Catering for Learner Diversity in the English Language Curriculum: Speaking and Writing Skills
Introductions

What do you want to get out of this workshop today?

Have you been to a workshop on learner diversity before?

How do you currently address learner diversity in your classes?
Aims

Raising awareness of strategies to cater for students’ diverse interests and abilities in the classroom

Exploring activities and materials for lesson planning

Examining considerations when addressing learner diversity in the development of productive skills
How far do you agree?

All students should be expected to aim for the same level of achievement.
How far do you agree?

Catering for learner diversity requires more lesson planning and more materials design.
How far do you agree?

Catering for learner diversity means more individual support at tables.
What is learner diversity? In what ways do learners differ from each other?

mixed ability (in each different skill)

different interests

different learning styles
What is learner diversity? In what ways do learners differ from each other?

- Different amounts of world knowledge
- Different learning styles
- Different interests
- Mixed ability (in each different skill)
- Different learning pace
- Different amounts of parental support
- Different levels of motivation
Student (age 14)

S: Teacher is write something at the end. He writes me how to do it better. I wish I know it before.

T: Why do you wish you could have known that before?

S: I don’t make the mistake if I know that.

T: But now you know for the future?

S: Yes but it’s finish now so no need. Waste my time to learn it after.
Common student complaints

I can’t do this task!
I don’t want to do this task!
I can’t do the task *in this way*!
I don’t want to do the task *in this way*!
I can’t work in this atmosphere!
I don’t want to work in this atmosphere!

too hard
boring
disruptive
too easy
not motivating
stressful
not useful
not inspiring
not encouraging
Process

Output

Read    Enter
Product

Process

Learning Environment
Product

Process

Learning Environment
Expecting students to complete a different task on the topic, e.g. student A produces a comic to explain a concept, and student B to produce a poster to explain the same concept.

Expecting students to create their own homework assignments sometimes [as long as these contain required elements]

Expecting students to produce a different level of language in their work, e.g. Student A needs to label the diagram, and student B needs to explain it.

Student Problems

“I can’t do this task!”

“I don’t want to do this task!”
Product

Process

Learning Environment
Enabling some students to complete the task alone and some to complete the task in pairs/groups

Designing tasks which require several stages of redrafting work, so that support, input and feedback can be provided appropriately at each stage.

Giving students specific roles each during a group task, e.g. student A is responsible for encouraging participation, student B is responsible for the grammar, student C is responsible for keeping the pen.

Student Problems

“I can’t do the task in this way!”

“I don’t want to do the task in this way!”
Product

Process

Learning Environment
Developing classroom routines that enable students to seek help when they want it, e.g. student write post it notes on their desks through the lesson, and the teacher can come around at an appropriate time later, to help them.

Encouraging reflective tasks, where students talk about what they have learned and how they have learned it.

Designing hands-on activities, or activities which involve standing up, turning chairs around, moving seats, etc.

Creating a classroom atmosphere that encourages mistakes as an interesting learning point, not as a failure.

Learning Environment

Student Problems

“I can’t work in this atmosphere!”

“I don’t want to work in this atmosphere!”
Learning Environment

Process

Product

Learning Environment
carpet patch
Speaking activities
Picture hole task

1. Look at your picture. Where do you think it is? What do you think is in the hole?

2. How are the pictures connected?

3. What are each of the constructions made of?

4. Before we watch the video about living bridges, what do you think the following numbers represent?
   - 10 years
   - 50 people
   - 500 years

5. Watch the video and check your ideas

6. How do you like the idea of a living bridge?
Three to Twelve Activity

Rural

Sustainable
Thinking Hats Activity

De Bono

1. difficulties, risks, weaknesses

2. benefits, positives

3. facts, data

4. feelings, emotions

5. creative ideas, solutions, alternatives

6. focus, summary

www.britishcouncil.org/hk
Tourism is developing at a rapid rate in many areas of the world. Some places build up urban cities with all sorts of tourist attractions and shopping outlets to cater for these tourists. Other places focus on attracting tourists to appreciate the natural beauty of their landscape. Eco-tourism is a type of tourism which aims to encourage tourists to visit natural areas, while causing minimal damage to the environment at the same time.

You are going to write a letter to the Hong Kong Tourist Board, encouraging them to promote eco-tourism more in Hong Kong. Discuss what to include in your letter.

You might want to consider:

• what areas of natural beauty Hong Kong has
• what kind of things eco-tourists would be able to do in Hong Kong
• why eco-tourism would be good for Hong Kong
Writing activities
Onion Ring Brainstorm

A visual record of how knowledge and understanding builds up gradually through the lesson.
Jigsaw

Picture jigsaw

Expressions jigsaw

Sentence jigsaw
Improving a Model Text
Follow up activities

Read one activity to your group and discuss together:

• How might this help engage students?
• How might this help cater for learner diversity?
• How might you need to adapt this for your own classes?

Then take another activity and discuss it together.