

Differentiated Approach in Teaching English and the Activities in Differentiated Instruction

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ANNOTATION

This article deals with the information about differentiated instruction and the importance of usage in the different level students in the classroom. Firstly, at the introduction part of this article, several scientists in EFL gave their perspectives about differentiated instruction and their opinions with their examples have been mentioned in this article. Moreover, types of differentiated instruction such as differentiated content, differentiated process and differentiated product have been clarified to the readers and supported with examples. This article also deals with effective activities for mixed level students related to the differentiated instruction and their instructions to implement them in the classroom have been mentioned in the article. This may open doors starter teachers to employ and understand them better.

KEYWORDS: *differentiated instruction, differentiated content, differentiated process, differentiated product, learning station, learning teams, using task card, snow ball fight, find your partner, word on your back.*

Introduction.

The English learners in some classes are different from each other in terms of language proficiency. According to my four-year experience that, the learners who are learning English language as foreign language have different language proficiency, some participants in the class have a high level of language proficiency, on the other hand, other students in the teaching context have low level language proficiency. Consequently, some novice teachers, like me have difficulties teaching both types of students who have different language background. In order to sustain friendly learning environment in the classroom teachers' responsibility is to activate less motivated students and students with low proficiency. To carry out effective lessons to this category of English learners, it is vital that teachers should incorporate differentiated instruction in their classroom.

Main part.

Some English specialists in teaching English believe that differentiated instruction is one of the key to solve this issue in language acquisition. Based on the definition of differentiated instruction by Tomlinson (2017, 1) "the teacher proactively plans and carries out varied approaches to content, process, and product in anticipation of and responses to student differences in readiness, interest and learning needs, the differentiation is proactive : teachers don't just respond to classroom problems, they begin their planning with an awareness of student differences and a plan to help all students succeed". In the following sentences three terms are explained such as differentiated content,

differentiated process, differentiated product.

According to the definition of differentiated content by Beth Sheppard (2022, 2) “when we approach content differently for each student, it means that all students do the same type of activity on the same topic, but the content presented to some students may be more challenging than others”. For example, to some students a teacher gives explanations of past simple – ed and irregular verbs. To other students a teacher take time to explain “was”, “were” and a teacher does not give an explanation to complicated form of past simple.

According to the definition of differentiation process by Bath Sheppard (2022,3) “Differentiating process means creating different tasks for different students. Everyone is working on the same topic, but some students may work on activities that require more independence or abstraction than others. It can also mean that students spend different amount of time on their activities. Learning stations are one great way to differentiate the learning process”. For instance, stations are places of the classroom where students do a particular exercise as well as there are given instruction how to do that exercise at the learning station. Students go to a station and do tasks or they go to other station and the levels of tasks at the learning station are various, all of which are from beginner to upper intermediate. It is optional process whether a teacher has student assign to the particular learning station or students have opportunity to choose the station freely.

According to the definition of differentiating product by Bath Sheppard (2022,4) “it means that students can demonstrate their skills in different ways. This contrasts with one-size-fits-all approaches to assessment such as multiple choice tests”. Larry Ferlazzo (2019,5) explains that he just adds a blank space at the end of every test and asks students to tell him what else they know about the topic – sometimes students can show more knowledge than they were able to demonstrate in response to the teacher’s test questions. Another approach which is suggested by Bath Sheppard (2022,6) is that to offer students a menu of options to demonstrate their knowledge. For example, we could assign students to show that they can use comparative adjectives by producing their choice of a video comparing two items, a poster comparing two places, a paragraph comparing favorite sport players, a letter explaining the grammar to a friend, a diagram, or an instructional web page. Let’s pay attention to another example for differentiated content. For example, a teacher informs learners to use past simple tense by producing their choice of video describing between current hometown and the hometown in our childhood, poster describing two historical events, a paragraph describing one invention of air conditioner, a letter explaining the grammar to a friend.

Results.

There are a number of activities related to differentiated instruction and their instructions in this article. The first activity that is about differentiated instruction is called “Learning station” and this activity was shared by Maria Imelda Nollora (2022,7). Learning Stations are locations in the classroom where students are expected to complete a certain task. The teacher sets up several stations in the classroom like writing, reading, listening, technology, games, and the teacher station through which groups of students move from one station to another. The number of stations that will be created shall be the same as the number of groups to be formed. Some teachers allot a portion of their class period for students to work in their designated learning stations every day while others use only one day of the week. Groupings are usually based on students’ English level, their needs, or interests. Teachers can also create station activities based on the content he/she plans to teach. This can be facilitated with a flexible schedule because the amounts of time students spend in doing the activities depend on their needs.

The second activity is called “Learning teams” and I learnt this activity when I was studying in online OPEN courses from Maria Imelda Nollora (2022,8). Learning Teams are groups of students

who can work independently. Organizing learning teams can increase student engagement and participation in the lesson and activities. This technique provides opportunities for students to work in teams and perform responsibilities or roles. In organizing learning teams, the teacher assigns or gives the team members the freehand to choose or voluntarily take specific roles or responsibilities like moderator, timekeeper, recorder, supply manager, summarizer, and reporter. Members can change roles and teams as needed. Teachers may retain the same teams for a certain period of time like a month or a grading period. Creation of new learning teams depends on the needs of the class. Tasks that could maximize the engagement of students in learning teams include poster making, story composition, skit writing, performing skits, and writing reflections.

The third activity that is effective for different level classroom is called "Using task card". I learnt this activity when I was studying in online OPEN courses from Maria Imelda Nollora(2022,9). His is better given as a group task when students are grouped according to their interests. Teachers may use index cards or small pieces of assorted color paper on which a single task or question is contained. Cards may be color coded so the teacher could easily distribute them to specific groups. For example, after reading a short story, discussion about story elements may follow. To enhance this activity, the teacher may ask the class to go to their respective groups (students are pre-grouped according to their interests and pre- assigned to bring their materials) and work together on their assigned task given in the card. Instead of asking the class to give the theme of the story, the teacher may task the singers group to sing a song whose message is close to the theme of the story; the artists group is tasked to draw a story poster; the writers group may be tasked to write a letter to readers explaining the story's theme; the actors group may act out a specific part of the story that gives its theme; and, the dancers group may do a dance interpretation of the theme.

The fourth activity which is beneficial for English learners with mixed level students is called "Snow ball fight", I managed to learn this activity when I was studying in OPEN online course from Dan Long (2022,10) colleague. This is a great short warm up activity I use in my classes. It gets students out of their seats, it wakes them up and gets them excited. Here is how it goes. First, we divide the whole class into two groups and each group gets their team name! Then, we pick one representative from each group and invite the student volunteers to the front of the class. Of course, we have to make a "snowball" (you can make one with a piece of paper) in advance. Now, it is time to begin the game. The teacher should give a brief instruction before they start. For example, give me four words that start with F. Whoever gives me four words first gets to pick up the paper ball and throw it at the other student. The point is to kill the other student. If you miss and don't hit them, they can still hit you. This activity makes students pull up vocabulary under stressful situations and is a good way to test if students really learned the vocabulary. This is also an excellent short activity that really wakes students up and gets them ready to learn.

The fifth activity which is essential for English teachers with mixed level students is called "Find your partner", I managed to learn this activity when I was studying in OPEN online course from Dan Long (2022,11) colleague. It takes 7-8minutes. I found this activity online. You need to prepare many cards with some images on them, among which there are two cards sharing the same images. Whole class participates in this activity. Students are each given a card with an image on it. There is two of each image. Students must circulate and try to find the person with the same image by asking yes or no questions. The students may not ask "Do you have an elephant" if their image is, for example, an elephant. They must ask more descriptive questions, for example, "Does your thing have 4 legs?" or "Does your thing live in the jungle?" This activity can help students engage in the whole class and try to stimulate students to use the target language in the real situation.

The last activity which helps to make mixed level classroom effective is called "Words on back" and a colleague Dan He who studied in OPEN online course shared this activity (2022,12). It takes 3-4

minutes. I leaned it in an English seminar. It served as a warm-up activity. Many cards with words on them are needed. Each student has a card attached to his/her back. The students must do the circulate asking each other yes or no questions to determine what word is on their back. This activity can be used in the vocabulary class. After the teacher explains all of the new words, he can organize this activity to test what students have learned in the class.

Conclusion.

Differentiated instruction plays large role in teaching English to speakers of other languages as well as students' needs, interesting. There are some reasons why it is vital for students and teachers. Firstly, in all of the English classes English language which is taught are not the same in terms of students' background knowledge and interest, readiness, preferences. For instance, some students in the English classes come to lesson with high intrinsic motivation and high level of English proficiency; on the other hand, others come to lesson with extrinsic motivation and low level of English proficiency. As a result, in this class teachers are responsible for fulfilling both kinds of students' needs. To tackle this problem it is essential to incorporate your lesson with differentiated instruction and activities based on above mentioned topic. The main reason is that this energizes your students' active participation and involvement. English learners are in charge of doing some kinds of specific task and assignment. For example, in learning station activity students should move around the classroom in order to perform given tasks in the station. Moreover, as it is mentioned earlier that a number of activities related to differentiated instruction and their instructions are written in the article. Such as learning station, learning teams, using task card, snow ball fight, find your partner, word on your back. To prepare these activities and preparing mixed level classes need some to conduct lessons effectively and reach stated goals. But it is important to fulfill students' needs and interests.

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