



Increasing Year Four Regional Students' Writing Achievement Through the Universal Design for Learning

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Abstract

This article examines how incorporating the Universal Design for Learning into writing instruction could improve the writing achievement of year four students in regional Victoria, Australia. The Universal Design for Learning is an instructional approach that aims to provide students with meaningful learning experiences through multiple means of engagement, representation, and action and expression. Using evaluative reflection research and a mixed methods approach, data were obtained from a year four classroom of 16 students aged 9-10 years. Convenience sampling was used to access student work samples and the diagnostic and summative assessment data of these students. Personal identifiers were removed before being received by the researcher to provide a neutral and objective analysis. Findings indicated a 15 percentage-point increase in students' writing achievement average after the Universal Design for Learning was implemented in writing instruction. Differentiation through the Universal Design for Learning supported students' individual writing abilities, strengths, and interests, plays a significant role in year four students' engagement, participation, and writing achievement. Implications for regional education include the importance of evidence-based instructional approaches that support student participation, inclusion, and equity by ensuring all students can be successful in their learning.

Keywords: *Universal Design for Learning, writing instruction, writing achievement, regional education, differentiation*

Introduction

Swift Primary School (pseudonym) is a co-educational government primary school located in regional Victoria, Australia. There are approximately 250 enrolments throughout foundation to year six, and the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage value is 800 (My School, 2024). The school is in a low socioeconomic regional area, with a variety of culturally and linguistically diverse families who are impacted by low socioeconomic status and intergenerational poverty (My School, 2024). Approximately 20% of students are learning English as a Second Language, and several students have intellectual or behavioural disabilities that impact their learning (My School, 2024). Swift Primary School has a strong focus on embracing student diversity and delivering a strengths-based approach to learning through evidence-based practices. Explicit instruction through the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model (Fisher & Frey, 2008) is the main instructional approach. A School-wide Positive Behaviour Support framework (Hepburn, 2022) is in place to support student behaviour.

The 2023 National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) results show that year four students at Swift Primary School are working well below average in writing, spelling, and

grammar when compared to students with similar backgrounds (My School, 2024). Proficient literacy skills inform a student's future academic success and participation in schooling, society, and employment (Dietrichson et al., 2020; Hanemann, 2015). Research shows that year three students performing below the national literacy standards are at high risk of never catching up to expected levels (Australian Education Research Organisation, 2024).

The year four Victorian students' academic achievement, engagement, and participation are impacted by several factors, including low socioeconomic status, intergenerational poverty, family violence, poor attendance, and intellectual disabilities (Duke, 2020). Poor school attendance is an ongoing factor impacting student learning, with approximately 50% of Victorian students attending 90% or more of the time (My School, 2024). According to Duke (2020) and Benoit & Kearney (2022), poor attendance has significant negative consequences for students, including an increased risk of school dropout, mental health problems, and poor academic achievement throughout primary and secondary schooling. The COVID-19-related school closures and online learning arrangements that occurred throughout 2020-2021 in regional Victoria negatively impacted year four students' academic achievement and school engagement. The challenges of online learning during a global pandemic caused significant disturbance and disadvantage to year four Victorian students' initial literacy learning (who were in foundation and year one at the time) (König & Frey, 2022). Initial literacy instruction is the foundation of any students' future academic achievement (Double et al., 2019; Quinn & Philippakos, 2023). Low writing achievement also negatively impacts academic achievement across the curriculum, as most learning areas require students to use language for a range of purposes, such as interpreting, analysing, and creating (Griffiths & McLean, 2022).

The several factors negatively impacting year four students' writing achievement emphasise the strong need for an inclusive and evidence-based instructional approach, such as the Universal Design for Learning, to be implemented in writing instruction to support all students' writing achievement. The Universal Design for Learning has been selected for its ability to implement differentiation based on students' individual learning needs and abilities. The current writing program is delivered using explicit instruction through the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model. By implementing the Universal Design for Learning alongside the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model in writing instruction, students will have access to multiple means of engagement, representation, and action and expression in every writing lesson (Centre for Applied Special Technology, 2024; Crowther et al., 2023). Hence, it is the aim of this article to shed light on how the Universal Design for Learning can improve year four students' writing achievement.

Literature Review

Recent literature showed that socioeconomically disadvantaged students often experience a combination of physical, social, emotional, and economic factors that negatively impact their initial literacy learning and language development (Duke, 2020; Su et al., 2020; Tomaszewski et al., 2020). Three studies found a strong positive correlation between adverse childhood experiences and poor school attendance and literacy achievement (Duke, 2020; Su et al., 2020; Tomaszewski et al., 2020). Adverse childhood experiences (abuse, neglect, poverty, household dysfunction, or having a disability or impairment) were associated with poor school engagement, participation, and connectedness to school and learning (Duke, 2020; Tomaszewski et al., 2020). While both Tomaszewski et al. (2020) and Su et al. (2020) examined Australian participants and data records (Medicare and NAPLAN), the study by Duke (2020) focused on American year nine and eleven secondary school students. On the other hand, Su et al. (2020) examined the influence of additional learning needs (hearing impairment and speaking English as a Second Language) on a student's literacy and numeracy achievement, highlighting the importance of differentiation to support disadvantaged learners.

The COVID-19-related school closures and online learning arrangements that occurred throughout 2020 and 2021 significantly impacted students' writing achievement. Three studies found a significant decrease in student engagement, attendance, and literacy achievement after extended periods of online learning (Ewing & Cooper, 2021; König & Frey, 2022; Thoma et al., 2023). Ewing & Cooper (2021) reported that younger children were more affected due to relying on their parents and carers for support in navigating technology and managing at-home learning. While Ewing and Cooper (2021) focused on Victorian participants, König and Frey (2022) completed a systematic review with data from several countries, including Australia. Interestingly, Thoma et al. (2023) concluded their study by highlighting the strong need for teachers to implement inclusive, active learning strategies that foster student engagement, connectedness, and participation in post-COVID-19 learning environments.

The impact of the Universal Design for Learning on student academic achievement has been examined in various curriculum areas, including writing, science, mathematics, music, history, and physical education (Crowther et al., 2023; Haegele et al., 2024; Hashey et al., 2020; Kelly et al., 2022; Kieran & Anderson, 2019; Super et al., 2021; Thoma et al., 2023). These studies were conducted in American and European contexts and were completed in various curriculum areas and learning contexts, including early years, primary, secondary, and tertiary education settings. They indicated that the program increased students' academic achievement and engagement in learning. Multimodal teaching and learning strategies including hands on, visual, musical, and auditory strategies were beneficial for minimising cognitive overload through clear and cohesive learning materials and instructions (Apostolou & Linardatos, 2023; Bolkan & Goodboy, 2020). Interestingly, multimodal strategies are also supported by cognitive load theory, where they can reduce extraneous load and improve both comprehension and recall (Sweller, 2011).

In conclusion, the literature reviewed provides understanding and insight into the combined factors that influenced students' low writing achievement and the existing relevant literature on the Universal Design for Learning and student achievement. In what follows, I examine whether this program could lead to similar results in an Australian context by studying how it could improve year four Victorian students' writing achievement.

Method

Evaluative reflection research in the form of systematic inquiry in the workplace was used to examine the research question (Hilton & Hilton, 2020). A benefit of evaluative research in this problem and context was to address a problem and goal in a regional Victorian and to provide exploration in the key areas of writing instruction and writing achievement (Rallis & Rossman, 2012). When conducted in a school setting, evaluative research can produce context-specific findings and actionable recommendations to improve student academic achievement (Hilton & Hilton, 2020; Kervin et al., 2016). This study aimed to provide implications for regional education and uncover ways to support the learning needs of all students. Convenience sampling was used by selecting an available classroom of year four learners. The benefits of convenience sampling included convenient access to data in the relevant problem and context (Kervin et al., 2016). A mixed methods approach consisting of quantitative and qualitative data was collected from a year four classroom of 16 students aged 9-10 years. The personal identifiers of all data and information used for this study were removed prior to being received by the researcher to provide a neutral and objective analysis of the findings. A thematic analysis was completed on the data to holistically analyse the results and answer the research question (Hilton & Hilton, 2020).

The Universal Design for Learning was implemented into teaching and learning across the span of a four-week informative writing unit focusing on video games. The Victorian Curriculum content descriptors being addressed were:

- Plan, draft and publish imaginative, information and persuasive texts demonstrating increasing control over text structures and language features and selecting print and multimodal elements appropriate to the audience and purpose (VCELY266) (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2024).
- Reread and edit texts for meaning, appropriate structure, grammatical choices and punctuation (VCELY267) (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2024).

The intended learning outcomes of the informative writing unit were:

- Students will plan, draft, and publish an informative writing piece.
- Students will proofread their own writing to check for clarity and readability.
- Students will develop confidence in applying appropriate grammatical choices, including full stops, exclamation marks, question marks, commas, and apostrophes.

Quantitative and Qualitative Data Collection Methods

To quantitatively measure year four students' writing achievement before and after implementing the Universal Design for Learning into writing instruction, 16 students' work samples were formally assessed twice against a curriculum-based writing rubric (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2024). Students' writing skills were assessed against the following seven criteria: Ideas, organisation, presentation, word choice, sentence fluency, conventions, and voice (Sedita & Hasbrouck, 2023). Each criterion was in accordance with the Victorian Curriculum year three writing achievement standards and content descriptors (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2024). Each criterion was worth three points, where one point indicated 'emerging', two points indicated 'mostly satisfactory', and three points indicated 'satisfactory'. A maximum score of 21 was available. Rubrics are reliable and valid assessment tools for measuring writing achievement, as a high-quality rubric allows educators to interpret student work consistently against an agreed set of standards (Hattie, 2012).

At the beginning of the study, students' writing achievement was diagnostically assessed before the Universal Design for Learning was implemented into writing instruction. The diagnostic assessment task required students to write a response to the following prompt: What is your favourite video game? Students had the option to select any video game of their choosing and were provided 60 minutes of writing time (one lesson). The teacher explicitly modelled the task and created a worked example at the beginning of the lesson before students began independently writing. No other supports were provided to students throughout independent writing time. The intent of this assessment was to authentically measure students' informative writing skills before the Universal Design for Learning was incorporated into instruction. The Universal Design for Learning was incorporated into an informative writing unit over four weeks. Writing lessons were conducted four times a week for 60 minutes in duration each. The Universal Design for Learning Guidelines were followed closely, ensuring students had multiple means of engagement, representation, and action and expression during each learning experience. Key strategies included: Multimodal (visual, verbal, auditory, and hands-on) strategies, explicit teaching (worked examples, modelling, and questioning) strategies, student-friendly writing checklists, writing templates, concrete resources (mini-whiteboards, letter-sound charts, magnetic letters), and opportunities for peer collaboration.

At the end of the study, students' writing achievement was summatively assessed after the Universal Design for Learning had been implemented into writing instruction for four weeks. The summative assessment task required students to write an information report on a video game of their choice. Students had the opportunity to research their topic using laptops, plan, draft, proofread, edit, and publish their information report. Formative feedback was provided throughout the writing unit to inform students' final submissions. Students spent four 60-minute lessons preparing their final information report for submission. This included planning,

researching, drafting, proofreading, editing, and publishing time. The summative assessment was completed individually by students. The aim of the summative assessment was to consolidate students' learning and measure the impact of the Universal Design for Learning on year four students' writing achievement. The same curriculum-based writing rubric was used for both formal assessments to provide a clear comparison of students' academic achievement before and after the Universal Design for Learning was implemented into instruction. The quantitative data was numerically presented in tables and line graphs. All data was meaningfully presented in clearly labelled and organised tables and graphs (Hilton & Hilton, 2020). The data was analysed and reflected upon to answer the research question.

To qualitatively assess student progress and analyse and reflect upon the impact of the Universal Design for Learning on year four students' writing achievement, student work samples from the diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments were analysed and reflected upon by the researcher. The student work samples collected ranged from worksheets, drafts of student work, and entries from students' writers' notebooks. Three focus students were selected, including one learner performing at the expected level, one learner performing slightly below the expected level, and one learner performing well below the expected level. An anecdotal analysis and reflection were written for each student writing sample collected. Students' writing skills, including handwriting, grammar, punctuation, ideas, word choice, and sentence structure, were assessed.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were made to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings and to ensure the wellbeing, safety, and privacy of participants' data. All personal identifiers of all data and information used for this study were removed prior to being received by the researcher (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2023). No attempts were made to re-identify whom the data was associated with, and all reasonable steps were taken to prevent re-identification of any data collected (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2023). No data from any Indigenous individuals was collected. The data presented in this project does not create additional risks of re-identification of the information or data. Additionally, the research carries a low risk to participants and the community (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2023). Integrity was applied throughout the project, where the researcher remained neutral and objective. Precautions were taken to minimise any potential researcher bias, including the use of anonymous data collection methods and an external assessment moderation process to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings (Adie, 2022). All student data and information were collected anonymously and kept strictly confidential. Only the researcher had access to the de-identified data, and students were not identifiable from any of the student work samples or formal assessment results. The risk of a data leak was minimised by storing all data records and information related to the project on a secure, password- and authenticator-protected hard drive (Hilton & Hilton, 2020).

Findings

The purpose of this study was to determine how incorporating the Universal Design for Learning can increase year four students' writing achievement. A close examination of the quantitative and qualitative data suggests three themes: Increased writing achievement, strong levels of student engagement and participation, and the importance of differentiation for the academic success and inclusion of all learners. De-identified general demographic and academic data was provided anonymously at the beginning of the study to contextualise year four students' writing abilities. Table 1 collates the participants' demographic and academic data.

Table 1: Participants' Demographic and Academic Data

	Age (Years)	Year Level	Assessed Writing Level (Victorian Curriculum F-10)
Focus Student 1	9	4	3.5
Focus Student 2	9	4	2.5
Focus Student 3	10	4	1.5
Student 4	9	4	3
Student 5	10	4	2
Student 6	10	4	3
Student 7	9	4	2
Student 8	9	4	1.5
Student 9	10	4	3
Student 10	9	4	2
Student 11	10	4	2.5
Student 12	10	4	3.5
Student 13	10	4	2.5
Student 14	9	4	1.5
Student 15	9	4	1.5
Student 16	9	4	2

In Victoria, year four students should be working towards achieving level 4.0 by the end of year four. At the beginning of this study, our participants were expected to be working at approximately level 3.5 (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2024). Two of our participants were performing at 3.5, and 14 students were working below the expected level of achievement. Therefore, most students (88%) were working below the expected level of achievement in writing.

Theme 1: Increased Writing Achievement

The diagnostic and summative assessment data showed that most year four students' writing achievement increased after the Universal Design for Learning was implemented into writing instruction. Table 2 gathers the summary statistics of students' diagnostic and summative assessment results before and after the implementation of the program.

Table 2: Diagnostic and Summative Assessment Data Summary Statistics

Student	Diagnostic Assessment		Summative Assessment		
	Numerical Score	Percentage (%)	Numerical Score	Percentage (%)	Percentage-point change
Mean	11.21	53%	14.37	68%	15%
Median	11	52%	14	66%	14%
Mode	13	61%	13	61%	0%
Range	9	42%	10	47%	5%
Minimum	7	33%	9	42%	9%
Maximum	16	76%	19	80%	4%

After the Universal Design for Learning was implemented into writing instruction, the data showed a 15 percentage-point increase on average in students' writing achievement. Specifically, the mean assessment score increased from 11.21 (53%) at the beginning of the study to 14.37 (68%) at the end of the study. The mean assessment score increased by 15% (3.16 points). Median and mode follow the same pattern. Table 3 shows a further comparison of year four students' writing achievement before and after the study.

Table 3: Comparison of Diagnostic and Summative Assessment Data

Student	Diagnostic Assessment		Summative Assessment		Difference Percentage-point change (pp)
	Numerical Score	Percentage (%)	Numerical Score	Percentage (%)	
Focus Student 1	16	76%	18	85%	9
Focus Student 2	13	61%	15	71%	9
Focus Student 3	10	47%	18	85%	38
Student 4	13	61%	15	71%	9
Student 5	12	57%	19	90%	33
Student 6	13	61%	12	57%	-4.7
Student 7	9	42%	14	66%	23
Student 8	8	38%	14	66%	28
Student 9	13	61%	17	80%	19
Student 10	10	47%	12	57%	9
Student 11	12	57%	12	57%	0
Student 12	14	66%	19	90%	23
Student 13	n/a	n/a	14	66%	0
Student 14	7	33%	9	42%	9
Student 15	7	33%	9	42%	9
Student 16	n/a	n/a	13	61%	0

On the diagnostic assessment, the highest score was 16/21, and the lowest score was 7/21. Whereas, on the summative assessment, the highest score was 19/21, and the lowest score was 9/21. The greatest improvement was 8.0 points (see Student 3), and two students showed no improvement (see Student 6 and Student 11). Insufficient data was provided for two students due to repeated school absences. Table 4 further highlights the overall increase in year four students' writing achievement after incorporating the Universal Design for Learning into writing instruction.

Table 4: Analysis of Diagnostic and Summative Assessment Data

	Diagnostic Assessment		Summative Assessment	
Score of 50% or higher	8 students	50% of students	14 students	88% of students
Score of 70% or higher	1 student	6% of students	7 students	43% of students

Implementing the Universal Design for Learning into writing instruction had a positive impact on most of these year four students' writing achievement. There were four outliers in the data set (see Student 6, Student 11, Student 13, and Student 16). The varied levels of improvement can potentially be attributed to a range of factors that will be discussed in the discussion.

Theme 2: Strong Student Engagement and Participation

The second reoccurring theme in the data was a strong sense of student engagement and participation after incorporating the Universal Design for Learning into instruction. The student work samples showed consistent student engagement and participation across most learning activities and tasks. In an informative writing unit on video games, students chose their own writing topics and demonstrated their developing knowledge and understanding through various means. Several students utilised multimodal learning strategies, including planning their writing by visualising their ideas with symbols, images, and illustrations. Other students used written language, a structured writing template with guiding prompts provided by their teacher, or a combination of all strategies. Allowing students to write about familiar, interest-based topics and providing flexibility in how they expressed their learning led to sustained participation throughout the four-week writing unit. The impact of sustained student participation through the duration of the unit reflected positively in the summative assessment data, where most students showed increased academic achievement. This highlights the positive impact of the Universal Design for Learning on year four students' writing achievement, participation, and engagement in the classroom.

Theme 3: Differentiated Teaching and Learning

The final theme identified was that the Universal Design for Learning effectively provided differentiated teaching and learning opportunities for students. The student work samples, and assessment data indicated that the differentiation strategies that catered to students' individual writing abilities and learning needs were perhaps one of the most successful aspects of the project. Given the broad spectrum of abilities in the year four classroom, differentiation based on the content, process, and product was essential in ensuring all students received learning activities that were appropriate for their individual learning needs and writing abilities (Tomlinson & Moon, 2013). The student work samples showed that all students received differentiation based on the content to extend upon their current writing abilities. For example, students' working at the expected level of achievement received scaffolding to incorporate descriptive vocabulary, subheadings, and paragraphs in their writing. Students working below the expected level of achievement were practising using full stops and capital letters correctly. By differentiating the content for these students, it ensured the task was an appropriate degree of difficulty for their writing abilities. It was clear from the student work samples that there was not

a single measure of success and that success looked different for each student based on their learning needs and abilities.

The student work samples demonstrated the use of a differentiated, student-friendly writing checklist for students to self-assess their own writing. Students working at the expected level of achievement used a writing checklist that encouraged them to integrate paragraphs, descriptive language, and correct punctuation in their writing. Whereas students performing below the expected level received a simplified version with visuals (symbols and images) to support them using full stops and capital letters correctly in each sentence. These resources were tailored to students' writing abilities and learning needs. A further three student work samples also showcased three students (performing below the expected level of achievement) who used a structured writing template to successfully complete the summative assessment task. This template had traceable sentence starters and prompts to support these students in being successful in their learning. The Universal Design for Learning facilitated differentiation in both the learning process and products produced by students. Differentiation through multiple means of engagement, representation, and action and expression was essential in ensuring learning was of an appropriate degree of difficulty for students' writing abilities and learning needs. This ensured all students could be successful in their learning, which supported equity and inclusion in the classroom.

Discussion

The findings are broadly in line with themes identified in the existing literature examining the impact of the Universal Design for Learning on student achievement in European and American contexts. One key similarity between this literature and my study is the increase in students' writing achievement after the Universal Design for Learning was implemented into instruction.

As in Hashley et al. (2020), my thematic analysis revealed that multiple means of engagement, representation, and action and expression in writing instruction generated strong student participation in most learning activities. In addition, my findings suggest that the use of an interest-based writing topic on video games actively engaged the year four students in writing by allowing students to write about a familiar topic they were passionate about. Existing literature showed the benefits of interest-based writing topics to support emergent writers, as when writers are confident in their subject matter, their attention can be focused on the mechanics of written language, including syntactic structures, handwriting, and vocabulary (Alzubi & Nazim, 2024; Nawal, 2018). Another existing study also recommended supporting struggling male writers through teaching and learning strategies that boost student motivation (De Smedt et al., 2018). This highlights the positive implications of student-centred approaches on regional Victorian students' engagement and participation in the classroom.

My findings revealed that multimodal teaching and learning strategies were integral to student success, engagement, and participation. This is well documented in existing literature the positive impact of multimodal teaching and learning strategies on student achievement (Apostolou & Linardatos, 2023; Bolkan & Goodboy, 2020; Crowther et al., 2023). These findings implicate the importance of providing differentiated learning opportunities based on students' individual learning needs and academic abilities in a regional education context.

In conclusion, the findings of this study broadly align with existing literature on the Universal Design for Learning and academic achievement and have strong implications for supporting the inclusion, participation, and active learning of students in regional education settings through the Universal Design for Learning. By implementing the Universal Design for Learning, instruction was tailored to meet individual student needs, strengths, interests, and current writing abilities. Similar to the findings in existing literature, students appeared more willing to attempt tasks, explore new writing skills, and refine their existing ones because learning activities were

achievable, engaging, and of an appropriate degree of difficulty (Goss & Sonnemann, 2017; Sullivan et al., 2014). These approaches reflect evidence-based practices that recommend drawing on students' funds of knowledge, strengths, and interests during teaching and learning (Ayre et al., 2022; Miller & Berger, 2020).

Limitations

Limitations of the project included the small sample size of 16 participants that were selected using convenience sampling. This reduced the amount of data collected and the generalisability of the findings to the broader population (Kervin et al., 2016). Nevertheless, my findings can potentially be extended to the broader year four cohort of participants in the same socioeconomic context. Another limitation is the lack of interaction between students and me, the researcher, within the classroom. Further research incorporating student observations and interviews would be beneficial to further examine the impact of the program on student engagement during both explicit teaching and independent writing time.

There were four outliers present in the quantitative data, including one student who showed no improvement between diagnostic and summative assessment, and one student scored one point less on the summative assessment than the diagnostic assessment (see Table 3). An additional two students did not complete the diagnostic assessment, which provided no point of comparison for their summative assessment score. Repeated student absences potentially influenced these four students' scores and caused a limitation in the data set by reducing the amount of data collected. One extraneous variable was the strong presence of explicit teaching alongside the Universal Design for Learning, as it could be interpreted that the increase in students' writing achievement was the result of the explicit teaching as opposed to the program. Further research incorporating control and dependent variable groups would be beneficial to examine these factors further and their impacts on students' writing achievement.

Actionable Recommendations Based on my Findings

Recommendation 1: Implementing the Universal Design for Learning

I recommend implementing the Universal Design for Learning in writing instruction across the year four cohort to proactively meet the diverse learning needs and writing abilities of all students. Incorporating multiple means of engagement, representation, and action and expression in writing instruction ensures equity and that student learning needs are met in this regional education setting. I encourage the year four teaching team to engage in Universal Design for Learning-related professional learning to increase their working knowledge and understanding of the program. Engaging with professional learning with content-focused learning, modelling of effective practices, feedback, and reflection is strongly suggested to strengthen teachers' ability to apply the Universal Design for Learning in practice (Barrio & Hollingshead, 2017; Craig et al., 2022). This provides opportunities for improving teaching practice, understanding the needs of regional students, and generating strategies to meet those needs. Key enablers include sufficient time and funding for professional learning, while constraints may involve limited time, funding, and a lack of support from school leadership. Differing or opposing pedagogical beliefs between teachers also may limit the success of this recommendation.

Recommendation 2: Team Planning and Collaboration

I recommend the year four teaching team collaborates through team planning to consistently implement Universal Design for Learning across the year four cohort. Collaboration through team planning allows teachers to share their knowledge and expertise and create a high-quality writing program. Team planning supports the delivery of a consistent, low variance curriculum cohort-wide (Silbey, 2019). Key enablers include effective collaboration and agreeing on the writing

program. Challenges may arise from limited planning time, potential staff absences during planning time, and differing pedagogical beliefs within the team, which could hinder success.

Recommendation 3: Reflective Practice

Lastly, I recommend the year four teaching team engages in regular reflective practice to assess the progress of implementing the Universal Design for Learning into instruction. Reflective practice allows teachers to identify the successes and areas for improvement specific to the regional Victorian student cohort (Super et al., 2021). Educators should meet informally each week and consult with school leadership to reflect on practice. Frequent reflection allows teachers to develop and implement strategies that promote equity and inclusion in the classroom (Sepdulveda et al., 2024). Enablers for this recommendation include school leadership providing sufficient time for whole-team reflections to occur and appropriate guidance. Challenges may arise from time constraints, lack of leadership support, opposing pedagogical beliefs among staff, and differing priorities based on individual student needs in each classroom.

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