

VALUABLE WAYS OF USING DIFFERENTIATION WHILE WRITING A LESSON PLAN

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Annotation: This article highlights the instructional support of overcoming challenges in making lesson planning the English classes among A2 B1 level students according to (CEFR), regarding to differentiation activities in order to overcome struggles while working with the students who have different background knowledges. According to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, they can describe familiar topics using short word phrases and simple sentences. However, making presentations and speeches in front of the class prevents their self-confidence. Whenever, high achiever students help and be models to those who are lower this motivates them to participate actively during the whole class.

Key words: differentiation, communicative competence, motivation, aligning with, accessible, approach, role-models, peer-feedback.

Introduction

In education, **differentiation** (or Differentiated Instruction) is a teaching philosophy where a teacher proactively modifies the curriculum, teaching methods, and student products to meet the diverse needs of individual learners. The goal is to ensure that all students—regardless of their starting point—can access the same high-quality content and achieve their full potential. There are 3 types of differentiation;

1. **Content** (This involves varying the materials students use to access the same core information)

2. **Process** (This refers to the activities students engage in to make sense of the content).
3. **Product** (This is how students demonstrate what they have learned at the end of a lesson).

It would be useful if **Process Differentiation** is used for the listening activity. Some of the lower-level (A2) students require a bit more support in understanding audio recordings, whereas the students with a B1 level are able to understand the main point. According to **the “Can-Do” performance indicators**, A2 level learners can understand and extract the essential information from short, recorded passages dealing with predictable everyday matters which are delivered slowly and clearly”, while B1 level learners can understand the main points of news bulletins and simpler recorded material about familiar subjects...” (Common European Framework of Reference, 2020). It would be recommended; therefore, the lower-level students should take notes with a graphic organizer while they are listening for the gist of the recording. Having a document that can help them to organize their notes and to identify key points in the conversation can serve to enhance their listening comprehension skills. **Tomlinson (1999) states** that “For such students, it can be quite useful to work with a visual organizer that follows the flow of ideas from the text or lecture” (p.77). At the end of the activity, it is recommended to make a pair with **some of the A2 level students with the B1 level students** so that they can receive support from their peers through checking their understanding and asking for clarification (Baecher, 2011).

Using Process Differentiation for the controlled speaking activity. While some of the A2 level students will require a bit more support in producing sentences to respond to customers, B1 level students are more confident crafting their own sentences. **According to the “Can-Do” performance indicators**, whereas A2 level students can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters ...”, B1 level students can enter unprepared

into conversation on familiar topics, and exchange information on topics that are familiar...” (Common European Framework of Reference, 2020). Writing a sample dialogue on the board with expressions of apology can also be essential for persuading the learners dare to speak. In so doing, my students will have access to typical phrases and sentences and be able to incorporate them into their conversations with the customers. Finally, I **would pair some of the A2 level with the B1 level** students so that they can learn from their higher-level counterparts. Key to meeting my language objectives is ensuring that students of different language abilities can collaborate so that lower-level students can feel more involved in the learning process (Baecher, 2011).

I implemented in two classroom activities as according to assessment data my group of students demonstrate differently due to their background knowledge. Some of them could produce simple sentences, and could express their ideas whilst, others rely on sentence frames and vocabulary support. According to recent formative assessment results aligned with Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) descriptors, some students can “understand short, simple texts on familiar matters” and “describe in simple terms aspects of their background” B1 level, while a few are still performing closer to A2 in listening and speaking. In the first activity (Listening for Gist and Details [L, W]), differentiation will be by content and process. All students would listen to a short dialogue about preparing for a talent show, but lower-performing students, who are group 1st, would receive a transcript with highlighted key vocabulary and a word bank, while higher-performing students, the second group, would complete a note-taking chart without linguistic support. This aligns with Tomlinson’s (2001), concept of differentiation by content (modifying materials) and by process (varying the way students engage with the task). The support is based on CEFR A2 “can do” descriptors such as “can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance.” In the second activity Speaking

Task, the students would perform and present their own presentation related to their talents. differentiation will be by product. Students will be arranged into groups of pairs a stronger learner and a developing learner in order to promote peer scaffolding. Group 1 students might use sentence frames (e.g., “I can...”, “I will perform...”, “I need...”) to produce a short 4–5 sentence description, while Group 2 students would present a longer, more detailed plan including reasons and future intentions. This reflects Tomlinson’s (2001) differentiation by product, as students demonstrate learning at different complexity levels. Assessment data inform these decisions by identifying which learners require linguistic scaffolds to meet the A2 speaking descriptor: “can give a simple description or presentation of people and activities.” Therefore, grouping, task design, and support strategies are intentionally aligned with learners’ proficiency levels to ensure access and challenge for all students.

I use differentiation in my classroom to meet the learning needs of students with different linguistic abilities, particularly by incorporating materials that are tailored to their various levels and by having lower-level students collaborate with higher-level ones. I have noticed some lower-level students appear to learn more efficiently when they are paired with a higher-level student. Several higher-level students have been providing them with guidance on expressions to use and sentence frames, thereby contributing to their learning. Tomlinson points out the use of peer mentors as a benefit to students because it helps them to “reach higher, learn more, and contribute to one another’s learning” (p.77).

Lesson Plan Template

Date: _____	Class: _____	Subject: _____	Time:
Level:			

Greeting and Taking attendance:		
Warm up activity (action songs)		
Material needed:		
Objectives:		
The procedure of the Lesson:		
Asking Previous lesson		
Asking homework		
Task outline		
Tasks for high performing students		
Tasks for low-achieving students		
Objective of the task		
Consolidation part		
Evaluating		
Giving Homework		

I chose the lesson template from Farrell (2002), and from the Cambridge Assessment English Website to compose my own lesson template. I looked through them and added warm up activity to let the students feel comfortable, also asking and consolidating previous lesson part is beneficial in order to recall and make a bridge between the two lessons. This would help the students recall the previous lesson and be ready to the following one. I also added objectives of the lesson and the objective to the task itself

as Ashcraft claimed in his article:” In central design, objectives emerge from the selection of learning activities. In backward design, the objectives are essential to developing the assessment, which then has an influence on the types of activities that are employed (Richards, 2013). In any case, objectives are an essential component of your plan, giving purpose and direction to your lesson. (Ashcraft, 2014, p.13). I classified my tasks in my lesson template into two parts as tasks for high performing students, and tasks for those who are low-achieving students in class. As a conductor of the lesson, we teachers should be attentive and flexible to motivate those who are trying to learn but still have challenges with their acquisition of their second language. Activities should also vary in level of difficulty, some easy and others more demanding. The activities should also be of interest to the students, not just to the teacher. Ur (1996, p. 216), however, cautions that varied activities should not be "flung together in random order." (Farrell, 2002, p. 6) Arranging the activities motivates the students’ absorption and supports them to do their bests and feel self-confidence during the classes.

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