

Example 35

Catering for learner diversity using RAFT and Equaliser in a Secondary 3 History lesson

Ms Wong Fung Ming¹, the History teacher at **Yan Chai Hospital Wong Wha San Secondary School**, plans a Secondary 3 lesson on Hitler and World War II. The objectives of the lesson are to enable students to understand the aggression of Nazi Germany and its effects, and to analyse how the Jews suffered from the Holocaust. Students are also expected to develop the historical skill of seeing the past from the standpoint of the people under study.

Preparing students for RAFT with reference to students' learning styles

Ms Wong asks students to watch movie clips about the Holocaust at home according to their interests before the lesson starts. There are two reasons for the pre-lesson preparation. First, as her students prefer the visual and auditory approach to learning and enjoy watching videos, they become more motivated to learn. Second, the visual effects of the video clips about the Holocaust enhance students' awareness of, sensitivity to and empathy for the people in that period, which are necessary inputs for students to do the RAFT² writing.

Using Equaliser and RAFT to meet diverse learning needs

Ms Wong uses Equaliser³ to design tasks that match students' readiness and RAFT is adopted to provide learning choices.

Equaliser

Single Facet

Take one role in RAFT to describe the sufferings of the Jews during the Holocaust in World War II.



Multiple Facets

Compare the responses of the different roles in RAFT to the Holocaust in World War II.

¹ Ms Wong Fung Ming now works at Yuen Long Merchants Association Secondary School.

² RAFT is an acronym that stands for "Role", "Audience", "Format" and "Topic".

³ Adapted from Carol Ann Tomlinson, *How to differentiate instruction in mixed-ability classrooms*, Pearson Education, 2005, pp.47

Students are asked to choose a role and to write on a specified topic to a target audience using a particular format, such as a message, letter or diary.

RAFT

| Role(R) | Audience(A) | Format(F) | Topic(T) |
|---|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| The Girl in Red (a character in the movie <i>Schindler's List</i>) | Her parents | Message for help | Save me! |
| A German woman who was married to a Jew (a character in the movie <i>Life is Beautiful</i>) | Nazi officer at the train station | Request letter to get on the train | We want family reunion |
| Anne Frank (a Jewish girl) | Family members of Anne Frank | Diary | We are being arrested! |

Using RAFT with writing options to cater for students' diverse abilities, needs and interests

RAFT encourages creative writing, and students can use written language to express their views and feelings based on historical fact. Adopting a specific role and writing to the target audience, students with diverse learning needs can approach past events with empathy. In this lesson, students learn to understand and share another person's experience and emotions when they play the role of that person. They are also motivated to engage in self-directed learning, and some even look for different resources after lessons to learn more about Anne Frank, who has been the most inspiring character in the lesson. Ms Wong also observed that some of the students could even apply the knowledge they acquire from RAFT writing to answering data-based questions in the examination.

If you are interested in catering for learner diversity, read also Examples 33 and 34.