



WHAT IS DIFFERENTIATED TEACHING?

1 INTRODUCTION

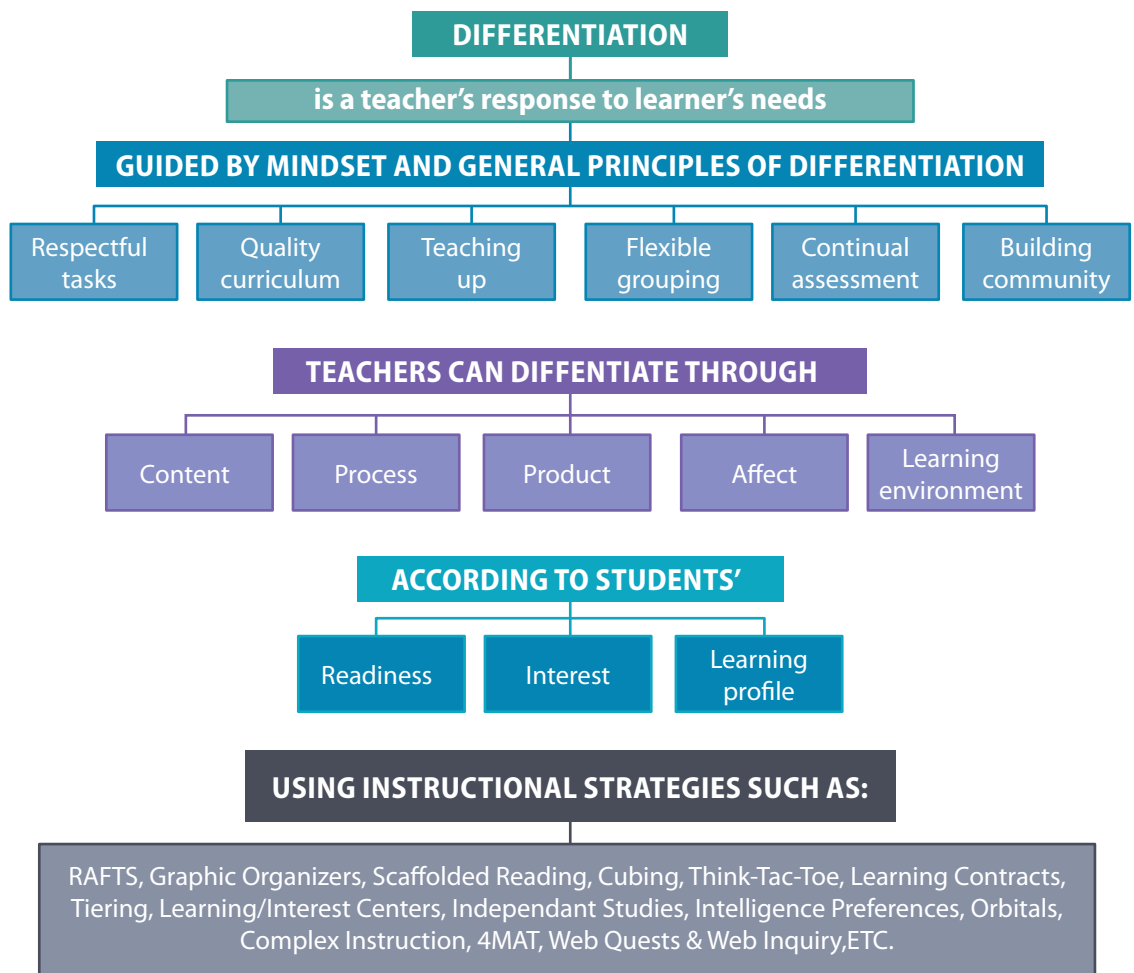
An inflexible curriculum does not respond to the wide variety of learner needs. Inclusive Education refers to the capacity of ordinary local schools to respond to the needs of ALL learners, **including those requiring extra support** because of learning or physical barriers, social disadvantage, cultural difference or other diverse learning needs.

2 WHAT IS DIFFERENTIATION?

Curriculum Differentiation is “a key strategy for responding to the needs of learners with diverse learning styles and needs. It involves processes of modifying, changing, adapting, extending, and varying teaching methodologies, teaching strategies, assessment strategies and the content of the curriculum. It takes into account learners’ ability levels, interests and backgrounds. Curriculum differentiation can be done at the level of content, teaching methodologies, assessment and learning environment.” NCS: Guidelines for Responding to Learner Diversity in the Classroom Grade R-12

3 WE DIFFERENTIATE AT DIFFERENT LEVELS

- Learning content
- Learning environment
- Teaching methods
- Assessment methods



4 WHY AND HOW DO WE DIFFERENTIATE?

WHY DIFFERENTIATE CONTENT?

- ▶ Access to effective learning for all
- ▶ Successful, motivating experiences for all learners

HOW DO WE DIFFERENTIATE CONTENT?

- ▶ **Abstraction:** Learners may access facts and concepts at a concrete or abstract level. Some may need to work with concrete objects as we cannot assume that all learners manage abstract learning
- ▶ **Complexity:** We need to place topics in familiar contexts. Many learners will not be familiar with complex contexts in the learning materials
- ▶ **Variety:** Engage all learners with varied material to avoid boredom and restlessness.

WHY DIFFERENTIATE THE ENVIRONMENT?

- ▶ Safe and conducive to learning
- ▶ Warm, accepting atmosphere in the class

HOW DO WE DIFFERENTIATE THE ENVIRONMENT?

Physical environment factors:

- ▶ Classroom spaces, classroom infrastructure, seating
- ▶ Noise level, class size, classroom resources

Psychosocial environmental factors:

- ▶ Learner satisfaction, enjoyment, confidence, communication with teacher
- ▶ Safe from harassment and harm

WHY DO WE DIFFERENTIATE TEACHING METHODS?

- ▶ Wide range of learning needs and levels of access to curriculum
- ▶ Engage all learners in meaningful activities

HOW DO WE DIFFERENTIATE TEACHING METHODS?

- ▶ Use a **variety of learning materials and strategies** for the same content: Curriculum Differentiation Ladders assist learners accessing the curriculum at different levels.
- ▶ Deliver **lessons at varying levels of difficulty:** Format – graphs, diagrams, tables, illustrations, cartoons,
- ▶ Form interest, topic or ability groups: Cooperative learning in small teams.
- ▶ **Universal Design for Learning** addresses the main barrier to fostering expert learners: The inflexible, one-size-fits-all curriculum which makes all learners vulnerable to barriers to learning – the gifted ones, the ones with disabilities, and even the ones who are thought to be “average”.

WHY DIFFERENTIATE ASSESSMENT?

- ▶ Rethink the traditional model of same assessment tasks for all
- ▶ Enable learners of different abilities to demonstrate knowledge and skills
- ▶ Ensure accurate and adequate evidence of achievement by all

HOW DO WE DIFFERENTIATE ASSESSMENT?

- ▶ Format – written, oral, computer
- ▶ Scope – range, level, tiered assessments
- ▶ Methods – multiple choice, essay
- ▶ Feedback – self-reflection, positive feedback

RESOURCES

- ▶ The NCS: Curriculum, Assessment and Policy Statement: Guidelines for Responding to Learner Diversity in the Classroom Grade R-12
- ▶ www.cast.org Universal Design for Learning
- ▶ www.udlcenter.org
- ▶ www.thutong.doe.gov.za Responding to diversity through curriculum and policy statements
- ▶ Differentiation Central www.diffcentral.com
- ▶ www.teachhub.com

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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For more information about the *Teaching and Learning for Inclusive Education* project: vvoib.be/southafrica

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“Children already come to us differentiated; it just makes sense that we would differentiate our instruction in response”

CAST

“Teachers should anticipate learning differences and design curricula to meet all learners’ needs rather than modifying and adapting the curriculum just for children with support needs.”

Dinnebiel and Boat (2007)

“Multi-level teaching offers access to the curriculum to all learners but at different levels according to their level of access. “It involves creating one lesson which enables all learners to collaborate on the same topic / theme but at different levels according to their level of access to the curriculum.”

Azette Engelbrecht

Tips

- ▶ The two main obstacles to achieving our goals as educators are an inflexible curriculum and diverse learner needs – always be aware of this!
- ▶ We want expert learners who are resourceful, goal-directed and motivated!
- ▶ Cooperative learning results in participants striving for mutual benefit for all group members
- ▶ With UDL flexible goals, methods, materials and assessment are created by design and not by default, which makes costly, time-consuming and after-the-fact changes in the curriculum unnecessary

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