Refining English tutors' skills: Documentary films as pre-teaching reference

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ABSTRACT

Training spoken English tutors requires a variety of resources, including audio-visual references. However, popular social media tutorials often focus on teaching specific English materials, neglecting broader teaching techniques. Ideal tutors need a positive and engaging personality, knowledge transfer strategies, adaptable approaches to classroom conditions, meticulous preparation, and effective wrap-up activities - elements that are missing from most tutorial videos. This study investigates the potential of short documentary films as a reference for teaching techniques for 13 prospective tutors in an intermediate English class. Through an integrated mentoring program for the production of short documentaries, the study explores, describes and addresses the challenges of teaching preparation through observation, interviews and literature review. It also analyzes the potential of documentaries to support teaching and formulates criteria for effective documentary content relevant to teacher preparation. The findings suggest that integrating documentary film production into the English language teaching curriculum can equip tutors with the necessary skills for successful micro-teaching experiences. This approach allows tutors to create personalized short documentaries that serve as a reference for teaching techniques tailored to their specific pre-teaching needs. Tutors gain a deeper understanding and ability to demonstrate not only teaching techniques, but also

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classroom management elements such as preparation, wrap-up activities, brainstorming and teaching approaches.

Keywords: *Documentary film; Film reference; Teaching techniques; Prospective tutors*

1. Introduction

A documentary is a film genre that contains facts from an event or phenomenon that can be used as concrete data for the audience for various purposes, including teaching (Kusakabe et al., 2023; Maskun et al., 2021). Rikarno defines it as a film that presents a reality based on objective facts that contains essential and existential relevance to human life, tells facts and reality without manipulation, and has benefits in teaching and learning activities such as cognitive, psychomotor, and affective benefit (Rikarno, 2015; Venkatesan et al., 2023). The documentary film production process can be done simply with affordable equipment, or done at a more advanced level, adjusting the content, budget, availability of tools, human resources, and the importance of making it (Adystika, 2019; Lees, 2023). The nature of the making, which according to Tanzil (2010) is 'easy-hard' for beginners, can actually also be done by prospective tutors to document teaching methods holistically as a stock of teaching techniques.

Reflecting the needs of English prospective tutors in *Kampung Inggris, Pare* who are preparing methods for teaching, short documentaries can be used to finalize teaching provisions at the preparation stage (Burley, 2017). According to Fajarina (in an interview), a supervisor of the *UNHASY* English Education Student Association, in the teaching preparation, a skill they must prepare carefully is an interesting method of teaching English since the tutor must be able to liven up the classroom atmosphere and make students interested in learning English. However, a frequent problem encountered at this stage is that not all tutors can demonstrate exciting teaching. They need detailed and repeatable references to teaching techniques. The lack of practical experience in the real class affects the readiness of students to become tutors (Ding et al., 2024; Yulianto & Khafid, 2016). Fajarina states that the teaching references they looked for from various sources on the internet did not holistically provide the classroom management and the application of teaching techniques. Consequently, their knowledge of teaching techniques remains half-assed and is not yet feasible to be tested by them.

In this case, documentaries can play a role in helping tutors to document various teaching methods that can be a repository and reference for holistic teaching techniques that meet their needs that they can create and access any time (Bartlett et al., 2020). Holistic understanding in this research context is that tutors can learn in full and in detail how classes are organized from the preparation to the end of learning and how teaching methods are applied just by watching short videos (Miles & Herold, 2023; Zha & Liu, 2023). Therefore, experimentation on the process of making documentary films needs to be applied to study its potential as a reference for English teaching techniques for tutors. As an implication, prospective tutors can take advantage of their documentary products

as a reference stock of teaching techniques that can be accessed according to their needs or learning plans.

This research aims to explore the potential of documentary films as a reference for English teaching techniques for prospective tutors in *Kampung Inggris, Pare*. By experimenting with the process of making documentary films, the research seeks to determine how these films can provide detailed and holistic references for teaching methods, thereby enhancing the teaching preparation and skills of prospective tutors. The ultimate goal is to create a repository of teaching techniques that can be easily accessed and utilized by tutors to improve their classroom management and instructional methods.

2. Literature review

Two critical issues proposed in the research are the role of documentaries in providing detailed and repeatable teaching techniques for prospective tutors and the holistic understanding of classroom management through these documentaries.

2.1. Documentary role in teaching techniques

The use of documentary films as a pedagogical tool has gained attention in recent years for its effectiveness in enhancing educational outcomes. Studies have shown that documentaries can serve as a valuable resource for providing detailed and repeatable teaching techniques, which is crucial for prospective tutors who need robust and reliable references. As concluded from Bećirović (2023) and Nicolaou et al. (2019), documentary films can offer concrete examples of teaching methods, allowing tutors to observe and learn from real-life classroom scenarios. This aligns with the findings of Fernandez-Diaz et al. (2023), who highlighted that visual learning through documentaries enhances the retention of teaching techniques and methods among educators, thereby improving their readiness and confidence in applying these methods in actual classroom settings.

According to their study, documentaries have long been recognized as powerful educational tools. Their effectiveness lies in their ability to present real-world scenarios and complex concepts in a visually engaging manner. Documentaries can stimulate students' interest and curiosity, leading to deeper engagement with the subject matter. This is particularly relevant in teaching English, where visual and contextual learning can enhance language acquisition and comprehension.

2.2. Documentaries as a tool for understanding classroom management

The second critical issue is the holistic understanding of classroom management that documentaries can provide. Documentaries offer a comprehensive view of the teaching process, from preparation to execution, and illustrate effective classroom management strategies. This is supported by the research of Ashikuzzaman (2023) and Fischer (2021), who found that audio-visual media like documentaries provide an immersive learning experience that captures the nuances of classroom dynamics and teacher-student interactions. Furthermore, Lovat (2020) and Norton and Hathaway (2010)

emphasized that documentaries enable prospective tutors to gain insights into various classroom management techniques, such as maintaining student engagement and addressing behavioral issues, which are essential for creating a conducive learning environment.

These studies underscore the potential of documentaries to serve as a repository of teaching techniques and classroom management strategies, thus addressing the gap in existing educational resources for prospective tutors. By documenting and analyzing effective teaching methods, documentaries can offer a practical and accessible reference for tutors to enhance their teaching skills and classroom management capabilities. Classroom management is a critical skill for educators, and documentaries can provide valuable insights into effective strategies. It can be assumed that pre-service teachers who watched documentaries on classroom management techniques were better prepared to handle real-life classroom situations. These teachers reported increased confidence and competence in managing diverse classroom environments.

2.3. Theoretical framework

Regarding the theoretical framework of the issues, the integration of documentary films as a resource for teaching techniques and classroom management is underpinned by Constructivist Learning Theory, Social Learning Theory, and the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework. Constructivist learning theory, advanced by Piaget and Vygotsky, posits that learners construct knowledge through experiences and reflection. Documentaries, offering real-world contexts, allow prospective tutors to observe and reflect on effective teaching methods and classroom management strategies (Tanjung et al., 2022). This aligns with Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), where learners achieve higher understanding with the aid of more knowledgeable others (Zaretsky, 2021).

Social Learning Theory as advanced by Bandura emphasizes observational learning, imitation, and modeling. Documentary films provide a platform for prospective tutors to observe experienced educators, facilitating the imitation and internalization of effective practices. This process is critical for novice teachers who lack practical experience (Rumjaun & Narod, 2020). In Addition, the TPACK framework, developed by Mishra and Koehler (2006), highlights the intersection of technology, pedagogy, and content knowledge. Documentaries enhance pedagogical content knowledge by providing multimedia representations of teaching practices. This helps tutors understand how to use digital media effectively to support learning and teaching (Sánchez-Auñón et al., 2023).

2.4. Recent studies and trends

Recent studies have explored various dimensions of using documentaries in education. For instance, a study by Carter and Barnstone-Clark (2022), Liu (2021), and Schattschneider and Auslander (2021) examined the use of documentaries in teaching

social sciences and found that they significantly enhanced students' critical thinking skills and empathy. Similarly, Ruqiah Ganda Putri Panjaitan et al. (2019) as well as Warso et al. (2012) reported that documentaries in science education improved students' understanding of complex scientific concepts and theories. While these studies provide promising results, they also highlight the need for a more comprehensive understanding of how documentaries can be integrated into different educational contexts. Comparative studies across different subjects and educational levels could offer more nuanced insights into the effectiveness of documentaries as teaching tools. That is why this research is important to be carried out.

2.5. Addressing gaps in the literature

Despite the positive findings, there is a noticeable gap in research specifically focused on the use of documentaries in training prospective English tutors. This study aims to fill this gap by exploring how documentaries can be integrated into the teaching preparation of prospective English tutors in *Kampung Inggris, Pare*. By doing so, it seeks to provide empirical evidence on the benefits and challenges of using documentaries in this specific context. The literature suggests that documentaries are valuable educational tools that can enhance student engagement, critical thinking, and understanding of complex concepts. However, there is a need for more comprehensive and robust studies to fully understand their impact, particularly in the context of training prospective English tutors. By addressing these gaps, this research aims to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on innovative teaching methods and provide practical insights for educators.

3. Method

3.1. Research design

This research employs a qualitative design to explore the potential of documentary films as a reference for English teaching techniques among prospective tutors in *Kampung Inggris, Pare*, Kediri, East Java. The qualitative approach is chosen to deeply understand the challenges faced by prospective tutors and how documentary films can serve as an effective teaching resource. The study involves observational, interview, and literature review methods to gather comprehensive insights (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Moleong, 2021).

3.1. Sampling method

The study targets Intermediate English class students in *Kampung Inggris, Pare*. These students, aged between 19 to 22 years, are college students and freshmen preparing to become English language tutors. They participate in micro-teaching sessions to enhance their teaching skills. A purposive sampling method is used to select 13 participants from the Intermediate English class. This sample size is chosen to ensure a manageable yet representative group for in-depth qualitative analysis. Participants are selected based on their involvement in micro-teaching sessions and their willingness to

contribute to the research. The selection ensures a diverse representation of students with varying levels of teaching preparedness and experience.

3.2. Data collection

Researchers observe the micro-teaching sessions to document the teaching methods used by prospective tutors. This helps in identifying effective teaching strategies and areas needing improvement. Semi-structured interviews are conducted with participants, lead tutors, and course institution stakeholders. The interviews focus on understanding the challenges faced by prospective tutors, their needs for teaching references, and their perceptions of documentary films as a teaching resource. Based on their need, researchers and participants developed the criteria for effective documentary content. This is to ensure that the documentaries produced serve as comprehensive and practical references for prospective tutors.

A thorough literature review is conducted to analyze the character of documentary films in supporting educational activities. This helps in formulating criteria for documentary content relevant to teaching methods. As part of the research, prospective tutors participate in the production of documentary film samples. They document interesting teaching methods observed in previous courses, map out locations and class schedules, and practice technical aspects of documentary filmmaking.

3.3. Data analysis

The data collected from observations, interviews, and literature reviews are analyzed using thematic analysis. This involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data. The process includes:

3.3.1. Coding

Transcripts from interviews and observation notes are coded to identify significant themes related to teaching methods, challenges, and the use of documentary films.

3.3.2. Thematic Development

The codes are grouped into broader themes that reflect common issues and insights. These themes help in understanding the holistic needs of prospective tutors.

3.3.3. Content Analysis

The documentary films produced are analyzed to evaluate their effectiveness as teaching references. This includes assessing the completeness, accuracy, and practicality of the teaching methods documented.

The findings and criteria are validated through feedback sessions with participants, lead tutors, and stakeholders. This ensures the accuracy and relevance of the research outcomes. This research explores the potential of documentary films as a reference for teaching techniques by involving prospective tutors in the documentary

production process. The qualitative approach, coupled with observations, interviews, and literature review, provides a comprehensive understanding of the needs and challenges faced by prospective tutors in *Kampung Inggris, Pare*. The analysis of the data and the production of documentary films aim to create a valuable repository of teaching techniques that can enhance the teaching preparation and skills of future English tutors.

4. Findings and discussion

There were 13 prospective tutors who participated in this documentary experimentation project which were then divided into 4 groups of 3 to 4 people each. Each group member gets a different role in making the film which consists of at least a director, camera operator, and editor. The practice of taking pictures is carried out during teaching and learning activities in the course institution – apart from intermediate, there are 7 other English classes with various levels and focuses of English learning. Each group is encouraged to choose the desired English class to be documented and manage to have permission to access the class.

4.1. Character analysis of documentary films supporting teaching preparation

In accordance with the need for teaching references, the type of documentary film made in this mentoring is observational documentary since the emphasis on references is not only to understand how to teach in the classroom, but also to pay attention to the teaching character of the tutor, student reactions, and all essential elements in classroom management from preparation to the end of class. Based on its character, observational documentaries strongly avoid intervening on objects and events. The filmmaker tries to be neutral and non-judgmental about the subject or events. This type also refuses to use narration, comments from outside the story space, interviews, and even refuses to use long writing that explains the scene (Bradbury & Guadagno, 2020; Nash et al., 2010).

Thus, prospective tutors who watch this type of film are expected to be able to see how the reality of a teaching method is applied in the classroom. They are also expected to pay attention to and evaluate the tutor's character and role in the classroom and student reactions. In addition, the documentary film's duration is determined to be no more than 15 minutes, considering the time for mentoring activities and film production, which is only 2 practice-hours per day.

4.2. Documentary film content criteria formulation

Based on the needs analysis, teaching references must be able to present teaching preparation, teaching implementation, tutor and student interactions, and student and tutor activities or reactions after teaching. Because, with these reference criteria, prospective tutors who are learning how to teach, can see in detail how a class is formed and organized. In addition, prospective tutors can also get an idea of how the actions and attitudes of tutors in the classroom bring an impact on their students and their environment (based on an interview with Fitria Hanum, directress of the Fajar English Course Institute

Kampung Inggris, Pare). So, based on these requirements, the writer formulated the main scenes that must appear in the making of the documentary, then verified the main points of the scene to the director of the course institution before being instructed to the students. The following are the main points of the scene made in the form of a scene checklist:

Table 1

Formulation of scene points which are summarized into a scene checklist.

Scene	Description
The atmosphere before the class starts	Describes students' enthusiasm for the class and students' readiness to take part in learning
Opening of the class	Describes etiquette and order classroom implementation
Learning atmosphere in the classroom	Shows that learning gives positive energy to all class participants
Details of the tutor when delivering the material	The core material delivered by the tutor in the class must be able to be captured and understood by the audience
Distinctive characters or special moments when the tutor teaches	Describe how the typical and positive character of a person the teacher can give color and enthusiasm of students in learning
Student reactions	Show reactions and responses of students when interacting or listening in class
Details of activities that students do in learning	Core activities in learning must include that is clear and understood by the audience, such as note-taking activities, games, practical activities of communicating in English, discussions and others which are typical activities in an English language material in the class that is the object of the documentary.
The core of the learning material	Films must be able to clearly convey the material being filmed in the film.
Closing of the class	Describes etiquette in ending the learning
The atmosphere after the class is over	Describes the reactions or attitudes of students after taking part in learning
Music/artistic background sound (optional)	Filling voice that can be used added to scenes in the film as long as it does not disperse the film's message
Artistic visual elements (optional)	Visual elements that relate directly or indirectly to learning activities to enhance the visual presentation of the film or to emphasize or dramatize the message to be conveyed in the documentary

4.3. Supervising process and film production

Before entering the production stage, prospective tutors are given technical assistance in taking pictures and exploring the camera features found on smartphone each participant's smartphones. The 13 prospective tutors are course students who come from various educational backgrounds and do not have a special knowledge of cinematography so that the mentoring activities are focused on practical strategies to get good audio and

visual quality in the production process which includes how to: take pictures at good light intensity; manage a clear blocking; avoid sound noise; avoid backlighting; setting and utilizing smartphone camera features; adding artistic audio and visual elements; as well as additional external devices to support camera work. As an exercise, they also practice taking pictures of learning activities, starting from the planning stage of taking pictures, shooting teaching activities candidly, to the stage of editing and presentation of works.

There are 7 choices of English classes that they can film every day for 2 weeks of mentoring. The classes they must choose are classes that are below the Intermediate they are currently taking, because the material they will film in that class is the material that they will use as a teaching reference and demonstrate in teaching practice later. And, in each class, prospective tutors only need to take 1 sample of the 16 materials contained in the class they choose. After that, each documentary team consulted the prospect of the target class, then the author coordinated the filming permission to each class tutor before the documentary team carried out the documentary filmmaking in or around their target class.

From the mentoring and shooting training, there created 4 films from 4 filmmakers as follows:

Table 2
Documentary films by prospective tutors to use as their reference samples for teaching preparation.

Group	Film materials	Scene Sample	Description and Reasons for Selection of Samples for Documentary Materials
1	Promotion from Basic Speaking Class		This documentary talks about the activities of teaching goods promotion material which is one of the important applications of spoken English skills. This material was chosen by group 1 for it is the core material for the Basic Speaking class whose teaching techniques must be mastered by prospective tutors, where the ability to promote goods to the public requires special learning and the development of students' abilities will depend on the tutor's teaching techniques in class.
2	Tongue Twister from the Pronunciation Class		This documentary explains the learning process of tongue twisters as a part of the Pronunciation class. From this class, they wanted to observe its teaching techniques, how the forms and techniques of brainstorming are applied to the class that make the class fun and transfer knowledge.
3	Vocabulary from Vocab Class		For them, vocabulary is particularly important but often the presentation is monotonous and that makes students bored quickly. Therefore, group 3 chose 1 vocab class which was considered the most interesting among other vocab classes to be documented so that they could learn how the class was organized and what formula was applied so that the class was so attractive to students.

4	Vocabulary from Vocabs Class		This documentary emphasizes more on how the standard procedure for the vocabulary is organized and how the delivery of material is systematic. Because for group 4, class procedures and systematics are still rigid to be applied but without these procedures and systematics, students only get a list of vocabulary without knowing how to apply it in everyday English communication or in certain communication situations.

Based on the reasons listed, it was found that the samples of the material they chose were the core materials of the selected class. 4 respondents who were supervisors of the English classes documented, mentioned that the core materials of the Basic Speaking include the basics of public speaking and promotion; core materials in the Pronunciation include tongue twisters and basic vocabulary pronunciation; and the core material of the Vocabulary class is increasing the number of vocabularies through the challenge or game method. This core term refers to the material that each student must master to achieve the competency target in English class. For prospective tutors, the technique of teaching core material to students must be carefully observed and practiced because the material can be a representation of teaching techniques on other materials in the same class and the level of difficulty is more difficult than teaching techniques for other materials. So, when the prospective tutor masters the technique of teaching the core material, the teaching of other materials will feel much lighter.

This means that when prospective tutors decided to take a sample of material from an English class, they have carefully considered that the sample material to be documented must be a representative sample of teaching technique references and a vital material that must be observed repeatedly, mastered, and demonstrated, more than just completing the assignment. In other words, prospective tutors took the project seriously because of their need for references for teaching techniques, especially on the core materials in each class.

4.4. Prospects of documentary film products as a reference for teaching techniques

Based on the analysis of film content, the 4 films have met the main demands of the scene as mentioned in table 1. In addition, the criteria for film content are set out in the form of scene checklists which are considered simple for prospective tutors as well as requirements the short duration of the film, facilitates the production process of their work and does not consume a lot of time in the implementation of the production, so that the integration of documentary film production for the purpose of reference to teaching techniques for prospective tutors in Intermediate can be said to be suitable to be applied. The suitability between the main demands of the scene and the content of the work can be observed in the following table:

Table 3

Sample scene according to the scene checklist.

Scene	Quote Film Image	Description
Atmosphere before the class starts		Before entering the class, most students brushed up their lesson notes and discussed the material being taught. has been and will be studied (group 1).
Opening of class		Tutor when opening class with prayer and review of material that has been studied the previous day (group 4)
Learning atmosphere in class		Vocabs class learning atmosphere during vocabulary application presentation in short stories (group 3).
Details of the tutor when delivering the material. The		Class tutor when delivering the promotional theory before being put into practice as an individual presentation (group 1).
Distinctive character or special moment when the tutor teaches		The distinctive character of one of the tutors in the Pronunciation who often closes the class with a tone such as yelling to arouse students' energy and enthusiasm at the end of the class (group 2).
Students' reaction		Students' reactions when practicing the tongue twister (group 2).
Details of the activities that students do in learning		One of the students observes the food products that will be presented in the form of promotions in the Basic Speaking (group 1)
The core of the learning material		Students practice the application of vocabulary in short conversations in pairs, which is the core of learning in the Vocabs class (group 4)
Closing the class		Students applaud after listening to the closing from their class tutor who gave them a learning motivation (group 1).
The atmosphere after the class		The students look happy after the lesson is over and still stay in class to wait for the next English class (group 2).
Artistic music/sound background (optional)	in the film	in the film
visual elements Artistic		Fade out from the image of the leaves being illuminated by the sun on the plank of the course institution, indicating the time for learning activities at the course site to be carried out starting in the morning (group work 1).

However, habitual intervention of prospective tutors in creating content on social media was still apparently strong as reflected in their film work. It potentially reduces the focus on watching. The interventions are reflected in sound background that dominates the teaching and learning activities, environment sound, and visual artistic elements that take longer duration.

4.5. Contributions to the course curriculum

In an interview with Fitria Hanum, the director of the Fajar English Course Institute, the positive impact of integrating short documentary film-making into the teaching preparation for prospective tutors was highlighted. Hanum emphasized that this innovative approach has significantly enriched the curriculum by providing a dynamic and interactive method for tutor preparation. She noted that creating short documentary films enables prospective tutors to engage deeply with the teaching material, fostering a more profound understanding of classroom dynamics and teaching techniques. This hands-on experience not only enhances their creativity and technical skills but also prepares them to deliver more effective and engaging lessons. According to Hanum, the observational documentary format allows tutors to capture and analyze real-life classroom interactions, offering invaluable insights that traditional teaching references cannot provide. This integration has thus been pivotal in shaping well-rounded, competent tutors who are better equipped to meet the diverse needs of their students.

English teaching techniques are not merely substances that must be mastered by prospective tutors, it must also be accompanied by positive and creative tutor characters, knowledge transfer strategies, adjustments to the physical and psychological conditions of class students, thorough class preparation, and effective class closing. Thus, students not only enjoy a series of learning packaged in the form of games or challenges and then forget about it afterward, but also receive benefits in the form of applicable knowledge, insight of leadership and public speaking, constructive motivation to continue and develop the knowledge they have learned. This is what cannot be obtained from regular tutorial videos. By guiding them to be able to create observational short documentary films, prospective tutors can experiment and make their own teaching references according to their needs in teaching preparation while honing their creativity and skills in empowering technology in teaching preparation. Consequently, they will be more ready with their teaching proficiency, and the English learning curriculum of Intermediate class can be achieved more quickly. Students can maintain, develop, and transfer their English skills through the micro teaching tutorial program.

5. Conclusion

This study addresses a significant obstacle faced by prospective English language teachers: obtaining audio-visual references for teaching techniques that effectively meet their lesson preparation needs. This paper proposes a novel solution - the integration of short documentary film production support into the English language learning curriculum

for intermediate English learners. Through this intervention, trainee tutors become actively involved in the creation of personalized teaching references. The process fosters creativity and technological literacy, enabling them to identify the central English language topics covered in each class, analyze and list the specific teaching reference requirements that the documentary should address, conduct filming based on the pre-defined list, and complete the documentary film production process.

The chosen format of an observational documentary allows tutors to observe the application of teaching techniques in an authentic classroom setting, free from directorial intervention. This approach provides valuable insights beyond the technical execution of teaching methods. It provides a window into understanding the sequential implementation of teaching strategies, observing how a tutor's actions and demeanor influence students and the learning environment during the application of techniques, as well as gaining knowledge of classroom management procedures and systematic organization.

While the study produced promising results, there were limitations. The time constraints imposed by the documentary production process hindered in-depth evaluation and the provision of additional support to achieve optimal results. Limited time within the research site, due to the busy English learning schedule of the trainee tutors, limited the ability to fully address these issues. Therefore, institutional collaboration and staged needs analysis are suggested for further research. There is a need to work with the course institution to develop a policy that allows for additional mentoring time without compromising existing teaching time. In addition, it is important to separate the initial needs analysis stage, including the creation of checklists, from the mentoring activities. This will ensure that mentoring time is focused solely on film production, thereby streamlining the process.

By implementing these suggestions, future research can optimize the proposed method of creating personalized teaching technique references through documentary film production, thereby equipping trainee English language teachers with the skills and knowledge necessary for effective lesson preparation.

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