relationships with families and getting to know students and build rapport on a personal level will help develop the learning environment of belonging and motivation.

To meet Standard 4, 'Content Knowledge' we need to have a deep understanding of our subject or subjects from a pedagogical perspective, and be able use learning methodology and academic language here to support student development. We need to have a strong knowledge of prerequisite relationships, being able to relate new content to student's previous knowledge and life experiences as well as identify misconceptions and confusions so these can be addressed. Finally, we need to show a working knowledge of how to use technologies and resources effectively. The key here again I think is getting to know your students and using this as a basis for your instruction. The better you know them, the more awareness you will have of their past experiences and background, and the better you will be able to tap into these in your instruction. This was a key point that came up in the Discussion Forum. Like others in the cohort, I am based in China. Culturally and language background can be considered when determining approaches and what areas might be challenging. It was agreed also, that you should always be open minded as a teacher, and keep diversifying your knowledge and use of different resources, methods and approaches, always keeping the individual needs of the students at the forefront, for student centered learning.

To meet Standard 5, "Application of Content", we must be able to create projects and lessons that are relevant to age-appropriate real-life problems and that promote critical thinking through questioning, while adapting these based on student differences and responses. We must also be able to create interdisciplinary lessons that follow and are adjusted by student feedback, following student preferences, and which support students to develop students understanding and respect of different cultures. To me, at its core, this is about finding ways to make lessons relevant to students. We will need to make it practical and show them how they can use information and skills in real life, while deepening think and making it meaningful. In kindergarten, this is especially important as we continue to nurture students' curiosity and all round development. The use of open-ended questions and activities, with teacher intervention and guidance towards particular information where necessary drives much of what we try to do anyway. In the Discussion Forum, we had a discussion about the caution we might need to take to ensure we are respecting other's cultures, especially if teaching about them and not appropriating. Again, it really does come down to being open-minded, educating yourself, and asking yourself if you really understand something, as well as, as always, taking the time to really get to know your students and their families.

To meet Standard 6, 'Assessment', we need to be able to create both formative and summative assessments to check for and verify student learning, and provide information that we effectively communicate to students and caregivers, in addition to informing future instruction as necessary. In addition, we need to be able to make adjustments and accommodations within assessments to meet the needs of different learners, including

special needs and EAL. Furthermore we need to be able to appropriately obtain data from assessments to identify learning needs and monitor progress. Working in kindergarten as a homeroom teacher, I am used to getting much of my data on students from observation of all activities throughout the day. It will be a beneficial experience throughout the program, to also try more formal ways to gain assessment data at times and on more students at once as this might be required, while still making activities engaging, age-appropriate and part of our natural daily activity. In the discussion forum we noted that there are many great tools that can be used for assessment, especially online and that ultimately assessments could be varied. We also explored the great point that assessments need not only be traditional in nature, but could incorporate student choice and creativity (so long as the core skill to be assessed is still looked at), which means deeper thinking and 21st century skills can be incorporated.

To meet Standard 7, 'Planning for Instruction', we need to be able to use evidence-based instructional strategies, resources and technology to plan for instruction that will guide each student to reach high standards. Planning should be data driven and instruction should show clear sequencing from introduction to simple examples, to more complex examples, with key concepts clearly taught. I think for all teachers, the challenge here is that while planning is vitally important for multiple reasons, especially differentiation, for true student-centered learning, we need to be constantly observing and reflecting, looking at our data and adapting as necessary, almost on a daily basis. Working in a kindergarten with very young students, aged 3 – 4, with a relatively small number of students – 14 – and a philosophy of learning through play and student emergent learning, it will be a challenge to balance still plan some instruction and activities to support student development, while still allowing the freedom for students to exercise curiosity and explore materials naturally. Planning and implementing the observation sessions for the clinical practice should support with this. In the Discussion Forum, it was noted that planning can also be beneficial for alignment across subjects and grade levels. At my school, we actually have three classes of my grade level. Meeting with the international teachers from the other classes, we have agreed that although dynamics in each of our classes are very different, having some collaboration with English planning will be beneficial so that more ideas can be shared and we can support each other. It was also noted that in our planning, we should always remember the importance of cross curricular and real life activities, as well as those that develop 21st century skills. The importance of data should be remembered. It can inform us on what is working well and what isn't, as well as on how students are doing.

Standard 8, "Instructional Strategies", really then follows on from this, and is focused more specifically on the use of research-informed practice in our planning and teaching (Standard 7 on the other hand was more about planning for differentiated and sequential lessons that are data informed, while also including best practices. Hence, they are similar and overlapping.) To meet Standard 8, we must use the obtained assessment data to specifically apply data-informed research and instructional strategies to drive instruction and learning. Research-based practices should be used for instruction and to monitor student learning, as planned by us and in collaboration with colleagues. In addition, here, we should effectively use questioning to promote higher order thinking in our students. To me, it will here be important to consistently ensure we are staying up to date with research informed practice and educating ourselves on it. However, just as important, will be continually reflecting on how we are actually using it in our practice and how we can use it in new ways. Higher order thinking questions will be a particular challenge for me due to my students having English as their second language and not yet being able to express their thoughts as freely as in their first language. However, in my situation, I can actually adapt this to the goal of developing student's ability to think and be creative in English, rather than just learning robotically, by asking graded questions of the right challenge level. (Finding this correct challenge level may of course not be easy.) My Chinese teachers can also work with me to support as necessary so that students can answer deeper thinking questions in their first language also. In the Discussion

Forum, the effectiveness of using online tools for data collection and recording was noted, for example, Google Forms. Also, there are a number of online and technology tools in existent that can enhance all aspects of learning. From being on this program, my knowledge of these has increased greatly. I look forward to continually exploring new ones to reflect on how well they could work for my students. Again, the importance of strong collaboration and communication relationships with our team was noted.

Standard 9, 'Professional Learning and Ethical Practice' is as it's name suggests, related to both of these. To meet it we must show strong awareness of the importance of continual reflection and self-development on our ability to support our students, and take responsibility for our professional development, continually seeking new opportunity. With regards to ethics, we must show respect and value for the background and culture of our school and students, in our teaching and other practices. We must abide by laws of the area in which we live and teacher ethics. Similar to above, for the ethics here, it is not just about our attitude, but more taking the time to educate ourselves appropriately on customs, laws and cultures, so that we can show these in our actual practice. For professional development, my school is in its second year. As a teaching team, we are being encouraged to collaborate together for our own professional development. This will involve doing our own research and each running workshops based on research and then discussing our own ideas on how we could apply them. This will be exciting to be a part of. I plan to continue to do my own reading and to follow education research on social media for example, to stay up to date. There are also the possibilities of conferences, both live in China, and online. In the Discussion Forum, it was noted that professional development could considered both with regards to content knowledge and teaching skills. Even at kindergarten level, this has relevance, where content knowledge could more refer to pedagogical knowledge of how knowledge may be formed and of the stages of development in different domains, with the teaching skill then being how we apply it. A discussion was also had on the importance of drawing the line between teacher and friend. Working with such young children myself, and as a homeroom teacher, where I am with my students all day, every day, this can almost push towards teacher versus parent. Again, while it is important to show students care and love, professionalism and caution still needs to be obtained. With professional development, the importance thing to always remember is that it is not just about doing the research and trainings, but then also reflecting on how it could be applied to your own teaching and going on to apply it.

Standard 10, 'Leadership and Collaboration', is about our wider role within the school. To meet it we must work alongside others to attain mutual growth and professional development. We must work with others to help lead cross curricular projects and lessons with our students, that also includes our schools mission and vision. Finally, we must show the ability to collaborate with wider staff beyond just the teaching faculty to participate in wider school projects. In the Discussion Forum and also VC discussion, many of us agreed that while collaboration within teaching had many opportunities, especially if we were growing to leadership roles within our grade or subject for example. However, wider collaboration for other faculties and whole school projects can be difficult. The possibility of collaborating with SEN teachers was suggested and is great for our students. Again, being part of a small, new and growing school, I am fortunate to have some possible opportunities here. These include collaborating with our marketing and logistics teams for school Open Days and also for organizing and hosting larger events, including the upcoming celebration day for the Mid-Autumn Festival (Chinese festival.)