

DiFFErENTiATiNG INSTRUCTION

It's Not That Different!



Practice Activities and Resources

Institute for the Professional Development of Adult Educators

IT'S NOT THAT DIFFERENT

Differentiating Instruction Handbook

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First things first!

Getting to know your learners is a key first step in differentiation. It's essential to know your learners' goals, interests, and general language proficiency in different skill areas. Which of the tools and routines below do you use to gather this important information?

- ☐ Previous teachers' assessment(s)
- ☐ CASAS pre-test scores
- ☐ Skill assessments (digital or paper)
- ☐ Picture surveys (digital or paper)
- ☐ Written surveys (digital or paper)
- ☐ In-class Polling
- ☐ One-on-one interviews
- ☐ Corners activities (to identify areas of strength, areas of need, and interests)
- ☐ Writing samples
- ☐ Learner video interviews
- ☐ Team tasks that reveal learners' goals and/or interests
- ☐ Other _____

The needs assessment process can be used as the basis for developing curricula and classroom practice that are responsive to learners' needs. It encompasses both what learners know and can do and what they want to learn and be able to do. Learners also need opportunities to evaluate what they have learned—to track their progress toward meeting goals they have set for themselves in learning English.

From [The CAELA ELL Toolkit: Needs Assessment and Self-Evaluation](#), page II-5

The Essential Questions Underlying These Materials

How do we meet the varied needs, goals & interests of our ESOL learners without losing our minds?

Can multilevel ESOL instruction be as effective as instruction in a class with students at the same language level?

Goals

After spending time with the session workbook and the ideas from the Webinar, you should be able to...

- Analyze your textbook lessons and instructional materials in order to determine how best to differentiate instruction for your English learners;
- Plan and manage like-ability and mixed-ability teams during virtual and in-person classes; and
- Expand your understanding of learning preferences and their role in differentiation.

Reflect

Which of the goals above are most meaningful to you?

What questions drive you to learn more about differentiation?

The Basics of Differentiation

View this [video](#) and complete the Notice and Wonder chart below.

Based on the video, what did you notice about differentiation?	Based on the video, what do you wonder about differentiation?

Differentiation: The What and The Why

What:


Differentiated instruction is an approach that enables instructors to plan strategically to meet the needs of every learner. It is rooted in the belief that there is variability among any group of learners and that instructors should adjust instruction accordingly (Tomlinson, 1999, 2001, 2003). The approach encompasses the planning and delivery of instruction, classroom management techniques, and expectations of learners' performance that take into consideration the diversity and varied levels of readiness, interests, and learning profiles of the learners.

- Differentiated Instruction: [TEAL Center Fact Sheet #5 \(2010\)](#)

Why?

*Learners' interests and needs vary: They have different identities, goals, high-interest topics.
Learners' language profiles vary: Their strengths, weaknesses, gaps, and preferences differ.
Learners' readiness varies: Their prior knowledge, academic readiness and cultural expectations of learning and teaching may be different.*

Reflect: What types of differences do you see among your learners?

<i>I have noticed the following differences in my class</i>	
first languages	
goals	
interests	
prior education	
socio-economic backgrounds	
cultural expectations related to learning/teaching	
marital status	
role in family	
English language proficiency in general	
listening skills	
speaking skills	
reading skills	
writing skills	
vocabulary	
grammatical accuracy	
Other:	

Differentiation: The How

Look at the example below. Which adjustment(s) would you use with your learners?

Learning objective: *Ss will be able to write a short biographical statement for the class web page.*

- Differentiate for interest: *Help Ss identify the relevance of a biographical statement for contexts other than a class web page*
- Differentiate for learner profiles (e.g., language proficiency): *More than half the Ss are at the foundations or low-beginning level. Those Ss will use a simplified paragraph frame to write their biographical statement.*
- Differentiate for readiness: *During pre-writing, Ss with stronger academic skills can work with a detailed graphic organizer and work from a model rather than a paragraph frame.*

Reflect: *Look at one of your upcoming lesson objectives and consider these questions:*

1. Is the lesson topic one that will interest all students? Is there another topic that would be more relevant to some students that you could draw on or weave into the lesson?
2. Knowing what you know about your learners' language proficiency, are there ways you can help them address gaps or weaknesses that might hinder their achievement of the lesson objective? Will learners with more language proficiency be able to support those whose language skills are not as strong?
3. How prepared are your learners to tackle this objective? Are there any cross-cultural issues that could arise? Will some learners need additional input or resources to make the lesson's tasks intellectually challenging? Are the digital literacy demands of the lesson manageable? If not, what type of scaffolding would make it so?

Differentiation: The How

After viewing the Webinar recording, how would you describe the method for differentiating each of these three elements of instruction?

Content:

Process:

Product:

Differentiation: Process & Product

After viewing the Webinar recording, identify 3 ways you could differentiate the roundtable labeling process for learners at different levels of language proficiency. How could you use a similar instructional routine with your class? How could you do this in a virtual environment?

► **Round Table Label** (See the Classic Classroom Activities Teaching Notes.)

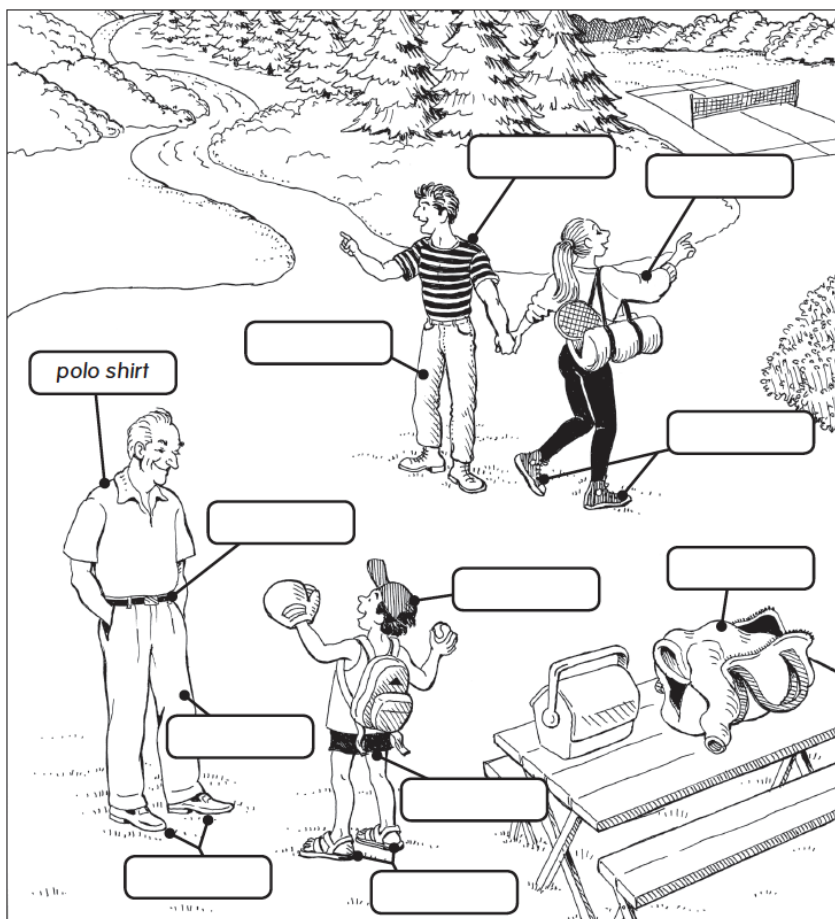
OPD pages 86–90, 94–95



Clothing

Looking Good at the Park

1. Work with 2 classmates.
2. Label what you see in the picture. Take turns.
3. Check your spelling in the OPD.



► **What's Next?** Work with a partner. Draw figures of people on a piece of paper. Take turns telling each other clothing items and accessories to draw on them.

Differentiation: Process & Product

After viewing the Webinar recording, identify 3 ways you could differentiate a peer dictation using these picture cards. Come up with additional ideas for your own class.

► **Guess What? Cards** (See the Classic Classroom Activities Teaching Notes.)




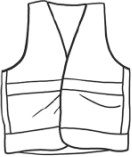

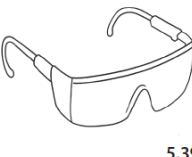

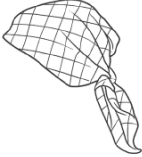




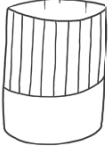
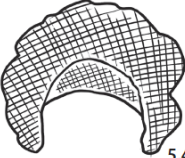
OPD pages 86–87, 92–93



Clothing

What should I wear to work?

1. Work with 3 classmates. Cut apart the cards. Put them face down in a pile.
2. Student A: Pick a card. Describe the word or phrase on the card.
Students B, C, and D: Guess the word or phrase.
3. The first student to guess correctly keeps the card.
4. Take turns.

 5.33	 5.34	 5.35	 5.36
 5.37	 5.38	 5.39	 5.40
 5.41	 5.42	 5.43	 5.44
 5.45	 5.46	 5.47	 5.48
WORD LIST			
5.33 pants	5.37 safety vest	5.41 name tag	5.45 surgical scrubs
5.34 shirt	5.38 coveralls	5.42 bandana	5.46 waist apron
5.35 shoes	5.39 safety glasses	5.43 badge	5.47 chef's hat
5.36 hard hat	5.40 blazer	5.44 face mask	5.48 hairnet

Differentiation: Process & Product

After viewing the Webinar recording, identify how a roleplay supports differentiation. Consider the elements of this worksheet. Which do you already use in setting up roleplays with your class(es). Which, if any, would you like to add to your roleplay routine?

► **Role Play** (See the Classic Classroom Activities Teaching Notes.)

OPD pages 86–87, 96–100



Clothing

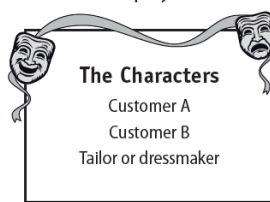
Lacy's Alterations Shop

1. Work with 2 classmates.
2. Write the character next to each line.
3. Choose your character. Write other lines you could say.
4. Practice saying the lines. Act out the role play.



The Scene

an alterations store



The Characters

Customer A
Customer B
Tailor or dressmaker



The Props

clothing items
a few sewing items

The Script

Customer A: Can you help me? I bought a jacket, but it's too tight.*

Let me see. Yes, I can let it out for you.

That's great.

And there's a button missing, too.

Really? You're right.

I can sew it on for you.

Thanks!

Excuse me, I'd like to shorten these pants.

Sure, could you put them on, please?

OK. The zipper is broken, too.




I can fix that. Let me get my tape measure.

*You can use other vocabulary for the underlined words.

► **What's Next?** You are going on vacation. Decide where you will go and what clothes you need. Make a list of 20 clothing or accessory items. After you finish, tell the class where you are going and what items you are taking.

Differentiating the Product (Assessment) with Choice Boards

Explore the choice board below that assesses learners on their understanding of policies and procedures to maintain safety on social media.

		
Write a Newspaper Article!	Make a Poster!	Conduct an Interview!
Write an article advising readers on how to use social media safely. See this example .	With a partner or alone create a digital poster on using social media safely. Review the Canva tutorial. See this poster example .	Use Anchor or your smartphone to make a podcast . Interview a classmate or family member about using social media safely. Use this template to plan.

Choice Board designed by Sylvia Ramirez, Professor Emerita, MiraCosta College, Carlsbad, CA

Reflect:

Consider an upcoming assessment task you're planning for your learners, e.g. a summary or a poster or an oral report. Could you create alternative tasks for learners in order to differentiate for different interests, needs, or readiness?

Differentiating for Modalities

When designing your lessons, check to be sure you've included a variety of learning modalities. This is differentiating for process but also for learning preferences.

Instruction Modality Analysis

What modalities will learners engage in during the lesson? Will they...	✓	Notes
1. listen to spoken and recorded texts (e.g., lectures, podcasts, broadcasts)?		
2. view and respond to a video?		
3. draw?		
4. look at and respond to illustrations or photographs?		
5. create a chart, graph, or map?		
6. look at and respond to charts, graphs, or maps?		
7. read silently?		
8. read along silently while listening to the text read aloud?		
9. read aloud to others?		
10. learn a mnemonic?		
11. add to a vocabulary journal?		
12. use a dictionary or translating device?		
13. calculate?		
14. analyze data?		
15. edit text?		
16. do a quick write?		
17. take notes?		
18. do a writing task or project?		
19. write on the board?		
20. trace new vocabulary in the air?		
21. use gestures or answer cards for feedback		
22. make flashcards		
23. use flashcards		
24. use movement (w/or w/out music) as a brain break or to support comprehension		
25. highlight or underline words in a text?		
26. solve a problem		
27. use a graphic organizer		
28. collaborate with a partner?		
29. collaborate with a team?		
30. respond on camera to a question or assignment given to the whole class?		

Differentiating for Modalities

(Continued from previous page)

When designing your lessons, check to be sure you've included a variety of learning modalities. This is differentiating for process but also for learning preferences.

What modalities will learners engage in during the lesson? Will they...	✓	Notes
31. role play?		
32. work independently?		
33. write responses and/or questions in the public chat?		
34. direct message responses and/or questions to the teacher?		
35. look for patterns?		
36. use a checklist or rubric to guide their work?		

Based on Sarah Lynn's Multiple Modalities Chart in Lynn, S. (January 6, 2015) **Using our Brains: Teaching with Multiple Modalities** [blog] retrieved from <https://longmanhomeusa.com/blog/using-our-brains-teaching-with-multiple-modalities/>

Digital Tools that Support Differentiation

The following links take you to examples of digital tools that support differentiation.

As we've learned through the experiences of 2019-2021 and beyond, technology allows learners to spend more time with lesson content as needed. Creating lessons on [Nearpod](#), [PearDeck](#), [Kahoot](#), [Canvas](#) or other LMSes, means that students who need more time with a concept can view and review a video, slide show, or other classroom material at their own pace. They can also self-assess as often as needed.

Differentiating process and product can be set up relatively easily with [Google slides](#) - each group works on their own customized slide [Google Docs](#) - Hyperdocs where learners can choose their learning path. [Google Jamboard](#)- learners can draw, type, dictate their responses or work on separate boards. [Padlet](#) - learners can choose their own task and upload it to the Padlet.

[Padlet Choice Board Example](#)

Designing for Differentiation: Multilevel Lesson Planning

This template is from [“Planning for and Managing Multilevel Classes”](#) (See the link for a larger (more readable version.) The designing for differentiation (D4D) elements presented in the Webinar are called out on the left.

Multilevel Instructional Planning Template

D4D # 4	Lesson Topic	Skill Focus	Levels:			
	Text and resources:					
	By the end of the lesson (objectives)					
	_____ learners will be able to					
D4D # 1	_____ learners will be able to					
	_____ learners will be able to					
D4D # 5	Lesson Stage:	Activity/Task	Grouping	Notes		
	Warm Up		<input type="checkbox"/> Whole class			
D4D # 6	Introduction		<input type="checkbox"/> Whole class			
	Presentation 1		<input type="checkbox"/> Whole class <input type="checkbox"/> Same level			
	Guided Practice 1		<input type="checkbox"/> Whole class <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed level <input type="checkbox"/> Same level <input type="checkbox"/> Individual			
	Guided Practice 2		<input type="checkbox"/> Whole class <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed level <input type="checkbox"/> Same level <input type="checkbox"/> Individual			
	Additional Presentation		<input type="checkbox"/> Whole class <input type="checkbox"/> Same level groups			
	Communicative Practice/ Application		<input type="checkbox"/> Mixed level <input type="checkbox"/> Same level			
	Evaluation		<input type="checkbox"/> Whole class <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed level <input type="checkbox"/> Same level <input type="checkbox"/> Individual			

Keeping it Real: Using your Textbook

This analysis tool is from [“Planning for and Managing Multilevel Classes”](#) (See the document for a larger (more readable version.)

You can use this tool to gather ideas on where and how to differentiate using your textbook.

Analyzing Textbook Lesson Elements That Support Differentiated Instruction			
Element	✓	Page	Differentiation Strategy
Photo			<input type="checkbox"/> Leveled questions (e.g., T/F, yes/no, alternative, Wh-, inference, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Differentiated oral responses (e.g., answer cards, oral short answer, complete sentences with frames, complete sentences without frames) <input type="checkbox"/> Differentiated written responses (e.g., annotation of the text, multiple-choice answers, written responses using frames, written responses without frames)
Illustration			
Chart			
Graph			
Map			
Grid			
Recorded text			<input type="checkbox"/> Different tasks for same listening passage (e.g., take limited notes, take extensive notes, summarize) <input type="checkbox"/> Leveled questions and differentiated responses (see above)
Recorded dialog			
Word lists			<input type="checkbox"/> Differentiated peer dictation (lower-level learners dictate words, mid-level and higher-level learners dictate sentences to each other)
Series of sentences			
Pair work			<input type="checkbox"/> Peer tutoring in mixed-ability pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Differentiated tasks for pairs, (e.g., pre-level pairs complete an abridged version of the activity with the teacher facilitating; on-level pairs complete the activity autonomously, higher-level pairs complete the activity and do a short follow-up task such as writing new sentences or questions associated with the activity)
Team project			<input type="checkbox"/> Leveled roles and responsibilities in mixed-ability teams <input type="checkbox"/> Differentiated outcomes for like-ability groups (e.g., pre-level teams use ready-made materials to assemble and label a poster; on-level teams create the poster using a design template with language frames; higher-level teams create their own design template)
Short texts			<input type="checkbox"/> Differentiate annotation tasks with the text, for example, working with vocabulary and summarizing: Beginning-literacy learners look for target letters or words in the text. <i>Circle all the capital Ts you see.</i> Beginning learners highlight words that are new to them. Intermediate and advanced learners highlight the most important phrases in the text that capture the key ideas.

Background Reading on Scaffolding

The following article is excerpted and adapted from the Los Angeles Regional Adult Education Consortium Revised ESL Course Outline.

SCAFFOLDING: A REALITY OF ESOL INSTRUCTION

While there are multilevel classes that include beginning-low through advanced ESL learners, the typical adult ESL class usually includes learners slightly below the level and learners slightly above. One learner may be more skilled in one area and less skilled in another. Rarely, if ever, is there a homogeneous group of learners. This reality makes differentiating instruction essential.

Differentiation can mean providing scaffolds during a task to support learners who would otherwise be highly frustrated, and it can mean adding additional challenges to a task to keep all learners motivated and engaged.

Guiding principle #7 of the English Proficiency Standards states that *“Scaffolding is an essential tool to facilitate ELLs’ acquisition of language and content.”* A sentence stem, a summary frame, and a word list are three examples of scaffolds that support learners’ speaking and writing skills. Usually, all learners benefit from these types of scaffolds in the initial stages of the lesson. However, a struggling learner may need additional scaffolds such as copying a mentor text with small substitutions or reading the first paragraph of a text in the time limit, versus reading the entire text.

Guiding principle #1 states that *“Adult ELLs have the potential to meet state-adopted challenging academic standards.”* Removing some of the scaffolds from a task is one way to make the task more challenging for learners above the level. Providing additional prompts or questions is another way to differentiate a task and keep these learners engaged. The chart below shows some additional ways to use materials to scaffold or challenge as needed, or even to do both during the same task.

[See chart on next page]

SCAFFOLDING: A REALITY OF ESOL INSTRUCTION

Material or Task	To Scaffold	To Challenge
Visuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use photos, illustrations, and charts to support lesson concepts. • Use to prompt a language experience story. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use to prompt additional language and content. • Use as a writing prompt for independent writing.
Jigsaw Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide pair A with a slightly less challenging text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide pair B with a text that is slightly more challenging.
Problem-Solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the problem scenario aloud as learners read along silently. • Give learners a list of possible solutions to choose from. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have learners listen without the text and respond to comprehension questions, then read the text silently in their teams. • Have learners come up with multiple solutions and consequences to present to the class.
Focused Listening with MP3s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give learners a worksheet to provide choices (e.g. different topics, details, or vocabulary) that learners can preview and listen for. • Play the audio multiple times. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If learners get the gist and details before others do and are listening again, ask them to make inferences based on what they hear.
Note-taking for details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give learners a graphic organizer (e.g., an outline) that is partially filled in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give learners a graphic organizer with less (or no) information filled in
Comprehension Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a questioning sequence that moves from comprehension to production. For example, ask yes/no, true/false, and “or” questions before asking Wh-questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When learners have demonstrated basic comprehension, ask a question that requires analysis or evaluation and ask for their evidence or proof of reasoning.

Resources

Textbook Tools for Differentiation

Adelson-Goldstein, J. et al. (2018) *Oxford Picture Dictionary Teacher Resource Center*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. *Includes PDFs of multilevel classroom activities (Classic Classroom Activities), multilevel listening worksheets, multilevel grammar worksheets and multilevel strategies in the lesson plans*

Adelson-Goldstein, J. et al. (2018) *Step Forward Teacher Resource Center*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. *The series was developed for narrow-spectrum multilevel classes so that all learners in the class could use the same book. The TRC has PDFs of multilevel classroom activities, multilevel strategies throughout the lesson plans, as well as multilevel listening materials.*

Bitterlin, G. et. al. (2018) *Ventures*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. *The series was developed so that learners could use different level books at the same time but all be working on the same topic area. Multilevel activity sheets are available online through Cambridge One.*

Johnson, S. and Jenkins, R. (2018) *Stand Out Teacher's Edition*. Boston, MA: National Geographic Learning/Cengage Learning. *Includes multilevel strategies in the lesson plans*

Lynn, S. et al. (2020) *Future Teacher's Edition*. New York, NY: Pearson.

Links for examples of digital tools used for differentiation

Note: When you click the Jamboard and Google slide links you will be asked to make a copy. This way you can adapt the material in any way you'd like.

[Visual Thinking Strategy Jamboard](#)

[Discussion Slides \(Google slides\)](#) Sample

[Discussion Slides \(Google slides\)](#) Template

[Padlet Choice Board Example](#)

Resources

Citations

Adelson-Goldstein, J. (2017). Planning for and Managing Multilevel Classes. Step Forward Multilevel PD Collection 2. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Bell, J. (1991) Teaching Multilevel Classes in ESL. San Diego, CA: Dominie Press.

Ferlazzo , L., Hull-Sypnieski, K., & Taylor, L. (2018). *Differentiation It's Not as Hard as You Think*. YouTube. educationweek. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h7-D3gi2IL8>.

Hess, N. (2001) Teaching Large Multilevel Classes. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Matthews-Aydinli, J. and Van Horne, R. (2006). "Promoting the Success of Multilevel ESL Classes: What Teachers and Administrators Can Do." in CAELA Digest. Retrieved from <http://www.cal.org/adultesl/resources/briefs/promoting-the-success-of-multilevel-esl-classes.php>

Parish, B. (2019) Teaching Adult English Language Learners. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press

Shank, C. and Terrill, L. (1995) "Teaching Multilevel Adult ESL Classes." in CAELA Digest. Retrieved from http://www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/digests/SHANK.html