Pre-Class Reflection

- What are the characteristics of the more able learners in your classroom(s)?

- How do you cater for their needs?

- What are the major challenges?

Catering for Learner Diversity in the English Language Curriculum: Stretching the Potential of the More Able Learners in the Primary English Classroom

Learner Diversity

English Language

More Able

Learners

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Run-down of the Workshop:

- Reflection and discussion on principles for catering for learner diversity in general and the needs of more able learners in particular (30 min)

- Demonstration on and justification for a sample teaching unit aiming at developing the language skills, thinking skills, and creativity of more able learners based on an information text (75 min)

- Break (15 min)

- Hands-on task: Brainstorming ideas for building a similar teaching unit based on a narrative text (45 min)

- Wrap-up and Q&As (15 min)
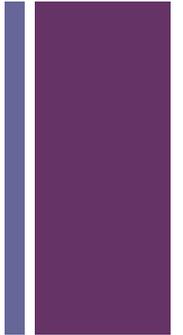
Brief Reflection:

Discuss the extent to which you agree with the following statements with a partner or in trios.

1. Learner diversity exists in my class(es)

2. When considering catering for learner diversity, more attention is paid to the weak and less to the more able learners

3. More able learners' abilities are mainly reflected in their target language proficiency

4. More able learners' needs can be catered for only in small classes

5. More able learners' needs are most effectively addressed through designing tasks at different difficulty levels

Needs and characteristics of advanced learners in the English subject

- What are the characteristics of the more able learners in our primary English language classrooms?

- Do they show:
    - more accurate and varied grammar and vocabulary?
    - better grasp of specific language skills like scanning and skimming?
    - higher motivation in accomplishing the language tasks?

- Do they also possess:
    - more critical attitude towards the topics of the activities?
    - more creative ideas?
    - better leadership skills?
    - deeper understanding of themselves as learners and their progress and therefore clearer learning goals?
    - …

Some principles for catering for the needs of the more able learners in the language classroom:

The three-tier operation mode of gifted education in HK

Are your more able students streamed into the same group(s)? What are your expectations on them?

- Level 1:

- A: Training in higher-order thinking skills and creativity for ALL students

Possible pedagogic implication: Open-ended tasks in the English language curriculum

- B: Appropriate grouping of students according to their needs across ALL subjects

Possible pedagogic implication: Streaming of students into different groups for different subjects

The three-tier operation mode of gifted education in HK

E.g. those targeting students' leadership skills, problem-solving skills, creativity and critical thinking

Level 3: Off-site support	E	
Level 2: Pull-out (School-based)	C	D
Level 1: Whole-class (School-based)	A	B
	Generic (General enrichment)	Specialized (Subject/ Domain- focused)

Nature

http://www.edb.gov.hk/en/curriculum-development/major-level-of-edu/gifted/

- Level 2:

- C: Pull-out programmes for generic skills training for a homogeneous group of students

- D: Pull-out programmes for training students with outstanding performance in specific subject domains

Possible pedagogic implications: Project-based learning, English ambassador programme, English fairs/performance involving selected students

The three-tier operation mode of gifted education in HK

Operation		
Level 3: Off-site support	E	
Level 2: Pull-out (School-based)	C	D
Level 1: Whole-class (School-based)	A	B
	Generic (General enrichment)	Specialized (Subject/ Domain-focused)

Nature

- Level 3:

- E: Challenging off-site enrichment and extension learning conducted by EDB, The Hong Kong Academy for Gifted Education, and tertiary institutions

http://www.edb.gov.hk/en/curriculum-development/major-level-of-edu/gifted/

Some differentiation strategies suggested by the EDB:

- Integrating multiple disciplines into an area of study (e.g. RWAC, which is promoted to all students!)

- Allowing in-depth learning of a self-directed topic (cf. phenomenal learning)

- Providing broadly-based curriculum content

- Providing learning activities that develop:
    - Abstract and higher order thinking skills
    - Independent thinking and open inquiry
    - Problem solving skills
    - Research skills Self-understanding

To be realised in tasks integrating the four macro language skills

Some differentiation strategies suggested by the EDB(Cont'd):

- Presenting ideas and products that challenge existing ideas (e.g. somehow 'unexpected' storyline in TSA reading texts)

- Evaluating outcomes through a range of measures which may include self or peer assessment, observation, performance, products, criterion-referenced and/or standardised testing

- Flexible grouping

- Tiered instruction

Some differentiation strategies suggested by the EDB(Cont'd):

■ Differentiated instruction: Multiple Approaches to…

Content	input, what students learn, including scaffolding support built into the input
Process	how students go about making sense of ideas and information, task conditions
Product	output, how students demonstrate what they have learned

Further References on Differentiated Instruction:
- *How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-ability Classrooms (2nd Edition)* (Differentiated instruction provides MULTIPLE APPROACHES to **content, process** and **product,** p.4) by Carol Ann Tomlinson
- **Principles that govern effective differentiation**
  http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/100216/chapters/Understanding-Differentiated-Instruction@-Building-a-Foundation-for-Leadership.aspx

Differentiated Instruction

1. Content Differentiation

Content Differentiation:
Example: Reading-to-write a narrative text

→Guiding students to analyse language features and rhetorical structure of a narrative text after they have read it for meaning through both "top-down" and "bottom-up" approaches
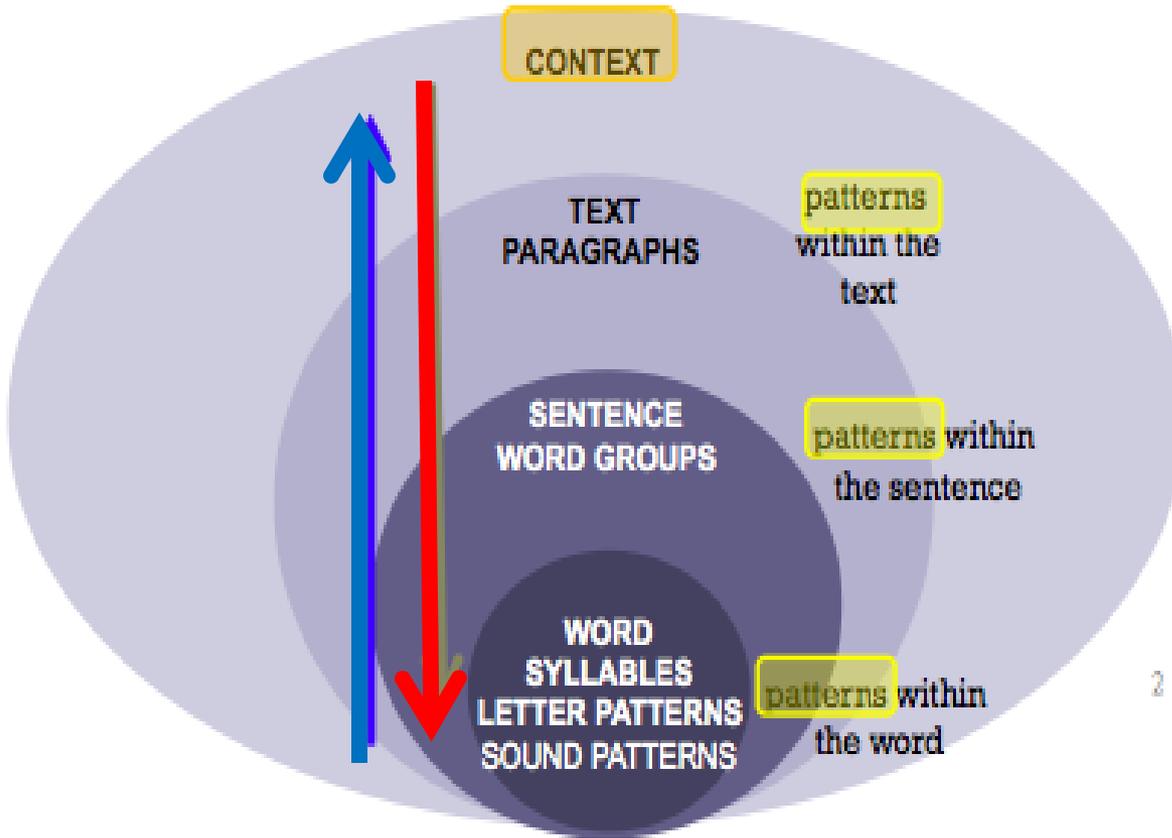
CONTEXT

TEXT PARAGRAPHS

patterns within the text

SENTENCE WORD GROUPS

patterns within the sentence

WORD SYLLABLES LETTER PATTERNS SOUND PATTERNS

patterns within the word

References:
- *How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-ability Classrooms 2nd Edition (Differentiating Content p.72) by Carol Ann Tomlinson*
- **Elements of Curriculum that can be Differentiated – Content**

http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/100216/chapters/Understanding-Differentiated-Instruction@-Building-a-Foundation-for-Leadership.aspx

2

+ For example…
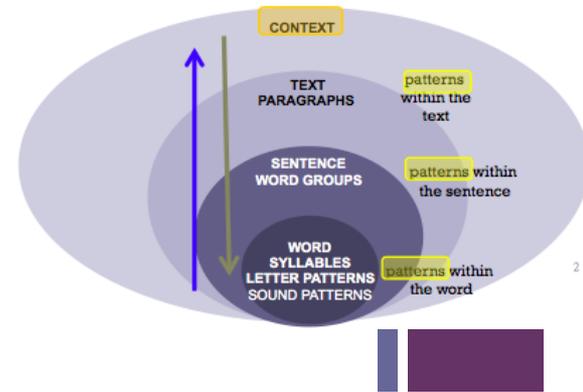
- Reading to write a narrative essay:

→ **Context level**: Activating the students' awareness of the purpose of writing and encouraging their sharing of thoughts (through videos/ pictures/ pre-task)

→ **Text level**: Showing several narrative texts and guiding them to analyse the rhetorical structure and features with the students

→ **Sentence level:** Guiding the students to identify the typical language features of the target genre (e.g. the use of the past tense for stating events, adjectives for describing the setting, characters etc.)

→ **Word level:** Identifying useful vocabulary (words/phrases) from the sample texts and asking the students to suggest alternatives (i.e. building range)

Differentiated Instruction

2. Product Differentiation

+ Product Differentiation: Core, Extended and Challenge levels of Students' Language Production

Challenge

Extended

Core

+ For example...
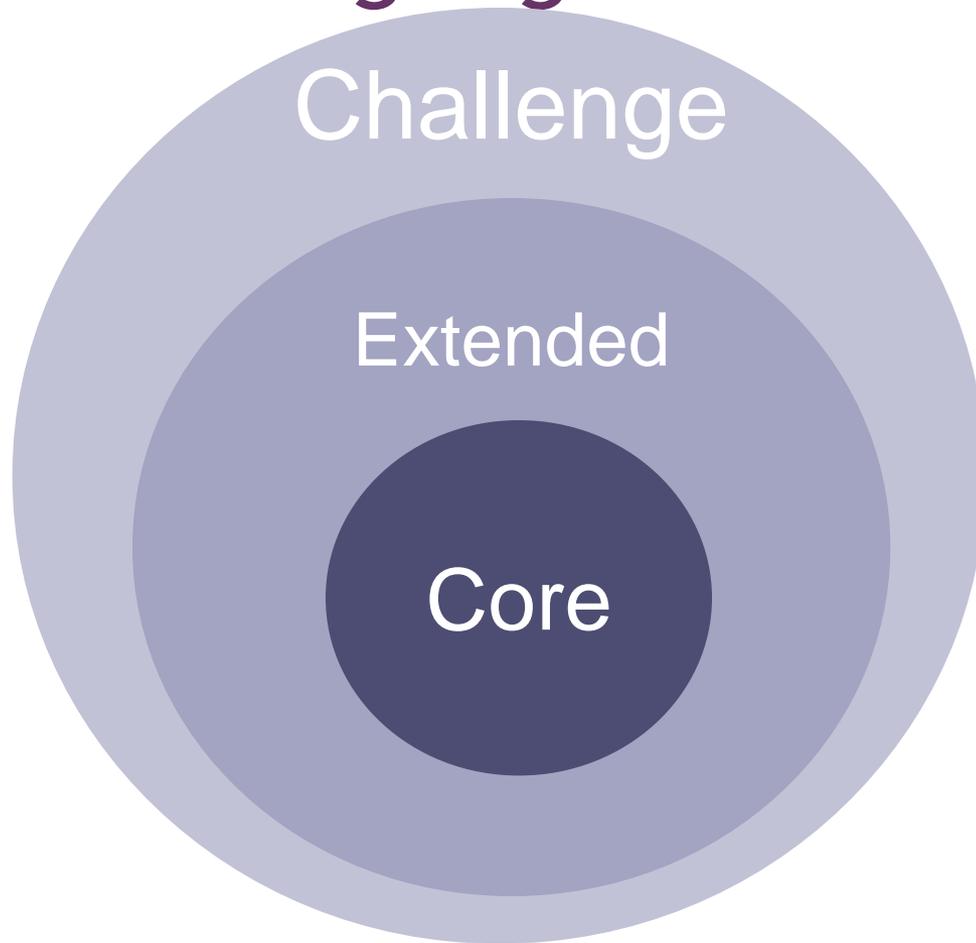
Challenge
Extended
Core
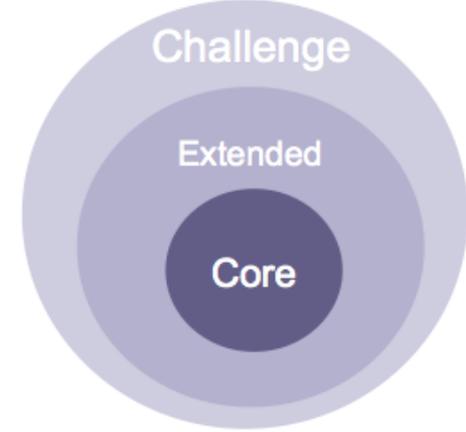
■ Speaking: **student presentation**

→ **Core**: Get students to do a show-and-tell introducing their favourite cartoon character

→ **Extended**: Get students to introduce their favourite cartoon character and how it compares to other characters

→ **Challenge:** Get students to suggest and explain some changes they would like to make to their favourite cartoon characters.

+ Other ways of differentiating the Products:

- Providing product assignments at **varying degrees of difficulty** to match student readiness.

- Using a wide variety of **kinds of assessments** (including but not limited to pen and paper assessment)

- Encouraging students to **express** what they have learned in **varied ways** (for example, producing multi-modal texts)

- Providing product assignments at **varying degrees of difficulty** to match student readiness

- Allowing for varied **working arrangements** (for example, allowing multiple drafts od student work).
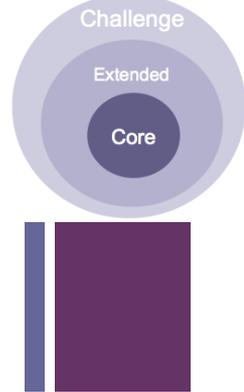
References:

- How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-ability Classrooms 2nd Edition (Differentiating Products p.85) by Carol Ann Tomlinson

- Elements of Curriculum that can be Differentiated - Product http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/100216/chapters/Understanding-Differentiated-Instruction@-Building-a-Foundation-for-Leadership.aspx

Differentiated Instruction

3. Process Differentiation

Process Differentiation: Audio, Visual, and Kinesthetic Activities

→ Designing teaching and learning materials and activities to cater for and develop different learning styles

e-learning

Audio

Others?

Visual

Kinesthetic
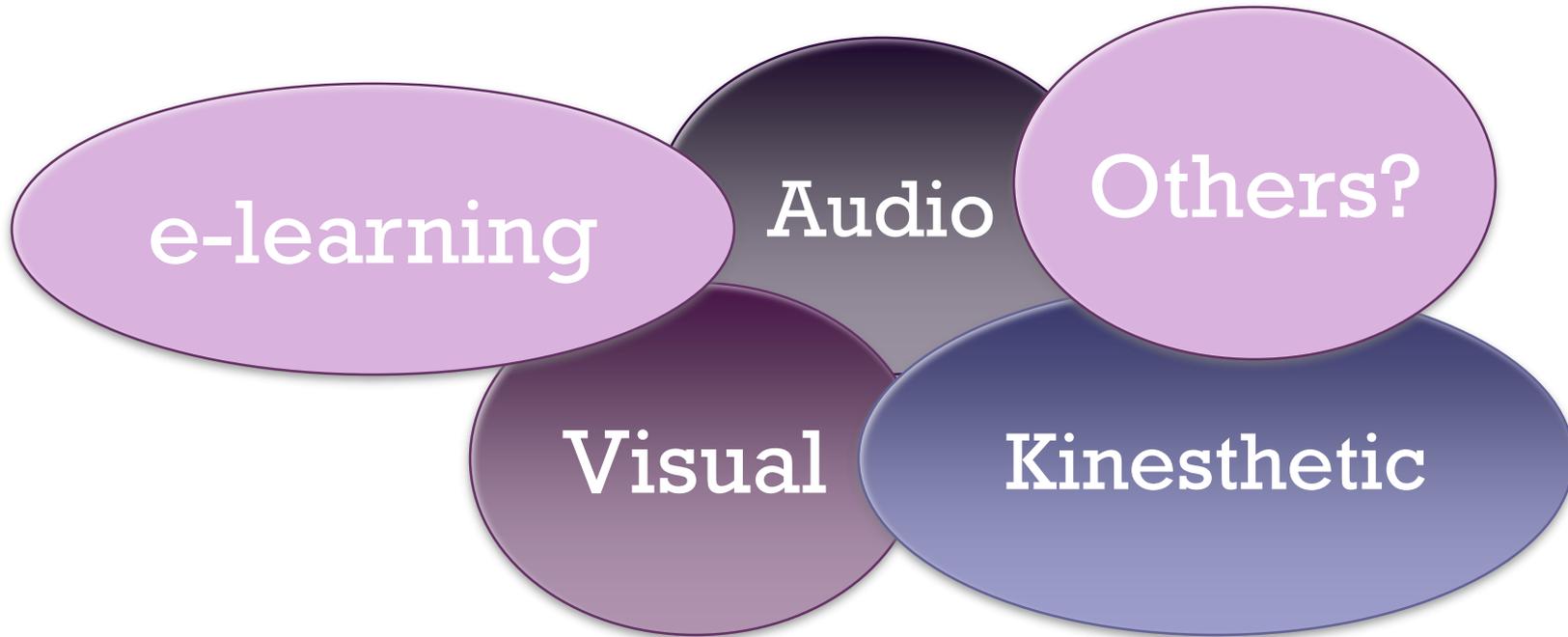
Which of these are particularly welcomed by KS1 and KS2 students?

+ Process Differentiation: Flexible Grouping

→ Designing teaching and learning tasks with different modes of participation
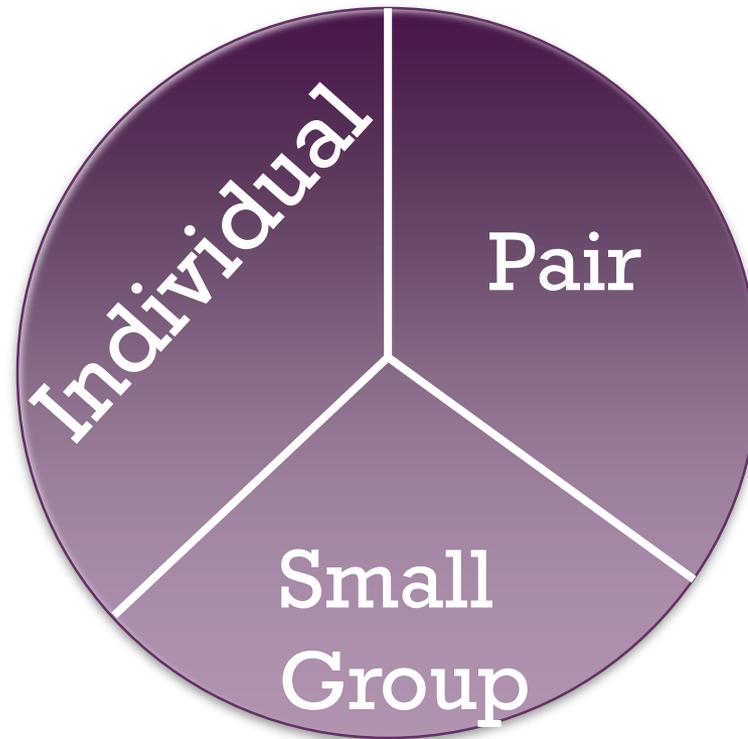
Process Differentiation:

Other ways of differentiating the learning process (the process/ the activity in which the learner comes to make sense of, understand and "own" the key facts/ concepts/ generalisations/ skills):

- Providing varied options at differing levels of difficulty/ based on student interests

- Allowing students to access additional teacher or student support for a task

- Giving student choices about how they express what they have learnt

- **References:**

- *How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-ability Classrooms 2nd Edition (Differentiating Process p.80)* **;Instructional strategies that support differentiated Process** (p. 81)**:** multiple intelligences, interest groups, varied graphic organisers, complex instruction, concept attainment, independent study *by Carol Ann Tomlinson*

- **Elements of Curriculum that can be Differentiated - Process** http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/100216/chapters/Understanding-Differentiated-Instruction@-Building-a-Foundation-for-Leadership.aspx

Sample Teaching Sequence
(informed by the above principles)

Background:
- a reading-to-write sequence primarily targeting learners' developing awareness of the information report genre
- integration of the macro skills
- open-ended tasks with flexible task conditions for promoting differentiated instruction (content, product, and process)

Stage 1: Pre-Reading (Content Differentiation)

- Photo of a barn owl

- What do we know about the animal on the left?
- Look at the picture on the left.
- Go to www.menti.com with your tablet / smartphone.
- Use the code??????.
- Answer the question. Be specific!!!

Now let's read a text on this animal and learn more about it!

We'll begin with a special version of the text:

The Barn Owl

What's the name of the animal?

What should we expect in the first paragraph?

1. XXXXXXXXX

2. XXXXXXXXX ← What does this word mean?

What can be these four sub-headings?

3. XXXXXXXXX

4. XXXXXXXXX

What should we expect in the last paragraph?

The Barn Owl

The barn owl is a bird of prey. It is an endangered species.

Appearance

Its face is like a plate which is used as a satellite dish. The sound bounces off. It has brown speckles and a white face.
It has white feathers under the wings and a white belly. There are furry-speckled feathers on its back.

Habitat

The barn owl lives in barns and chimneys. It does not make nests.

Food

The barn owl is a carnivore and it eats mice, rats, wild gerbils and baby rabbits.

Movement

The barn owl flies fast and silent and glides and it flies low, so that its prey can't hear it coming. It is nocturnal and usually sleeps during daytime.

The barn owl is endangered because people are moving to barns and also because mice eat chemicals and the owls eat the mice and they die.

(The Barn Owl, Adapted from Rees, 1996, p. 57)

Stage 2: While-Reading (Process Differentiation)

- Read the text (on P.1 of the task sheet) for one minute and understand as much of it as you can.
- Compare the information about barn owls in the text and on the menti word cloud that our class has constructed.
- Jot down the points covered about barn owls in one or both sources in the table on P. 2 of the task sheet.

Stage 2: While-Reading (Process Differentiation)

The Barn Owl		
Points covered in our class's menti word cloud only	Points covered in the reading text only	Points covered in both sources

The Barn Owl

Let's do detailed reading!

The barn owl is a bird of prey. It is an endangered species.

Appearance

Its face is like a plate which is used as a satellite dish. The sound bounces off. It has brown speckles and a white face.
It has white feathers under the wings and a white belly. There are furry-speckled feathers on its back.

Habitat

The barn owl lives in barns and chimneys. It does not make nests.

Food

The barn owl is a carnivore and it eats mice, rats, wild gerbils and baby rabbits.

Movement

The barn owl flies fast and silent and glides and it flies low, so that its prey can't hear it coming. It is nocturnal and usually sleeps during daytime.

What should we do to protect the barn owls?

The barn owl is endangered because people are moving to barns and also because mice eat chemicals and the owls eat the mice and they die.

(The Barn Owl, Adapted from Rees, 1996, p. 57)

Brief Reflections on Detailed Reading as a way to cater for learner diversity :
- Potential for scaffolding the less able students while challenging the more able ones simultaneously
- Providing contextualised training on the reading strategies(c.f. CDC, 2017 KLA Guide)
- Transcending language across levels: word, phrase, sentence and text, using such as resources for comprehending the reading text (i.e. reading by identifying syntactic and semantic clues (c.f. CDC, 2017 KLA Guide))
- Providing good contexts for teaching vocabulary and grammar (i.e. achieving text grammar (c.f. CDC, 2017 KLA Guide))
- Caution: Detailed reading is time-consuming so teachers may apply it to only one important part of the reading text instead of the whole text)

Understanding the target genre of an information report:

- Text type: Information Report → Purpose: Describing things (giving information of aspects or parts of one thing)

  – A Report on Barn Owls (written by 2 children following joint work by their class)

The Barn Owl

The barn owl is a bird of prey. It is an endangered species.
Appearance
Its face is like a plate which is used as a satellite dish. The sound bounces off. It has brown speckles and a white face.
It has white feathers under the wings and a white belly. There are furry-speckled feathers on its back.
Habitat
The barn owl lives in barns and chimneys. It does not make nests.
Food
The barn owl is a carnivore and it eats mice, rats, wild gerbils and baby rabbits.
Movement
The barn owl flies fast and silent and glides and it flies low, so that its prey can't hear it coming. It is nocturnal and usually sleeps during daytime.

The barn owl is endangered because people are moving to barns and also because mice eat chemicals and the owls eat the mice and they die.

Stage 3: Post-Reading & Pre-Writing (Product Differentiation)
Understanding the target information report genre:

Read the information report on P. 1 of the task sheet again.

Where do we know the barn owl is a bird? (i.e. class of the animal)

Where do we know it is endangered?

Introduction

Where do we know WHY it is endangered?

Conclusion

How many aspect(s) of the barn owl is covered in each of the middle paragraphs?

How is each middle paragraph organised?

Stage 3: Post-Reading & Pre-Writing (Product Differentiation)

Understanding the target information report genre:

So what do we know about the structure of an information report about an endangered species?

Version 1

Section	Structure		
Heading	Name of the animal		
Introduction	Class of the animal	→	That the animal is endangered
Middle paragraphs	Sub-heading	→	Specific features of the animal
Conclusion	That the animal is endangered	→	Why the animal is endangered

Stage 3: Post-Reading & Pre-Writing (Product Differentiation)
Understanding the target information report genre:

So what do we know about the structure of an information report about an endangered species?

Version 2

Section	Structure
Heading	Name _____ of the animal
Introduction	Class _____ of the animal → That the animal is endangered
Middle paragraphs	Sub-heading → Specific features _____ of the animal
Conclusion	That the animal is endangered → Why the animal is endangered

Stage 3: Post-Reading & Pre-Writing (Product Differentiation)

Grammar and Vocabulary <mark>Let's underline all the verbs in the text.</mark>

The Barn Owl
The barn owl is a bird of prey. It is an endangered species.

Appearance
Its face is like a plate which is used as a satellite dish. The sound bounces off. It has brown speckles and a white face.
It has white feathers under the wings and a white belly. There are furry-speckled feathers on its back.
Habitat
The barn owl lives in barns and chimneys. It does not make nests.
Food
The barn owl is a carnivore and it eats mice, rats, wild gerbils and baby rabbits.
Movement
The barn owl flies fast and silent and glides and it flies low, so that its prey can't hear it coming. It is nocturnal and usually sleeps during daytime.

The barn owl is endangered because people are moving to barns and also because mice eat chemicals and the owls eat the mice and they die.

(The Barn Owl, Adapted from Rees, 1996, p. 57)

Stage 3: Post-Reading & Pre-Writing (Product Differentiation)

Grammar and Vocabulary   Let's underline all the verbs in the text.

The Barn Owl
The barn owl is a bird of prey. It is an endangered species.

Appearance
Its face is like a plate which is used as a satellite dish. The sound bounces off. It has brown speckles and a white face.
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The barn owl is endangered because people are moving to barns and also because mice eat chemicals and the owls eat the mice and they die.

(The Barn Owl, Adapted from Rees, 1996, p. 57)

Stage 3: Post-Reading & Pre-Writing (Product Differentiation)

Grammar and Vocabulary

- What tense is used in the information report? Why?
- What do the sentences usually start with (i.e. what is the subject of most of the sentences)?
- Is that subject singular or plural? What happens to the verb following it?
- Complete following table on the three common sentence patterns found in the text:

> To what extent and in what aspects are these questions relevant to the students' literacy development in general and that of reading proficiency in particular?

Stage 3: Post-Reading & Pre-Writing (Product Differentiation)
Grammar and Vocabulary (Version 1)

Sentence Pattern	Example Sentences	Function
A is B.	The barn owl is a bird of prey. _____ _____	
A has B.	It has brown speckles. _____ _____	
A + Action Verb (+ Adverb)	The barn owl flies fast and silent _____ _____	

| To introduce the body parts of the animal | To tell what the animal does/ does not do | To tell the class of the animal and what it is like |

Stage 3: Post-Reading & Pre-Writing (Product Differentiation)
Grammar and Vocabulary (Version 2)

Sentence Pattern	Example Sentences	Function
A is B.	The barn owl is a bird of prey. _____ _____	To tell the class of the animal and what it is like
A has B.	It has brown speckles. _____ _____	To introduce the body parts of the animal
A + Action Verb	The barn owl flies fast and silent _____ _____	To tell what the animal does/ does not do

The barn owl is a bird of prey. It is an endangered species.

Appearance
Its face is like a plate which is used as a satellite dish. The sound bounces off. It has brown speckles and a white face. It has white feathers under the wings and a white belly. There are furry-speckled feathers on its back.

Habitat
The barn owl lives in barns and chimneys. It does not make nests.

Food
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Movement
The barn owl flies fast and silent and glides and it flies low, so that its prey can't hear it coming. It is nocturnal and usually sleeps during daytime.

The barn owl is endangered because people are moving to barns and also because mice eat chemicals and the owls eat the mice and they die.

Purpose and organisation
- Has a general classification then description of specific aspects
- Uses sub-headings to define paragraphs
- Each paragraph begins with a reference to the subject, e.g. `The Barn Owl…", "It…"
- Uses explanation appropriately to conclude the text

Language features
- Constant use of subject reference
- Use simple present tense
- Use of action verbs (*eats, fly, pick up*)
- Subject and verb generally agree with each other
- Use simple sentence structures, with connectives such as *because, so that*

Ways of describing
- Use adjectives and noun, e.g. *sharp claws furry-speckled feathers, endangered species*
- Use an appropriate simile, e.g. *face like a plate*

Stage 4: Writing 1 (Content and Product Differentiation)
Use of a multimodal text as differentiated input

- Watch a cartoon on owls and jot down some new findings about barn owls on the note sheet using the three sentence patterns identified in Stage 3.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_C_1cATo9uw

Other possible videos:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XR8aTmLiYcU

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m0XgSrdYQRY

Stage 4: Writing 1 (Content and Product Differentiation)
Use of a multimodal text as differentiated input

New Findings on Barn Owls
- A barn owl is/has/(action verb) _____
- It is/has/(action verb) _____
- It is/has/(action verb) _____
- It is/has/(action verb) _____
- It is/has/(action verb) _____
- It is/has/(action verb) _____.

Expand the original information report using these new findings. Decide where you'd insert these sentences. You may also change the original sentences to fit the new findings in.

Stage 5: Writing 2 (Content and Product Differentiation)
Researching and writing an information report

- Do an Internet research on another endangered species of your own choice. Jot down facts about that species in graphic organisers like tables, mind-maps, flow-charts etc.

- Write an information report on the endangered species you choose. You will need to refer to the table on the structure of an information report and the sentence patterns commonly found in such reports (Stage 3 above).

- Include a photo or a drawing of the endangered species in your report (you may find YouTube videos on drawing animals helpful)

Stage 6: Post-Writing (Content and Process Differentiation)
Assessment as and for Learning

- Read each other's information report. For each report you have read, give the writer some feedback by compiling a 'Two Stars and a Wish' template:

Two Stars and a Wish
Star
Star
Wish

Hands-on Task

Let's get into groups of 3-4. With reference to the short story *A Wise Old Owl (P.6 of the task sheet)*, plan some possible teaching tasks that may develop students' language skills, creativity and critical thinking through responding to the text and connecting it to our more able KS1 and/or KS2 learners' life experience.

You may want to apply the above principles we've discussed in the previous demonstration:

- Differentiated instruction (content, product, process)
- Reading-to-write
- Genre-based approach
- Multi-modal input

Hands-on Task: A Wise Old Owl

Suggested version for KS1:

There was an old owl. He lived on a tree. Every day something happened around him. Yesterday he saw an old man carrying a heavy basket. Today he saw a girl shouting at her mother. As he saw more, he spoke less.

As he spoke less, he heard more. He heard many stories. A woman said that an elephant jumped over a fence. A man said that he never made mistakes.

The old owl saw and heard about what happened to people. Some people became better and some became worse. The old owl became wiser every day.

Hands-on Task: A Wise Old Owl

Suggested version for KS2

There was an old owl that lived in an oak. Every day he saw incidents happening around him. Yesterday he saw a boy helping an old man to carry a heavy basket. Today he saw a girl shouting at her mother. The more he saw the less he spoke.

As he spoke less, he heard more. He heard people talking and telling stories. He heard a woman saying that an elephant jumped over a fence. He also heard a man saying that he had never made a mistake.

The old owl saw and heard about what happened to people. Some became better and some became worse. But the old owl became wiser each and every day.

(Text adapted from: http://www.english-for-students.com/a-wise-old-owl.html)

Hands-on Task: A Wise Old Owl

What's the moral behind the story?

We should be observant, talk less but listen more. This will make us wise.

How can the text be used to develop our more able KS1 and/or KS2 learners'

- reading strategies? (which strategies?)

- grammar awareness? (what grammar item(s) to focus on?)

- higher order thinking skills?

- creativity?

What about the two versions of the same text? What marks the major differences between the two?

Hands-on Task: A Wise Old Owl

How about coupling this story text with

- the previous information report on barn owls?

- With other literary texts like https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MYNJyg78Jmc (which is a nursery rhyme version of the story)?

A Wrap up

Possible dimensions to look at for differentiated instruction:

- Content
- Process
- Product

Stretching the Potentials of Advanced Learners:

- Tiered instruction
- Varying task conditions (process& content) in addition to task types (product)
- Using multimodal input and output
- Encouraging higher order and abstract thinking
- In-depth learning of self-directed topics

Book Recommendation:

- Carol Tomlinson's *How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms*