Catering for Learner Diversity the Primary English Classroom at KS1

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Workshop Objectives:

In this workshop, participants will…

1) Explore learner diversity in learning English and factors to consider in addressing learner diversity

2) Plan and design units and lessons to cater for diverse learning needs during their transition from kindergarten to primary one and through the KS1 years through exploring demands of activities and tasks

3) Select and develop resources to arouse students' motivation, address their diverse learning needs and styles, and engage them in self-paced learning

4) Consider ways to formatively assessing learners within the teaching, learning and assessment cycle

Opening Discussion

"Who are our KS1 students?"

- What similarities do all our learners have?

- What differences do they have?

Type your ideas on Mentimeter

Two students – Same Class Different Experiences

- Kate comes from a middle class family. She went to an English medium kindergarten, has an English speaking domestic helper and attends after school English classes twice a week. She loves reading English books and her favourite author is 'Roald Dahl.'

- Hugo lives with his mother and grandmother. They are new arrivals from Mainland China. No one in his family speaks English. He learnt the alphabet song in kindergarten.

- Both students get allocated to the same class in a local primary school. After about a month, the students have their first dictation. Kate scores 100 and Hugo scores 15. Kate receives a reward. Hugo has to copy the words he got wrong three times.

  - What impact could this experience have on Kate and Hugo? (views towards English, attitude, motivation, engagement, social relationships)

  - What assumptions might the teacher have about Kate and Hugo? Are these assumptions fair?

  - What changes could be made to help accommodate the needs of both Kate and Hugo in the same class?

Think about your current practices

What could be some of the issues with…

- Standardized homework?

- Regular high-stakes assessments?

- A focus on accuracy?

- The quantity of textbooks, workbooks, grammar books…?

Impact on our learners

- Less willing to try
- Less interested in English – believe they 'can't do English'
- Narrowly focus on accuracy and not fluency, complexity or creativity
- Focus on getting the right answer rather than learning from the process
- See English as a subject and not a language
- Stay in their comfort zones
- They compare themselves to each other by their grades and scores
- Develop a 'want-hate relationship with English' (Lin, 1999, p.394)

Impact on us

- We miss the little improvements our students make that show they are learning and give us satisfaction
- We design and assign activities and tasks that have right and wrong answers (A or 100% = perfection)
- We judge ourselves and each other on our learners and our mistakes
- We relate right answers to effort
- We play safe and don't take risks

Curriculum and Diversity

- "Every class is made up of individuals who are different in terms of motivation, learning styles, interests, preferences and abilities. Teachers can cater for learner diversity through effective curriculum planning, and appropriate learning, teaching and assessment strategies" (CDC, 2017, p.71)

Curriculum Recommendations

- employ a variety of strategies to enhance interactive learning

- make use of graded learning tasks and exercises;

- provide students with the same tasks and exercises, but
    - varying the expected output of different students; or
    - varying the amount and style of teacher input and support for the less able students and stretch the more able ones

- making use of open-ended tasks

- selecting, adopting and adapting appropriate texts

- breaking tasks into smaller steps

- providing different support in learning tasks

- connecting the design of learning materials to students' life experiences

- make use of flexible groupings

- engage students in active and self-directed learning (CDC, 2017, p.73)

Mindset of a teacher who differentiates

- All students have areas of strength
- All students have areas that need to be strengthened
- Each students brain and body is unique
- It is never too late to learn
- Students bring their own prior knowledge and experiences to everything they do
- Emotions, feelings and attitudes affect learning
- Students learn in different ways at different times

Adapted from Gregory & Chapman, 2013

Everybody is a genius.

But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid.

Albert Einstein

Demands and Support

Activities as tasks can have different kinds of demands and this impacts on the support and how we cater for diversity

- Interactional demands
- Content demands
- Genre/ Discourse demands
- Linguistic demands
- Cognitive demands
- Affective demands/engagement

Modified from Cameron (2001)

Activity 1: Looking for opportunities to differentiation in the textbook

What are the demands of this activity?

Longman Express 1B page 10-12 – Colourful clothes

Our ideas

- **Interactional demands** – low (doesn't require interaction with others)
- **Content demands** – Awareness that in different countries the weather is different and we need to wear different clothes / also culture impacts on the clothing we wear
- **Genre demands** – that the text related to the pictures / That each part needs to be read independently from other parts / Search for relevant information / that the article provides factual information
- **Linguistic demands** - Relationship between good and lucky / relate different parts of a text together (skirt / kilt) / the use of the possessive 's' / the use of possessive pronouns / relate 'different countries' to 'around the world' / plurals and singular nouns / pronunciation of 'Pablo' 'trousers' 'dresses'
- **Cognitive demands** – locating information / understanding the rubrics
- **Affective demands** – Is it interesting to P1 learners?

What support might we provide or do we need to provide to help with these demands?

Do different learners need different types of support? Why?

Differentiated Instruction
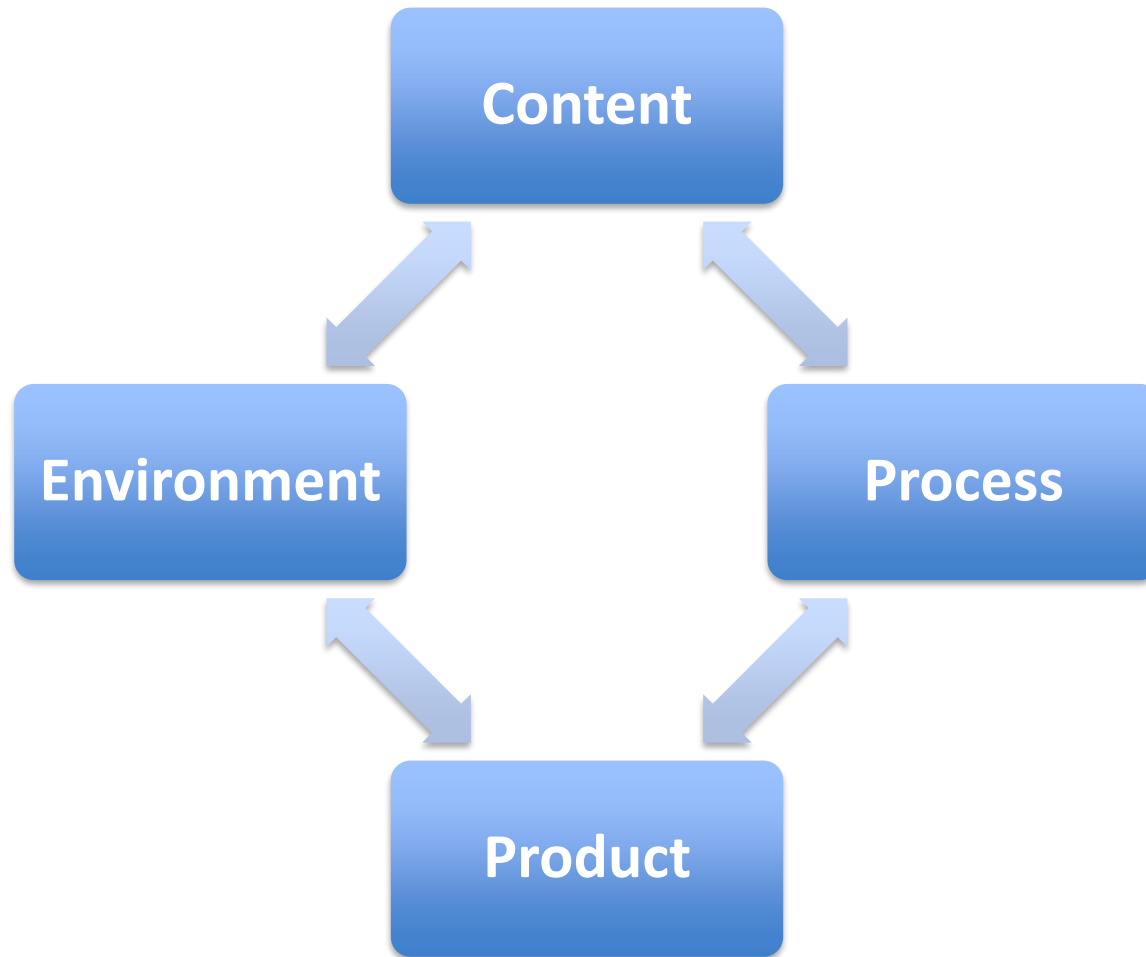
Differentiated Instruction

- **Content** - We can change the text, modify the text, supplement the text (videos, other texts, pictures...)

- **Process** – We can use different teaching reading approaches – Shared Reading / Guided Reading / Supported Reading / Paired Reading / Group Reading / Independent Reading / focus on specific reading skills/strategies

- **Product** – We can change the questions / give students other ways to demonstrate their learning / focus on specific reading skills/strategies

- **Environment –** We can create a display of clothing from different countries around the world. We could ensure ideas are valued and not just right answers.

Activity 2: Balancing demands and support

- Analyse the demands of the Practice 1 activity and consider ways to cater for diversity using Differentiated Instruction

Demands
Interactional demands
Content demands
Genre/ Discourse demands
Linguistic demands
Cognitive demands
Affective demands/engagement

Differentiated Instruction
Content
Process
 Product
Environment

Break ☺

Activity 3: Demonstration of open tasks to cater for diversity

What are the demands of this task? Why might this task not cater well for students with different needs?

Ways open tasks help cater for diversity:

- **Affective demands** - students have more choice and ability to personalize. Writing their own ideas and not those of others
- **Linguistic demands** - students can use their own linguistic resources
- **Genre demands** – students gain more awareness of the genre and its social purpose
- **Content demands** – students can relate the task to their own knowledge and experiences
- **Cognitive demands** – students need to make choices about the language they will use

Stages of an open writing task

Set the context

Build the field

Text de-construction / Text analysis

Shared writing / Text re-construction

Independent writing

Demonstration

- **Set the context**
  - Design an outfit for the class mascot (Changed the context to make it more relevant to students) and write a description of it.
  - Purpose – Make others choose your design / make the best design in the school
  - Audience – classmates and other students in the school

Building the field

- Show examples of mascots and the clothing they wear (Discuss why they have these kinds of clothing – Usually bright!)

- Ask participants to read through page 10 and 11 of textbook and find all the clothing words – Ask what makes some of these clothes special? (e.g. grass skirt) Ask if they know any other special clothes? Elicit ideas to the board.

- Revise clothing and colour vocabulary using various games and decision making activities

- **Text de-construction / Text analysis**
  - Give participants a cut up description and ask them to work in groups/ pairs to put it together. Include some sentences that aren't related.
  - Discuss why they choose some sentence and not others and why put it in that order – what clues did they use? Discuss the features and organization of the text. Elicit possible other things that they could include in a description – likes, dislikes, hobbies… etc.
- **Shared Writing (PicMix)**
  - Co-construct a text together for the teacher's mascot clothes design (use PicMix app to put clothes on the mascot virtually)

- **Independent Writing**
  - Participants design their own clothing for the mascot and write a description

- **Sharing (Use Shadow Puppet Edu)**
  - Participants use the app – Shadow Puppet Edu to record their description to share with the class.
  - Make a display of the class mascot designs and descriptions

Reflecting on the Demonstration

- How did the open writing task cater for diversity?
- What skills were developed?
- What opportunities were there within the task to formatively assess our learners?
- What could be the advantages of this kind of task compared to the 'traditional' ways of teaching mentioned at the beginning?
- What could be the challenges of implementing this in your KS1 classroom?

Other ways to cater for diversity in KS1

- Explicitly teaching 'Word Attack Skill'
- Develop activities and games that require interaction and language to complete them
- Focus on ALL aspects of language learning – creativity, fluency, complexity and not just accuracy
- Make lessons meaningful, lively and fun!

Takeaways

- Discuss with the teachers around you. What will you take away from this workshop and implement in your KS1 classroom?

- Please let us know ☺

References

- Cameron, L. (2001) Teaching languages to young learners. Cambridge: CUP.
- CDC (2017) English Language Education Key Learning Area Curriculum Guide (Primary 1- Secondary 6) - Draft
- Gregory and Chapman (2013) *Differentiated Instruction Strategies . One size does not fit all.* Corwin
- Lin, A. (1999). Doing-English-Lessons in the Reproduction or Transformation of Social Worlds? *TESOL Quarterly Vol.33 (3),* 393-412