“Differentiation: How to do it”

Geoff Petty ([http://www.geoffpetty.com/differentiation.html](http://www.geoffpetty.com/differentiation.html)) has done considerable work on differentiation. He has kindly allowed us to reproduce this helpful overview of the differentiation strategies teachers might be familiar with.

If good differentiation practice in the classroom demands that the teacher starts with what the learner already knows then it stands to reason that we apply the same principles when enabling professional learning. This resource can help teachers describe what they already do as well as allowing a lead learner to baseline or audit existing practice. Planning subsequent professional learning processes are thus better informed and so more likely to meet teachers needs. You can also use this tool to introduce the idea of evidence of impact (discussed in months 3 and 5). Staff might describe a strategy they feel has a positive impact in their classroom but discussing how they know it impacts can be quite revealing.

This tool, however, is merely a starting point for reflecting on differentiation. This toolkit emphasises the link between differentiation and challenge.

**What to do**

There are a number of different ways you might use this resource:

- Get staff at the start of a meeting to do as Eve Hedley did (see month 1 powerpoint and journal). Ask them to tick which of the strategies they use with good effect and identify any that they’ve never thought of using. This helps you gather intelligence about teachers starting points.
- Alternatively once staff have done the task above give them a bit more time to share their practice and thinking. You could facilitate this by giving them time to do think/pair/share.
- Ask staff to pick one that they think they use to greatest effect. Give them one minute each (be strict) to describe what they do and what difference it makes.
- Give it to staff individually or to a team of staff, e.g. middle leaders, T&L group or department/year team, before a meeting and ask them to tick which of the strategies they use effectively either individually or in their team. You could use this information to map strategies across the school in order to facilitate reflection on and sharing of practice.

**Use this resource in conjunction with...**

- Follow this up with a practical activity which staff could take away and try in the classroom
- Use one of this months power points to help you plan an introductory meeting
- Combine it with the Quotes Quilt to help staff understand the importance of differentiation
Differentiation: How to do it

Differentiate by task; outcome; and time allowed

Set different tasks. Use:
- ability groups
- help sheets and writing frames
- extension tasks, or grade criteria + targets

Use teaching methods that differentiate well, e.g. require all students to participate, and all students to carry out thought provoking tasks,

Graduate tasks e.g. from easy to hard on a worksheet. Use “Bloom’s Taxonomy” and mix Mastery and Developmental tasks

Set open tasks, because stronger students interpret these in a more demanding way. Expect more from the more able students.

Differentiate resources: e.g. use texts of different depth, breadth, and difficulty

Differentiate time allowed by:
- Resource Based Learning
- Independent learning
- Mastery Learning

Accommodate Learning styles.
- Visual, aural, & Kinesthetic
- Right and left brain
- Honey and Mumford etc

Integrate Learning Support into your classes
Use ILT to give support

Use group work so that peers can support each other

“Buddy up” students who can help each other. E.g. one who can write and one who can’t. The buddy needs some ‘training’

Make explicit use of for e.g.
- peer checking
- peer tutoring
- learning teams

Develop Generic skills by:
- Feedback proformas
- Teaching skills with both Process and Product

Use “Medal and Mission” feedback

Set individualised goals and targets based on diagnostic tests & assessment; ILP; One-to-one action planning; etc

Differentiate feedback, then set individual tasks & targets


Accommodate different preferences & support-needs

Use self-assessment and ask students to set themselves targets

Reprinted with permission from Geoff Petty (diagram for third edition of Teaching Today)