

Standards Unit

IMPROVING DIFFERENTIATION IN BUSINESS EDUCATION

TOPIC 1: WHAT IS DIFFERENTIATION?

FACILITATOR GUIDANCE

Activity 2: Which teaching methods differentiate best? (1 hr 15 mins)

Facilitator notes

Participants should sit on tables of four to six, depending on the overall number present. Consider how you want to group participants: mixed groups of teachers from different curriculum areas can provide a richer discussion, but tasks may take longer.

Now read the activity.

Objectives

- To evaluate and rank teaching methods by their capacity to differentiate
- To identify methods that differentiate well
- To consider and share methods for improving differentiation when using teaching methods that do not differentiate well.

Resources

PowerPoint Slide 12

A set of cards for each group

'Answer sheet'

While completing these tasks you should take 'differentiate' to mean 'can address the different needs, interests and abilities of all learners'.

Facilitator notes

The objectives for this activity are on

PowerPoint Slide 12.

There are four sets of cards for participants so you can accommodate up to four groups of participants. Each set of cards contains a range of teaching methods, as well as three further cards labelled A, B and C.

Velcro dots are provided, which you can stick onto the back of the cards if you wish. If you do this, participants can stick their cards on to fabric-covered display boards. This enables participants to view each other's displays and compare findings.

An alternative is to use blu-tack to display them. If the cards are not displayed, participants can circulate and view them on the work tables. You are strongly advised to familiarise yourself with the cards before you do this exercise and to check the meaning of any that are unclear.

Stage 1 Which teaching methods differentiate best? (For each of the following tasks work in groups of between four and six) (45 mins)

You are provided with cards describing commonly used teaching methods. Some blank cards are also included. These can be left aside for the moment.

- Deal out the cards so that each member of your group has a batch. Read out and discuss the cards in turn.

- After discussion of each card, place it in one of the following categories on the assumption that the teaching method is used by itself:
 - A Can differentiate well
 - B Can differentiate reasonably well
 - C Does not differentiate well.
- When you have finished categorising the cards put them in order within each category, starting with the best at the top.
- Now use the blank cards to add methods that you have found to differentiate effectively.

At the end of the small-group work each group should stick their cards to a display board. Present them in columns headed A, B and C. In the group session, discuss similarities and differences between groups' responses and reasons for categorising teaching methods in a particular way. Display and share any methods you have added to the blank cards.

Facilitator notes

For some of the techniques participants will say: 'It depends'. This does not matter. The aim is not to get right answers but to discuss and reflect on why certain teaching methods differentiate well and others do not.

Encourage participants to see patterns. For example, there are three cards on questioning. Participants frequently place one of these under A, one under B and one under C. What is the difference between the three types of questioning?

Many of the techniques that differentiate well require the learners to be active. What does this tell us? Be careful, though, that participants do not automatically equate learner activity with good differentiation. The question should always be: 'Does this teaching technique enhance the learning of all learners?'

An 'answer sheet' is provided, which you may want to give out at this point or at the end of the whole session. The answers are only indicative.

Stage 2 How can you improve differentiation while using 'weak' teaching methods? (group work) (30 mins)

Facilitator notes

Often Stage 1 of the activity will overlap with Stage 2 as participants have already started discussing how they might adapt different teaching techniques to make them differentiate better. Depending on the time available and the nature of the participants, you can decide how formally you want to organise the next stage.

For each of the methods you placed in category C, decide as a group how you can make that method differentiate better. For example 'Teacher talk' would differentiate better if it were punctuated with Question and Answer or short sessions of group work, especially if the questions were 'high order' with sufficient 'wait time', and help was given to allow all students to answer the questions.