SEND Bulletin NO. 1

We differentiate in response to the learner's...

INTEREST LEARNING PROFILE READINESS

These three components represent the WHY in differentiated instruction
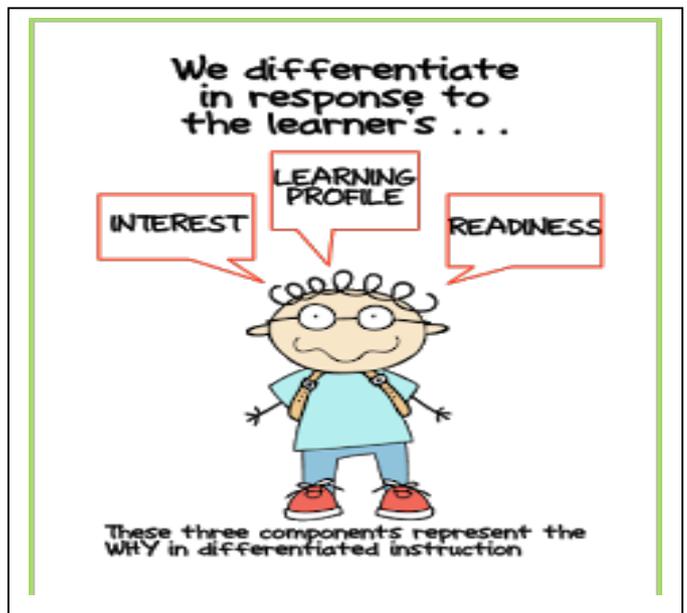
Differentiation

Teachers are faced, every day, with the task of catering for the diverse learning needs of all pupils in their classes. Confidence and motivation are key factors for achievement so it is important that pupils' confidence in themselves as learners is developed by helping them to maximise their strengths. When they realise that they can be successful in some areas of the curriculum they will be more motivated to take on a range of new learning challenges in other areas. At the same time, pupils need to be provided with the support that will help them to use a range of strategies to develop and consolidate new skills.

Differentiation should make each lesson appropriate to the needs of all learners. Government guidance explains how levels of opportunity can be offered to pupils with a range of learning difficulties and disabilities. Lessons for most classes can be differentiated for three groups:

- **All, or nearly all learners** - the baseline of the lesson to which all pupils, including those with many learning difficulties and/or disabilities, will have access. (However, for the few pupils whose attainments fall significantly below the expected levels for the age groups, a much greater degree of differentiation will be necessary.)
- **Most learners** - the majority of pupils will reach this level.
- **A few learners** - the few more able pupils will be extended to this level.

This kind of planning offers a good foundation for classroom assessment.

Differentiation is about providing learning experiences and challenges that take into account the different characteristics of learners. It requires careful assessment, planning and provision of flexible approaches to teaching and learning, classroom organisation, the level and type of tasks, pupil support and the use of resources. Some of the approaches to differentiation shown below can be used when developing a range of learning skills within an inclusive classroom.

Differentiation by teaching and learning

Effective inclusion requires teachers to identify and respond to pupils' preferred ways of learning. We all give and receive information through visual, auditory and/or kinaesthetic (old VAK) channels.

If pupils are given opportunities to learn using their strengths, they will be more successful. Sometimes there is a need to present information using a balance of teaching styles, in order to allow learners to experience their own preferred learning styles. Conversely, it is sometimes beneficial to give them opportunities to collaborate with other learners who have different preferred learning styles.

Visual learners enjoy learning through written language, pictorial images and other visual materials. They often have visual/spatial strengths. They like to:

• use diagrams, graphs and charts
• relate text to illustrations
• design posters to convey information
• use mind maps
• model meanings or concepts in drawings or diagrams
• use cue cards and prompt sheets
• refer to wall charts and visual organisers
• use visual memory spelling techniques
• use visualisation techniques for story writing
• enjoy working on computer graphics and use the interactive whiteboard
• use DVDs and films to gain information.

Auditory learners like to learn through listening. They also enjoy talking about their learning. They like to:
• take part in guided group-reading activities
• share their ideas in circle time
• play language and word games
• take part in role play
• take an active part in collaborative group work
• talk about their written work
• join in saying aloud rhymes, chants and performance poetry
• take part in auditory discrimination games and activities
• use music in the background to help them learn
• listen to CDs and take part in musical activities.

Kinaesthetic learners like to learn through movement and touch. They often find it difficult to keep still. They like to:

• have regular brain breaks interspersed between learning sessions
• use whiteboards and highlighter pens
• use magnetic numbers and letters for support with literacy and numeracy

- take part in IT control activities
- learn through using their senses
- take an active part in movement and mime
- play games using boards, cards or other materials
- learn through practical/concrete activities
- use constructional apparatus.

Next time: **Differentiation by classroom organisation**

If you have any interesting information or resources which you would like to share with your colleagues via this fortnightly bulletin please e-mail them to me:

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Many thanks

Anne