

SERUpdate

VOLUME 20—NUMBER 2

JUNE 2010

This year has seen a number of staff changes at SERU. Ruth Motley, our Manager for several years, has taken up a position in Curriculum Services, as Program Manager, New Media and Communication Technologies. Staff will miss the passionate support and energy Ruth brought to her time here and we wish her the very best in her exciting new role. Jan Kenney will be continuing her role as Acting Manager when she returns from leave. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Jeanne Hall on her temporary appointment within the New

Media and Communication Technologies team. As Office Manager, Jeanne has been the 'face' behind the management of our web site, the production of SERUpdate and the administrative coordination of all our services. While we will miss her technological expertise, we are really pleased that Jeanne has the opportunity to utilise her skills in a new venture.

Jim Sprialis - A Manager

Differentiating the Curriculum

INTRODUCTION

Take a look in any classroom today and you will find a group of 'unequal children' – diverse in culture, ability, social advantage, family background and learning style. How then can we teach such an unequal group of learners? When I was in primary school we all read from the same book, calculated the same sums and sat in very straight rows. Diversity and individual differences were not considered as the curriculum drove the teaching in the classroom. Children who had social difficulties, disadvantaged background or disabilities were left behind – I can remember a boy who was 14 years old in grade 4! Education has come a long way since those days and we are very glad of that! The focus has shifted to the child and teachers spend a great deal of time getting to know the children in their class and then adapting and modifying instruction to better fit the needs of their students.

This term's SERUpdate explores the idea of differentiating learning with educators in South Australia from a diverse range of situations including university, district disability support, curriculum and primary and high schools. There are articles on whole school approaches, inclusive literacy programs and play – simple but effective ways that enable diversity to be accommodated and celebrated. Some examples of the many resources available at SERU that can provide further direction in providing a curriculum that is inclusive of all students are also listed.

Carol Edwards

Project Officer Communication Support Service

There is nothing more unequal than the equal treatment of unequal people.

Thomas Jefferson



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Government of South Australia
Department of Education and
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Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday

8.45 am—5.00 pm

Opening Times →

Tuesday

8.45 am—3.00 pm

SERUpdate is available for download—<http://web.seru.sa.edu.au/SERUpdate.htm>

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DIFFERENTIATING CURRICULUM FOR THE MANY, NOT THE FEW

Often in general education, differentiating the curriculum is used synonymously with modifying and adapting the curriculum for individual students with identified disabilities or other special educational needs. Individualising learning experiences for students with special needs can be essential to ensure that these students work towards appropriate goals in productive ways, often within the framework of an IEP or NEP. However, it is worth acknowledging that differentiation is a broader concept relevant to *all* learners in *all* classrooms. In fact, general classrooms that are effectively differentiated to address diverse student needs are likely to be much more responsive to those with identified learning difficulties and disabilities, even before any part of the curriculum is individualised. This article does not present specific teaching strategies to differentiate curriculum, but discusses the hallmarks of effectively differentiated general classrooms that support learning and a sense of belonging for all students, including those with special educational needs.

For the general education teacher, the challenge is always to manage the individualised goals and learning tasks of the student with special needs while also planning for and attending to the diverse needs of all students in the class. In her extensive work on this topic, Tomlinson (2001) explains that differentiated classrooms provide “different avenues to acquiring content, to processing or making sense of ideas, and to developing products so that each student can learn effectively” (p.1). Teachers attend to student differences in current levels of skill, background knowledge and understanding (or “readiness”), to varied student interests, and to students’ preferred or most comfortable ways of working (“learning profile”) in order to maximise the extent to which each student works at an appropriate level of challenge, is motivated to learn and can retain and retrieve information efficiently. Teachers in differentiated classrooms recognise that these differences among students are meaningfully related to learning, and proactively plan to address these differences through curriculum and learning opportunities (Tomlinson & Jarvis, 2009). Differentiating curriculum for all students is essential to creating a truly inclusive learning environment.

Effective teaching in diverse classrooms involves balancing a clear destination for all students with multiple pathways for arriving there. Sometimes, this means devising individual learning opportunities. In other cases, teachers assess the needs of the group and determine that not one, but multiple students would benefit from having a task broken into smaller steps, or having a more structured template to guide note-taking, for example, while another group of students would benefit from the challenge of working on a more open-ended task or developing their own note-taking structure and process. This might result in two or three (but not 25 or 30) versions of the same core task. Similarly, a teacher might plan to address different reading comprehension levels by providing a range of resources for students to read on a common concept before engaging in a group discussion; again, it is unlikely that the teacher will need 25 different texts to cater for the full range of readers.

What are the principles and practices of effective differentiation?

Differentiation is more than simply a set of teaching strategies or activities. It is an approach to teaching that is grounded in a set of core, underlying principles that reflect inclusive values. An effectively differentiated general classroom is characterised by the following principles and practices:

- *Teachers take responsibility for the progress of every student* and not only those who sit still, work quietly and learn easily. With this attitude, the teacher lets go of assumptions about what students of a particular age group or year level *should* be able to do, and focuses firmly on what each student *actually* knows, understands and is able to do in relation to general curriculum objectives at a given point in time, in order to create opportunities for each student to progress further. When learning is difficult for a student, the teacher seeks alternative ways to facilitate access to key ideas, rather than seeing the difficulty as a deficit in the student or the result of uncontrollable factors outside the classroom. The teacher embraces full responsibility for the progress of students with identified special needs;

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these students are not viewed as the primary responsibility of the special education teacher, to be dealt with outside the general classroom. The teacher knows each student as an individual and creates opportunities to learn more about what makes each student “tick.”

- *Teachers and students work as partners in learning* to monitor individual progress and negotiate worthwhile learning experiences. The teacher facilitates open discussions about student diversity and establishes a common language with students for talking about differentiation. For younger students, this discussion might relate “different-sized learning” to the familiar concept of people wearing different-sized shoes or clothing based on their individual differences in physical size. For older students, the discussions might focus on the concept of moderate challenge for learning and how the same task will not always provide the right fit for every student at a given time. Students self-assess their own progress and level of challenge, make important choices about their own learning, and assist the teacher to manage the resources of the classroom for effective differentiation. Strictly teacher-directed classrooms in which the responsibility for learning is not shared with students are rarely conducive to effective differentiation.
- *Differentiation results in multiple ways to access quality, concept-based curriculum.* Whether the curriculum is derived from SACSA, the new national Australian Curriculum, or some other framework, the teacher must effectively “translate” the content of those documents into clear learning objectives and effective opportunities for students to engage with key ideas. Concept-based curriculum helps students to see meaningful connections between information and to remember, organise, retrieve and transfer knowledge. When the teacher is unclear about the deeper concepts, principles and “big ideas” with which all students should work, then differentiation can become a confusing series of multiple activities that do not relate to common objectives. Effective differentiation allows all students to work within a common general framework of key concepts and important

ideas, and to develop key knowledge and skills, but in different ways, with different levels of structure and support, at different levels of complexity, and at different paces.

- *Teachers differentiate “up” instead of “down”* to lift the standard for all students. Educators sometimes worry that differentiating the curriculum for struggling learners will result in a “dumbed down” curriculum for all. When teachers understand differentiation as a process of designing multiple paths to the same destination, and when that destination is grounded in quality curriculum, the result should be a lifting of expectations for what all students can achieve. Effective teachers differentiate “up” by first planning the most complex, high-level version of a task – something considered suitable for the most advanced students in the class – and then differentiate to enable as many students as possible to reach as close as possible to that high standard. This might be achieved by breaking a complex task into more manageable chunks, providing more structure for working on an open-ended task, or varying the resources with which students work without altering the essence of the task. Differentiation should ensure that students with disabilities can access quality curriculum with important objectives as fully as possible.
- *There is a balance between different ways of working* over a period of time in a differentiated classroom. This includes whole-class instruction and collective activities some of the time which builds a sense of community – not every activity is differentiated, and differentiation doesn’t have to happen during every lesson. The teacher recognises that different ways of working and methods for expressing understanding are more comfortable and efficient for different students. It is not possible to have every student working according to his or her strengths or preferences at all times. Rather, in a differentiated classroom the teacher employs a variety of teaching strategies, resources, ways of grouping students, and methods of assessment to ensure that, over time, all students will have the chance to work in preferred ways.

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Students are also challenged to work in less comfortable ways that prompt them to develop new skills and compensatory strategies. The goal is to strike a balance between different approaches, including those that may feel least comfortable for the teacher.

- *Ongoing assessment informs differentiation.* The teacher uses pre-assessment prior to every unit of work to find out each student's starting point in relation to the unit objectives, and to find out about students' relevant interests. This allows the teacher to plan proactively for varied points of entry into the general unit. A variety of formative assessments are routinely used to track students' progress, to inform adjustments to learning activities and to guide grouping decisions throughout the unit. These might include a simple "exit card" at the close of a lesson to determine which students have mastered a particular concept and will be ready to move on, and which students would benefit from additional practice in the following lesson to reinforce their understanding. Journal entries, work samples, short quizzes, discussions and many other common forms of formative assessment can effectively inform differentiated instruction when a teacher works with this principle in mind. Summative assessment at the end of a unit is certainly a feature of differentiated classrooms, but students receive consistent and constructive feedback about growth and learning as well as about final performance.
- *Grouping is flexible and intentional* to address diverse and evolving student needs. Rather than a static model of grouping, which sees students frequently grouped according to "high", "middle" and "low" abilities, students are grouped in different ways for flexible purposes in a differentiated classroom. It might make sense to group students for a particular differentiated lesson based on their current levels of readiness in relation to

learning objectives, and these groups may change for a different lesson. Sometimes it could make sense to group students according to their common interests or preferred ways of expressing ideas, to allow students to choose their own groups, or to offer students the choice of working independently or with a partner. This flexibility means that students with disabilities or special needs do not always find themselves working with the same group of students or one-on-one with a support teacher. Rather, all students have the opportunity to work with different peers for different purposes over time. Grouping decisions are made primarily to help teach students, and not to sort or classify them based on certain labels.

- *Resources are managed to support differentiation.* Teachers who differentiate effectively are masters of logistics; they develop and constantly refine routines and strategies for managing time, space, people and material resources in the service of differentiation. Differentiated classrooms incorporate resources at a wide range of reading levels instead of only grade-level resources and include information presented in multiple formats. Students know how to move efficiently into groups, how to manage transitions between activities, what to do when they finish a task, how to seek assistance, where to find the materials they need, and how to work independently. These routines take time and practice to develop, but allow the teacher to maximise student engagement and minimise time that is wasted in classrooms where tasks are not effectively matched to learners.

Differentiation is a team sport

If it is starting to sound as though no mere mortal could possibly juggle the demands of a differentiated classroom, it is wise to remember that teaching is not an individual performance, but a team sport.

Differentiated Instruction allows teachers options of varying "learning activities, content demands, modes of assessment, and the classroom environment to meet the needs and support the growth of each child."

Thousand, J. S., Villa, R. A., & Nevin, A. I. (2007). *Differentiating instruction: Collaborative planning and teaching for universally designed learning*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press

DIFFERENTIATING CURRICULUM FOR THE MANY, NOT THE FEW

Those teachers who manage effectively differentiated classrooms are those who know the strengths and expertise of their team-mates as well as they know their own, and have developed an integrated, open, collaborative approach to the classroom. An important part of that team (which might also include the student, the family, school leaders, teaching colleagues, the school counsellor, ESL teachers, support staff, specialists from outside agencies, and even the librarian) is the special education teacher.

In schools at all levels, effective special education relies on effective general education, and much depends on the partnership between the two. General classroom teachers cannot be expected to have expertise about every disability or learning need they may encounter, or even where to access this information and special education teachers can also offer advice about teaching strategies and adaptations likely to work for a range of learners. Many special education teachers do not have the same depth of knowledge about the content or structure of the general curriculum as do their general education colleagues. Through collaborative planning, team-teaching, coaching and modelling, students with special needs can benefit from the best of both sets of expertise. Teachers who differentiate effectively rely on and welcome collaboration from special education and other professionals and see themselves as just one part of the larger team. This kind of collaboration is supported by strong school leadership with a clear commitment to inclusive practice.

There are many ways that teachers can make individual adjustments to curriculum for students with special needs. These are most

likely to be effective when implemented in inclusive classrooms where differentiation is the norm for every student and reflects a cohesive approach to teaching and learning. In effectively differentiated classrooms, disabilities and special needs are an integral part of the broader diversity of the classroom, and students with IEPs or NEPs are more likely to experience a sense of belonging instead of feeling constantly singled out for attention.

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Jane Jarvis

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“Differentiation is defined as a response to the cognitive, affective, social and physical characteristics that distinguish what and how students learn. A classroom where learners are provided with equal opportunity to learn, but are not expected to learn the same curriculum in the same way at the same time is the context that exemplifies differentiation. Respect for individual differences among and between learners is a definition of differentiation.”

Sandra Kaplan, interview “Differentiation in the Classroom”,
from *Talent*, newsletter for Northwestern’s Center for Talent Development,
Winter 2006.

TEACHING FOR EFFECTIVE LEARNING - PEDAGOGY FOR A RESPONSIVE AND DIFFERENTIATED CLASSROOM

What is differentiation?

Carol Ann Tomlinson, respected educational commentator and author of many books and articles regarding assessment, differentiation and curriculum, explains what a differentiated classroom looks like:

A differentiated classroom offers a variety of learning options designed to tap into different readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles. In a differentiated class, the teacher uses (1) a variety of ways for students to explore curriculum content, (2) a variety of sense-making activities or processes through which students can come to understand and "own" information and ideas, and (3) a variety of options through which students can demonstrate or exhibit what they have learned.

What does this mean in practice?

The Teaching for Effective Learning framework (TfEL) outlines principles of learning and teaching to enact Tomlinson's three criteria for differentiation.

In Teaching for Effective Learning

Pedagogy involves much more than its most obvious component, the tasks that teachers set. It includes the ways in which teachers interact with students; i.e. how they question and respond to questions, use students' ideas and respond to students' diverse backgrounds and interests.

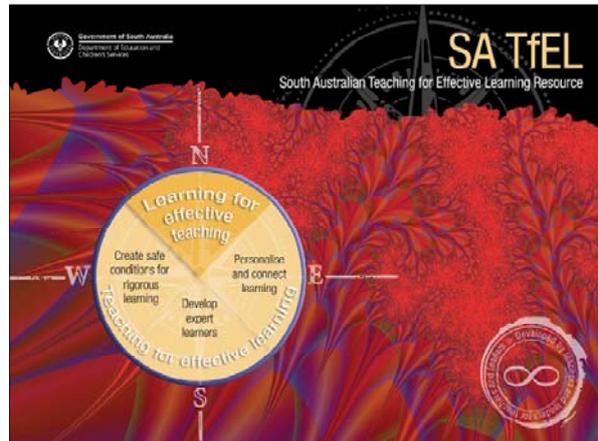
It includes the social and intellectual climate that teachers seek to create and the types of learning that they set out to promote. It includes the decisions that they make about framing the content around a series of tasks to be completed or as key ideas and skills that are revisited and built on. Teachers also need to think about how they link and sequence activities and how and what they assess.

TfEL provides a language, frame and guide to support teachers to discuss, articulate, develop review and differentiate pedagogy and curriculum to 'unleash learning potential'.

What is the Teaching for Effective Learning Framework about?

TfEL was developed by teachers and leaders for teachers and leaders. It has a strong

research base which is underpinned by, and reflected in, the collective wisdom of teachers ... it speaks for, with and to teachers.



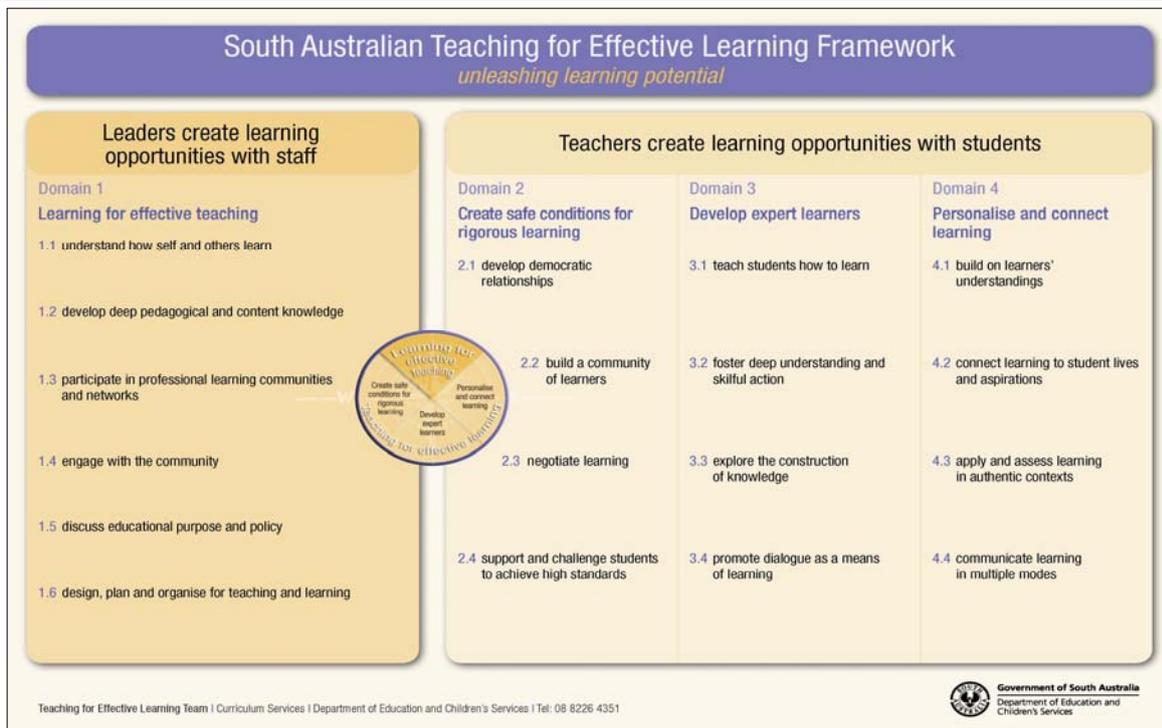
The true north in the Compass that which makes TfEL truly South Australian and unique, is its focus on learning for effective teaching, the learning that teachers engage in to further develop their understanding of learning and pedagogy.

Three domains of the Compass focus on the conditions necessary to support the learning of all learners:

- Create safe conditions for rigorous learning – safety and challenge to achieve their personal best and recognised standards
- Develop expert learners – learning how to learn...supporting learning as a life-long endeavour
- Personalise and connect learning – 'hooking in and hanging on to' learners with authentic tasks which provide supportive environments and provoke learners to engage.

It is through the development of, and interaction between, the priorities of these domains that learners engage with context driven pedagogy, as teachers respond to the learners and the context developing constructivist and differentiated pedagogy

TEACHING FOR EFFECTIVE LEARNING - PEDAGOGY FOR A RESPONSIVE AND DIFFERENTIATED CLASSROOM



How does TfEL develop and enhance Tomlinson's criteria for all learners to unleash their learning potential?

1 A variety of ways for students to explore curriculum content

Before students will explore curriculum they need to feel safe to take risks and be challenged to extend past their comfort zone. TfEL Domain 2: Create safe conditions for rigorous learning identifies conditions which support all learners to 'have a go' and develops a culture which recognises:

- students and teachers as both learners and teachers
- the skills and understandings which all class members bring
- 'we are in this together' and we help each other learn.

Support and challenge are used to stretch each learner to their full potential.

Each learner is different, bringing to the classroom different understandings, expectations, interests and individual understandings about what learning means. Starting with the learner supports responsive pedagogy and differentiated curriculum.

Teaching for Effective Learning is based on constructivism, beginning with the learner and supporting him/her to make meaning as the focal point for teaching. It is essential for learners to connect with learning activities and to see them as relevant to their needs – current and future.

2 A variety of sense-making activities or processes through which students can come to understand and "own" information and ideas

A key aspect of Domain 3, Develop expert learners, is designing tasks for students to 'talk their way into personal understanding'. Through focused learning conversations and collaborative activities to share and build on each others' ideas, learners wrestle with big ideas to develop deep understanding. 'Wait time' is an important aspect for students to 'own' information and ideas as it supports everyone to think about the issue and to give longer responses rather than fast fact recall, which excludes some learners. In this domain of learning and teaching it is not enough that students learn about things, it is important that they develop learning expertise, skills, knowledge to transfer to new learning situations.

TEACHING FOR EFFECTIVE LEARNING - PEDAGOGY FOR A RESPONSIVE AND DIFFERENTIATED CLASSROOM

Teachers teach students how to learn, by designing activities which encourage and expect students:

- to learn in different ways
- try and understand different strategies for thinking, learning and working collaboratively.

Students are taught how to learn, as they are learning.

3 A variety of options through which students can demonstrate or exhibit what they have learned

In Domain 4, Personalise and Connect Learning, teachers develop pedagogy which is responsive to learners and the context, ensuring that learning is relevant and builds on what learners bring from their previous learning. One way to 'hook in and hang onto' learners is by having tasks with multiple ways of entering and completing the activity. Options including a variety of multimedia and ICT, dance, role-plays, music, inside and outside activities keep learners engaged and learning. It is fundamental to provide feedback to the learner at the point of need to move learning forward. This feedback needs to be focused on taking the learning and learner to the next phase. Social learning comments, 'Well done!', 'Perfect' and 'Way to go!' are meant to improve learner confidence and self esteem and are encouraging. Adding learning focused comments, 'What does that make you think about?', 'What else do you know about that?', and 'How does that link with ...?' help learners to make links with other big ideas and extend their learning. Students are also taught to give and receive feedback to move their own learning and that of others forward.

The teacher's ability to assess and respond to the changing needs of learners is fundamental to differentiating the curriculum. Responsive teachers design learning opportunities which change direction as student needs, interests and challenges change. In this way students participate in deciding where and how the curriculum develops and make personal choices about ways to make sense of learning and show achievement.

Teaching for Effective Learning identifies elements of pedagogy:

- Create safe conditions for rigorous learning
 - Develop expert learners
 - Personalise and connect learning.
- In harmony, these will support constructivist teaching approaches to support deep understanding. TfEL places learners, adults and students, as central to learning and teaching and active participants in learning, which 'gives students more ownership of their learning and..... growing independence in thought, planning, and evaluation'.

At its heart, Teaching for Effective Learning is differentiation of teaching and learning based on the teacher knowing, understanding and connecting with each learner and learning. It is through the interrelated development of pedagogy which starts with learners, supporting, challenging and expecting them to construct meaning that differentiation occurs at the point of need that teachers engage learners to achieve their personal best.

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CHALLENGES OF A SMALL SCHOOL WITH A CLASS OF MULTIPLE YEAR LEVELS

Teaching in a small school with a junior primary class of R-2 and an upper primary class of year 3 to 6 students is quite similar to teaching in a large class of the same year level in many ways. Our year levels are broader, but within our classes, we probably have a similar number of children's ability or year levels. As with any class, we consider that some students need extension, others need support, some just want to cruise and we also have students with disabilities with high levels of need. We don't really have a fixed formula but there are a number of strategies that we have found to be both manageable and effective in our teaching.

One of the most important things we believe that is needed to support students with disabilities in a mainstream school is a supportive learning environment. Without the support of other students, staff and the wider school community, it really is much harder. Over many years, we have established a positive and supportive school environment that values each student and acknowledges individual differences. We expect our students to develop resilience, caring, respect, persistence, optimism, leadership skills and independent learning skills and help by teaching and reinforcing these skills.

To enable teachers to effectively teach focus groups or individuals in the composite classes, we help all our students develop independence and establish class routines including neat and accessible storage of equipment and materials. We acknowledge and highlight that each student has some things they are good at and others may need more help. We find that younger children in the room need help learning to feel positive about themselves or set realistic goals, especially when comparing their work and abilities with those of the older students in their class.

As a school, we have found the ICAN Engagement Matrix a useful tool to monitor and measure student engagement, particularly when we measure "how good" the school environment feels. eg are children on task, do they know what to do next and what to do when they are finished. Our school Code of Behaviour helps us to acknowledge and accommodate individual needs and we

actively encourage students to be successful at school. Each classroom has areas where children work in groups or individually and there are a number of places children can access some down time. We have found it is much easier to differentiate the curriculum for learners within a positive and supporting school environment.

To further support students with disabilities, other students and the classroom teacher, SSOs are in the classroom each morning (for literacy and numeracy blocks) rather than using a withdrawal approach to special education support. This minimises the time children spend out of the classroom and gives the teacher more flexibility in the classroom. Sometimes the SSO works with special needs students, other times the teacher works with those students while the SSO works with other students in the classroom. This strategy benefits everyone and is highly valued by the whole school.

We have used cross age teaching for many years. Recently I came across the "All, Most, Some" programming model and believe it closely matches the way we work. A starting point for units of work is a common theme or topic. We then introduce the topic and provide explicit instruction before explaining task requirements. Within the unit of work, we expect that not all students will do all of the same work. Some will publish or produce different final work products; maybe not all students will participate in each part of each activity but may do a variation of the work based on their needs and abilities.

The "All, Most, Some" Programming model devised from the Planning Pyramid (*Schumm, Vaughn and Leavell, 1994*) not only helps teachers to consider individual needs at the first planning stage, it also assists in reducing teacher anxiety by acknowledging from the beginning that not *all* students will do the same work and achieve the same learning outcomes that others do. When using this model, it is not necessary to develop a different plan or unit of work to accommodate all students but can document the activities that *all* learners can do and achieve, *most* learners can do and achieve and *some* learners can do and achieve

CHALLENGES OF A SMALL SCHOOL WITH A CLASS OF MULTIPLE YEAR LEVELS

The following example highlights how to cater to a diverse class in written language. A writer's workshop is held twice weekly for the R-6 combined group with all teachers and SSOs working together with students. Teachers take it in turns to plan and present a lesson to the students (this helps us share our workload and also maintain a high level of energy for writer's workshop). We introduce the task or topic to all students, discuss the features of the writing genre we are working on, hold small group or whole class brainstorming for ideas, provide students with models and scaffolding appropriate to their age group. Students are encouraged to do their best work whether that be an illustration for scribed writing from a reception student, focus on writing rich and complex sentences for older more capable students, modifying writing topics to suit the obsession of the month or supporting students to explore other styles of writing to do with the topic.

To make it easier to manage multiple year levels in a classroom, we are using the same

maths program and spelling program (text books and homework books) across the school. All or most children in the class will have topics introduced using concrete materials. Some may be offered extension activities while support is given to others. We integrate maths and spelling across the curriculum areas as appropriate. Independent learners use their text books to reinforce and practise what they have learned. We utilise the internet for Spellodrome, Mathletics and daily tables challenge into our spelling and maths program.

Whether a school has multi-level classes within a classroom or single classes with a diverse range of students, differentiation strategies such as the "All, Most, Some" Programming model, peer tutoring and effective use of a range of educators within the school support successful student learning.

Anne Heinrich

Principal
Farrell Flat Primary School

DIFFERENTIATING THE CURRICULUM OR JUST GOOD TEACHING?

WHAT IS MEANT BY DIFFERENTIATING THE CURRICULUM?

"Differentiated Curriculum refers to teaching that is adapted to take into account the individual differences and needs of students in any one classroom." (Riley, 2006)

Differentiated learning is a teaching theory based on the premise that instructional approaches should vary and be adapted in relation to individual and diverse students in the classroom. It is a blend of whole class, group and individual instruction. It is now recognized to be an important tool for engaging learners and addressing individual needs.

Differentiated curriculum is an active process through which a teacher can communicate to a learner that they are recognised and valued. Tomlinson (2000) describes the four classroom elements in which a teacher can differentiate, as:

- Learning environment / how class feels;
- Content / what to learn, how to access;
- Process / learning experiences;
- Products / final level of thinking task.

Differentiated teaching means having high expectations for each student. It requires teachers to be responsive and flexible in their approach to teaching. By adjusting the learning program and their delivery of information, teachers provide multiple options to learners to take in information and make sense of their ideas.

"Differentiation is like jazz. It is continual improvisation based on solid themes and shared experience. (Tomlinson, Eidson, 2003)

SCHOOL CULTURE

Ardtornish PS caters for learners with a diverse range of support requirements. There are a number of students verified as eligible for the DECS Disability Support Program across all year levels - including learners with sensory, intellectual, physical, speech and language disability; Autistic and Asperger's Disorder. The school consistently reinforces a culture of respect, acceptance and celebration of difference. We continually strive towards providing a safe and supportive learning environment.

DIFFERENTIATING THE CURRICULUM OR JUST GOOD TEACHING?

Recently, staff have participated in professional learning opportunities, with a focus on assessment, differentiating curriculum and documenting Teaching and Learning Plans. Titled “Catering for Learners with Special Needs” it was presented by Ingrid Alderton, Manager Learning Difficulties Team; Libby Brown; Project Officer Learning Difficulties Jillian Denys, Regional Support Services Disability Coordinator. Another example included training with a focus on building knowledge, skills and practical strategies to support students with Autism Spectrum Disorders.

QUALITIES OF THE TEACHER

Teachers who successfully cater for students with special needs are reflective practitioners who regularly consider ways to better cater for the needs of students in their class. They are well organised and prepared for lessons. Teachers gather information about individual students to inform their planning. This includes reviewing previous NEP documentation and recommendations in reports from relevant professionals. Of particular importance is being able to talk with a child’s previous classroom teacher about strategies they had found useful. They give a great deal of thought about the needs of individual students and how they can best access the curriculum. While planning is considered of high importance teachers also report the importance of thinking on your feet. Some teachers report that the most effective accommodations made for individual students had happened quite incidentally and remained a part of the class routine and program. Most teachers agree that it was useful to have a good sense of humour and have a joke with their students.

The role of explicit teaching in all areas was emphasised by most teachers. It was felt that teachers must be actively engaged in the learning process and individually checking for understanding of concepts presented.

Teachers agreed that the classroom program should have a high emphasis on the development of literacy and numeracy skills as for most of our students with special needs these areas are a high priority. However teachers also agreed that there was a need to ensure students had a balance of time spent on activities they enjoyed like science and hands on learning experiences. Overall

teachers reported that the process of differentiating the curriculum can be very rewarding when students achieve expected and unexpected outcomes in their learning.

CLASSROOM VISION

In differentiating the curriculum teachers identified the need for an overall classroom vision relating to expected academic, social, emotional, and physical outcomes. It is important for there to be predictable routines and expectations. Teachers reported that time spent on this early in the year was time well spent. Managing those routines then became entrenched, leaving one less thing to focus on as the year progressed. Central to this was the development of classroom dynamics and establishing what it means to be a part of the class group. How will conflict be managed? What does it mean to respect each other?

The success of integrating a student with special needs is highly dependent on the attitude of the teacher who needs to encourage students to have a go. A climate of risk taking is developed and valued.



PRE INTERVIEW GOAL SETTING REPORTS

This year we are trialling the use of a new reporting structure where teachers prepare with students a report which details learning goals set by teachers and students. This report is sent home prior to the first interview for the year early in Term 2. Already there has been much positive feedback about the impact of this process especially for students with special needs who have clearly felt empowered by this process. Students have a high level of ownership of the goals developed and we look forward to monitoring and reviewing these as the year progresses.

DIFFERENTIATING THE CURRICULUM OR JUST GOOD TEACHING?

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Strategies to differentiate the curriculum for students with special needs are developed through the Negotiated Education Planning process taking into account advice from specialists and information from parents. Strategies our teachers have found successful include:

- focussing on the student's abilities and interests and structuring activities around this to assist their level of engagement in learning
- planning activities which provide students with a level of independence
- providing opportunities for students to demonstrate what they can do in different ways eg oral presentations, photographs, film
- assessing students 'on the run'. Teachers reported it was important to observe students operating in a range of settings and looking out for what they can do and noting that;
- providing many opportunities for real life experiences to develop oral language skills eg having animals in the classroom as part of a unit of work
- breaking learning into manageable and achievable chunks
- provide students with reasonable warnings about transitions into a change of lessons or activities
- use of higher order thinking skills (eg Bloom's, Six Thinking Hats etc) and open ended tasks to enable different entry points by different students
- providing scaffolded opportunities for students to work in groups where participants are given a choice of topic and method of assessment
- observe students closely to identify possible triggers for inappropriate behaviours
- focus on appropriate behaviours and use positive reinforcement and praise – both verbal and non verbal
- meeting regularly with the SSO to develop and review programs. It was felt that SSOs needed clear direction about their role in supporting a student with special needs
- using parent helpers in the classroom as they can bring a variety of useful approaches to assist a range of students
- using acronyms to help students remember

different concepts. eg Ingrid Alderton suggests to our staff the use of COPS (Capitals, Overall, Punctuation and Spelling) to give students a structure to use when editing writing

- use of visual reminders stuck to the student's table, book, folder or on a chart in the room
- providing students with regular breaks for physical exercise or a change of scene
- having expectations that they can do it and provide students with a range of strategies for solving a problem eg use of number charts, rulers, number lines, concrete materials to solve addition and subtraction problems.



USE OF SSO TIME

Due to the nature of some of our students' disabilities their resource requirements may vary. In our school we have used these resources to appoint classroom based SSOs. Teachers are responsible for developing individualised programs for these students and document goals and strategies in a student's Individual Learning Plan. SSO support is used in a range of ways at our school depending on the needs of the child. SSOs provide one on one, small group and in class support under the guidance of the teacher. While there are times when SSO time is used to withdraw students for one on one support eg speech and language programs, it is recognised that too much of this support can be detrimental to learning because students may become reliant on the support and not learn the skills of independence we are trying to develop.

DIFFERENTIATING THE CURRICULUM OR JUST GOOD TEACHING?

Some teachers noted that we give the hardest to teach students to the people with the least amount of training. While our SSOs are very skilled and contribute significantly to the development of students, many teachers reported that they like to use the time to really focus on the needs of individual students themselves.

CHALLENGES

While it was recognised that working with students with special needs can be a very rewarding experience there were some challenges for us to address in the future. These included:

- time to adequately prepare for lessons, meet with SSOs and ensure documentation was kept up to date
- The use of our end of year whole school assessment processes did not necessarily provide useful information for some of our students with special needs. The development of more regular and varied assessment processes were seen as a positive way forward
- The changing nature of the content of the Teaching and Learning Plan as learner needs change
- Lack of understanding, at times, among students and parents about students with special needs in our community. It was suggested that regular articles in our newsletter and on our website may help to inform parents / careers about the diversity in our community
- Parents' expectations of their child's abilities and potential. The school's report

SOCIAL INCLUSION THROUGH PLAY

Vale Park Primary School has a diverse student population of 290 children, nine of whom are diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder. The school is well regarded for its rigorous focus on meeting the needs of the ASD students; a dedicated team of staff continually refine their practice and enjoy a keen interest in their own learning in this area.

Christian Pastoral Support Worker (CPSW) Amy Reid serves a wellbeing focused role in the school and strives for the continual improvement of peer relations within the

cards did not always provide an opportunity to reflect effort or achievement made for the individual. This was seen as an ongoing process which required open and honest dialogue

- physical space in some of our classrooms was identified as an issue particularly when teachers were using methodologies involving small group work and concrete materials
- managing teacher stress. Many teachers talked about the need to keep calm and choose battles wisely. It was important that teachers focused on positive achievements and remembered that every day is a new day and a new opportunity for learning.

Overwhelmingly teachers agreed that catering for students with a range of needs is all about good teaching. What begins as a specific strategy to assist one student more often assists many others. Good teachers address the needs of all their students by using a range of teaching strategies to cater for a range of learning styles.

References

Tomlinson, C. & Eidson, C. *Differentiation in practice: a resource guide for differentiating curriculum..* 2003.

Marg Erwin

Deputy Principal
Ardtornish Primary School

student body. This year Amy has implemented a lunchtime play program in accordance with the DECS Learner Wellbeing framework (2007) which emphasises the strong and mutual interconnection between wellbeing and learning; stating children learn more effectively in secure environments, where wellbeing is addressed.

The play program involves a range of group activities hosted by student leaders, upper primary classes, parent volunteers, local community members and staff.

SOCIAL INCLUSION THROUGH PLAY

Activities are rostered daily and include things such as dance competitions, organised sport matches, knitting, building, limbo, play-dough, croquet, skipping songs and games, woodwork, talent shows, art activities, orienteering, dress-ups and kite-flying. In addition to these activities, a Play Box system is run with smaller groups of children led by upper primary student volunteers. Themes for the Play Boxes include hairdressing, camping, shopping, offices, medical and games.

This play initiative was originally implemented with the purpose of reducing loneliness, harassment and misconduct in the school yard. It has since proven a highly effective vehicle for the teaching and learning of fundamental social skills such as peer group entry, conflict management, communication and getting along with others. The success of the program rests largely on the opportunity for all students, particularly those with learning difficulties and special needs, to have regular positive interactions with peers in a supportive, play based environment.

First and foremost, the lunchtime activities are inviting. They are fun but basic, allowing children to discover the intrinsic nature of play. Secondly, the activities are mostly run outdoors. Whilst there still exists a structured learning situation with relevant expectations, it is one-step removed from the formal classroom environment. At Vale Park Primary School we have found this especially engaging for boys. Further, each of the activities involves student leaders; allowing for peer teaching and rich social learning. This has proven valuable in the genuine, context-based learning of social skills. Whilst many of our students with ASD participate in the activities, it has been worthwhile for them to assume a role in helping facilitate the activity or game. In doing so they are involved in the life of the school and are both empowered and challenged in their task. They have the opportunity to experience success with their peers in a safe and fun environment and as a result their self-esteem grows tremendously.

During the lunchtime activities students are developing important executive functioning

skills including self-directed learning, interdependent learning, problem solving, creativity, innovation, delayed gratification and concentration (Westwell 2008). Play Boxes have served to facilitate imaginary play, which we know is highly beneficial for children's development, especially in the area of social skills. While taking part in various forms of role playing, students are practising cooperation and have the opportunity to develop pro-social skills such as greeting, turn taking, sharing, listening, communicating, problem-solving and managing conflict (Copper 2006).

At Vale Park we believe this program is unique in that it seeks the involvement of the local community and as such offers a significant differentiation of the teaching and learning environment. Volunteers from local churches, service clubs and our parent body are involved in facilitating activities based on their interests and hobbies (e.g. knitting, orienteering, croquet). There has been an overwhelming response from local businesses and community members who contribute materials for use in the Play Boxes. The local Rotary Club, Council and Church community are involved in the endeavours of this program. We have found that engaging the support of the community enables students and staff to appreciate the connectedness of the school to wider society. Importantly, the students respond differently to members of the community who offer them wisdom and reflections on interests that differ from mainstream school curriculum. We feel that the alternative lunchtime games enhance the curriculum to suit more diverse learning styles and engage students in learning. Put simply, we would say this program rekindles children's natural interest and desire for discovery through play.

It is important to note that the learning involved in this program is inter-related, has multiple entry points and can be adjusted according to learning goals set by the teacher. Indeed the activities in their present form, as a part of a lunchtime program, are geared toward the development of pro-social skills such as effective communication, understanding of self and others, making sense of the moral order of the community,

SOCIAL INCLUSION THROUGH PLAY

regulating emotions and adapting behaviour in regards to age related norms and varying social contexts (Beauchamp & Anderson, 2010). However, there are endless possibilities for the inclusion of formal curriculum based learning through these play activities. Consider for example the exploration of measurement including length, height, area and perimeter that could be facilitated through the building activity as evident in the photographs below. The cash register and play money in the shopping setting could be used to enhance number sense. At the play-dough station students can divide and share equal amounts or consider mass, shape or patterns. The orienteering activity involves map reading and could include learning about coordinates and direction. There is significant potential for rich learning activities such as these to be incorporated from all areas of the curriculum.



On an end note, we emphasise that students who participate in the lunchtime activities are engaged in *meaningful* learning; perhaps learning that is more powerful and tangible

than that typically offered in mainstream curriculum. We feel as though this lunchtime play program underscores the importance of continually working to improve pedagogy and differentiate the curriculum; an endeavour fundamental in our commitment to meeting the needs of all learners.

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Department of Education and Children's Services, 2007, *DECS Learner Wellbeing framework for birth to year 12*, Office of Early Childhood and Statewide Services, Adelaide, SA.

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Amy Reid

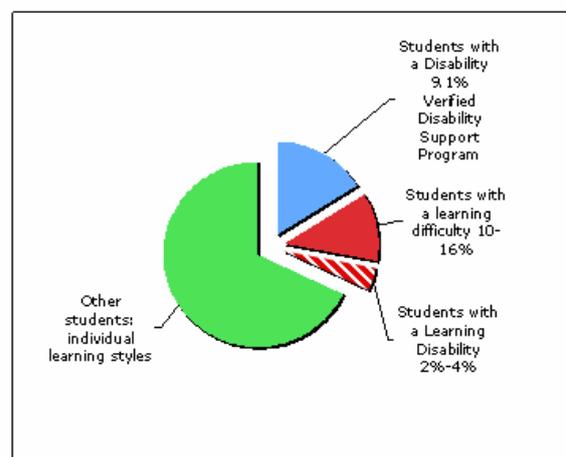
Christian Pastoral Support Worker
Vale Park Primary School

DIFFERENTIATION—WHAT IS IT AND HOW TO IMPLEMENT IT?

In your classroom or school you will have students with a range of abilities, learning styles, schooling histories, personal histories, and numerous other reasons that may explain why they may not be ready to access what you have planned to teach.

In South Australia we currently have 9.1% of the population verified as eligible for funding under the Students with Disability Support Program. Not all disabilities are included in this support program; for example Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and Dyslexia are not included. Schools receive some funding through their resource entitlement statement for students with learning difficulties and literacy issues.

Below is a diagram of a DECS school profile



DIFFERENTIATION—WHAT IS IT AND HOW TO IMPLEMENT IT?

In your class room or school you may have students from a range of culturally, socially and linguistically diverse backgrounds; students with social and emotional issues who require differing teaching and learning processes to access learning. Of course not all students who struggle with learning have a label and even if they do, the label doesn't give you the answer on how to ensure that they learn.

So if teachers program for the *average* student in the class they could be excluding more than half of the learners.

Given the variety of learners in any classroom teachers need to be able to differentiate the curriculum so as to be inclusive of all their students. Differentiated instruction has been recognised and practised for many years especially in the area of gifted education. The main advocate for differentiated instruction in the US, Carol Ann Tomlinson (1996) began building the concepts of differentiated instruction from use in the gifted classrooms, to use in all classrooms. Differentiation allows you to plan and carry out varied approaches to content (what a student learns); process (how the student learns and how you teach); and product (how the student demonstrates what they've learned) in anticipation of and in response to student differences in readiness (prior mastery of knowledge, understandings, and skills); interest (the student's curiosity and passion); and learning profile (how the student learns best). (*Shaddock 2007*).

What is differentiated curriculum?

It refers to teaching that is adapted to take into account the individual differences and needs of students in any one classroom. It comprises modification to the curriculum, teaching structures and teaching practices in combination to ensure that instruction is relevant flexible and responsive leading to successful achievement and the development of students as self-regulated learners.

Differentiation practices within the classroom not only addresses the needs of gifted students but can also be used for students with disabilities, those with learning difficulties and learning disabilities.

Differentiation is not easy; it places very heavy demands on teacher's time, knowledge and organisational skills. Carol Tomlinson, the main advocate for differentiated instruction,

argues that the teacher needs to take account of students' current levels of ability, prior knowledge, strengths, weaknesses, learning preferences and interests in order to maximise their opportunities to learn.

How do teachers being to think about curriculum differentiation?

1. *The starting point: content, the big ideas*

Teachers should begin to plan for differentiated instruction by focusing on the essential core content they would hope all students will learn from the lesson or series of lessons (information, concepts, rules, skills, strategies) they refer to this as identifying the big ideas. These ideas need to link to future learning and pathways. In relation to content, it is essential that the student is not disadvantaged in future years by having missed out on crucial learning and essential skills.

When planning the differentiated objectives for the lesson it is usually helpful to have in mind the three sentence starters

- All students will
- Some students will...
- A few students might

When the curriculum content is modified, learning disabled students are provided with less material than peers and material that is easier to accomplish; and for gifted students the reverse would be true.

2. *Process: how the student will learn and how you teach*

Given the variety of learners in any classroom teachers need to vary their method of instruction e.g. they may need to simplify language, pre-teach any new vocabulary, provide high quality visuals, highlight important terms or information. Direct and explicit forms of instruction appear to achieve most in the early stages of learning basic academic skills.

Through a range of accommodations and modifications it is hoped that teachers will be able to plan and implement programs that meet the needs of the learners. Providing accommodations and modifications covers all the major and minor emphases to instructional processes that teachers can focus on in their classrooms. This would include the method of instruction, how students are grouped and the level of interaction between students and teachers.

DIFFERENTIATION—WHAT IS IT AND HOW TO IMPLEMENT IT?

DECS uses the term accommodations to describe the nature and degree of adjustments to curriculum practice, which have been identified and agreed to through either the Negotiated Educational Planning process (NEP) or individual educational planning process (IEP), to meet the disability specific needs of the learner. Accommodations are changes made to the way students learn and how they are assessed. Curriculum outcomes and standards are not altered or lowered. Modifications are changes in the expectations we have for students with disabilities when their intended learning outcomes and achievement of a Standard is not commensurate with their peers.

When the teaching and learning processes are modified some of the following strategies may be used:

- the teacher may give more assistance to individual students
- they may reteach concepts or information using simpler language or more examples
- questioning may be pitched at different levels of difficulty for different individuals
- more feedback and monitoring may be varied
- extension work may be set for more able students.

It is important that through the learning process both teachers and students understand, accept and value the differences amongst their peers, as this will help in their acceptance that peers may be doing different work, and that assessment grades may vary. This can be problematic and frustrating when working with older students who may not want to be seen doing different learning task from their peers.

3. *Product: how the student demonstrates what they have learned.*

Differentiated output is another aspect of differentiation. Teachers can facilitate student learning by detailing the learning outputs required, as exemplified through the use of marking rubrics and the setting of personalised learning goals with individual or groups of students. Students can demonstrate learning using a variety of formats other than written, for

example oral presentation, powerpoint, dramatical or visual presentations. How do teachers differentiate a learning experience?

Differentiation is

- Rigorous
- Relevant
- Flexible and varied
- Complex

A basic lesson structure would:

- have a clear objective, that accommodates scaffolded learning to achieve task outcomes
- incorporate a good understanding of the learners to make sure instruction is targeted at the appropriate level of difficulty and student learning profile
- gain the learner's attention by providing focussing activities
- review relevant past learning with the aim of connecting to new learning
- provide an overview as well as objective and purpose of the lesson
- provide information in small steps with modelling and checking for understanding
- include guided practice
- use reflective feedback and collaborative teacher-student feedback
- plan for independent practice and reteaching if necessary
- provide final review of the lesson.

How do teachers manage a differentiated classroom?

- Tasks and products designed with a multiple intelligence orientation
- Assessment for/as/of learning
- Rubrics and moderation
- Use of technology
- Product criteria negotiated jointly by student and teacher
- Group/peer investigation
- Use of multiple texts and supplementary materials
- Interest centres/authentic experiences
- Independent learning contracts/goals.

The important thing is not so much that every child should be taught, as that every child should be given the wish to learn.
John Lubbock

DIFFERENTIATION—WHAT IS IT AND HOW TO IMPLEMENT IT?

Research suggests that the following five conditions are needed for teachers to introduce differentiation into their classrooms.

- They need to believe that the investment in time will produce better results
- Have adequate time to plan lessons
- Know the individuals in their class extremely well
- Have access to a varied range of resource materials
- Have support from within the school for a differentiated approach to teaching.

References

Westwood, P.S., 2003. *Commonsense Methods for Children with Special Education Needs*. Routledge Falmer fourth edition.

Tomlinson, C.A., 1996. *Differentiating Instruction for Mixed Ability Classrooms*, Alexandria, VA :Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Shaddock, A. Giorcelli, L. Smith, S., 2007. *Students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms, a resource for teachers*. Commonwealth of Australia.

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ACCESSING INFORMATION

All students, particularly those with disabilities, learning difficulties, high intellectual potential, behavioural, social and emotional problems, can successfully access the curriculum and achieve their full potential if teachers are aware of students' individual needs and how these needs can best be met.

"Differentiation is pedagogy". As pedagogy is what teachers do – teaching, educating and using various instructional methods, "differentiation" would meet this definition. However, like all pedagogy, with differentiation we need to aim for quality and purpose. Purposeful differentiation can only occur if teachers are fully informed about the abilities and challenges of the students they teach, and of the modifications and accommodations which will facilitate their education.

In the Early and even Primary years, teachers are more likely to have this knowledge than teachers in the Middle and Senior Years. Students usually have fewer teachers, and these teachers are generally involved in developing individual Negotiated Education Plans with parents. Students themselves are usually willing to accept assistance both in and out of class, but are often not fully aware of what their needs are and how these needs are best supported. As students become older, meeting their individual needs becomes more complex. They have a range of teachers, they

have developed learning styles and preferences and have greater self-knowledge and ideas about the support and modifications they prefer and will accept.

As it is essential that all staff is aware of the needs and preferences of all students, teachers are expected to acquaint themselves with each student's Negotiated Education Plan and relevant reports. This can be time consuming and, for many teachers, very confusing. A method which successfully promotes an inclusive and supportive learning environment for all students in a Birth to Year 12 School is to provide staff and students with "Access Cards". Initially a list of NEP students was produced. This list was extended to include students with identified Learning Difficulties and Gifted students, however simply identifying students to staff was not enough. Access Cards were developed for the senior students initially and eventually completed for all year levels from R to 12. The development of the cards and the information they contained was time consuming, but proved immensely worthwhile.

Access "Cards" are not cards. They are really Access Information and are a précis of the student's abilities, needs, learning style and preference, modifications, accommodations and assessment strategies which will enhance this student's learning.

ACCESSING INFORMATION

They refer to reports from other professionals, and inform teachers where these reports can be found. This information cannot be compiled by an SSO, as if it requires analysis of all information, and meetings with students and parents. The Access Information proforma is based on the proforma in the NEP on the SERU website. It has been added to and modified to suit the needs of the school and the students.

Section 1, "Physical Considerations" is about the students' physical and environmental needs, and how the setting can be organised to maximize learning opportunities. In the case of sensory disabilities appropriate classroom and seating arrangements, assistive vision and audiological devices required are documented in this section. Reference is made to any Access Plans and these are attached. It is also the section that refers to any Health Care needs and plans for the student, including medication. For some students, the arrangement of the classroom environment and seating within that environment are crucial to successful learning. This section is where reference is made to these things.

The next section, "Things That Help Me Learn", is related to students' learning style and needs. It is possible to have a fairly generic list that can include a range of things which apply to many students, and which can be ticked to indicate they are an essential for the student to whom the information refers. It is also possible to add student specific comments. Suggestions about what will help each student from professional reports are included here. This is where it is important to mention things like providing visual or verbal cues, repeating instructions, checking for understanding and so on. The range of things that can be included is not finite, but must be related to the needs of the individual.

The following sections outline appropriate assessment strategies, support provided and programmes attended, as well as technologies available to support the students. There is a small section at the bottom of the page for any information which has not been included above. To complete any of the sections in the access information it is necessary to know the student's needs, read and understand all

reports, meet with parents (if possible) and talk with the students.

This page is given to students. The second page contains confidential information for teaching staff. It is a précis of Guidance, Speech and other reports, any other relevant information and has the curriculum goals and outcomes from the student's NEP. If information is particularly sensitive reference is made to the person who can provide this information on a need to know basis.

For Access Cards / Information Sheets to be effective in promoting the differentiation of the teaching and learning environment information about methods to vary the content, process and product for each student needs to be easily available to teachers and students. Confidentiality also needs to be considered. For a long time a folder was given to each teacher containing the Access Information for all students from Reception to Year 12. The folder also had a section that contained information about the large range of disabilities, disorders and learning difficulties experienced by our students, and strategies for assisting these students. This information was updated and redistributed each year. This involved an enormous amount of time, resources and paper. Once the school intranet was up the information was put on a secure area that was only accessible to staff as read only documents. Information could then be easily updated in a timely way without collecting folders, shredding old and reinserting new information and worrying about where folders were stored.

Hard copies were still printed for the student, the students' files and two folders, which were kept in secure offices for the use of the technologically challenged. Staff could print copies from the intranet if they chose to. The folders with generic information were maintained and updated. All staff still received a list each term of students requiring support or extension so they were aware of students who had Access Cards.

The students became very instrumental in promoting the use of this information.

ACCESSING INFORMATION

From Year 5, they were all given a copy of the first page of the information to put in their diaries. The purpose was explained to them, and they were encouraged to use the sheets to help them explain their needs if they had teachers who did not know them. Students were involved in discussions about what helped or hindered their learning and were making use of this information. For instance, they would come for replacement copies if they were lost or damaged. They would also report that teachers were ignoring what was on the sheet. One young man even took his access information when he enrolled at TAFE to help him explain his needs. Students valued having this information and it empowered them to advocate for themselves. It helped develop self-awareness, self-efficacy, knowledge of their rights and a sense of personal responsibility for their learning.

It was clear that some, if not all, staff were using the information, when they started asking when they were getting their folder (in the pre-intranet days), complaining when they could not access them on the Intranet due to a technological glitch, or asked if they could discuss a certain student and had a copy of the information.

Each year a copy of the annually updated Access Information was put in the students NEP folder, attached to copies of their timetables from Year 6 upwards. Initially, completing Access Information is very time consuming, but once it is done it is easy to update and maintain. It becomes a valuable source of information and helps keep the NEP updated each year. More importantly, it gives teachers and students information about how students best learn, what their individual needs are and how these needs can be met. It helps develop a student / teacher partnership on the delivery of a differentiated curriculum. It does not happen immediately. It is necessary to develop a culture in which students and teachers value and use the information provided. Once this is established, the benefits to students are obvious in improved learning outcomes.

Pam Jacobs

Head of Primary Years
Mark Oliphant College

Pam Jacobs is presenting at the Special Education Expo. See back page for details.

STUDENT ACCESS CARD (to be placed in student's diary / Student Record Folder)	
Name:	Class/Care Group:
Year level: 2010	Difficulty/Disability:
Last Assessment:	Level of Support:
PHYSICAL CONSIDERATIONS <input type="checkbox"/> Sight <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing <input type="checkbox"/> Seating	HEALTH CARE NEEDS/ MEDICATION <input type="checkbox"/> Medication
THINGS THAT HELP LEARNING <input type="checkbox"/> modification of expectations, eg length of time spent on task <input type="checkbox"/> photocopy of notes/assignments <input type="checkbox"/> limited/no copying from board <input type="checkbox"/> modified home work tasks <input type="checkbox"/> support with organisation <input type="checkbox"/> explanation, checking understanding of tasks	<input type="checkbox"/> clear instructions and visual cues <input type="checkbox"/> visual prompts for routine processes/procedures <input type="checkbox"/> teach key words/subject vocabulary <input type="checkbox"/> use a multi-sensory approach <input type="checkbox"/> text at appropriate level <input type="checkbox"/> support with time management
NATURE OF SUPPORT <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawal <input type="checkbox"/> Main Stream : <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	USE OF TECHNOLOGY <input type="checkbox"/> computer where appropriate <input type="checkbox"/> spellchecker <input type="checkbox"/> audio tapes <input type="checkbox"/> software – textHELP Read & Write
ASSESSMENT <input type="checkbox"/> extra time <input type="checkbox"/> verbal clarification of test <input type="checkbox"/> modified test <input type="checkbox"/> use of spell checker/computer	<input type="checkbox"/> use of scribe/word processor <input type="checkbox"/> test read to student <input type="checkbox"/> open book during test <input type="checkbox"/> alternative ways of showing learning
ADDITIONAL STUDENT INFORMATION Other Special Considerations	
See next page for teaching and learning implications	
<input type="checkbox"/> Useful for all students with NEPs <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Essential for this student	

ADDITIONAL TEACHER INFORMATION
Curriculum Priorities
Additional Information

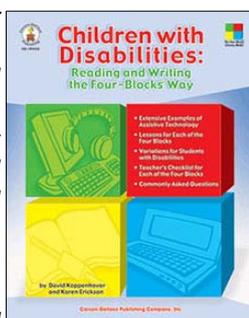
“I DON'T WANT TO BE DIFFERENT!”

Some children will verbalise their desire not to be 'seen' as different while others may communicate this through their behaviour. Our challenge as educators is to differentiate the curriculum so that they don't 'feel' different.

Sounds like a conundrum, but it is possible. In the Limestone Coast, Regional Support Services have introduced 200 mainstream teachers to an inclusive literacy framework that makes this a reality. Its multilevel activities allow the teacher to program for the whole class, whilst using the concept of Universal Design for learning, to ensure that all students can access this same program at the same time.

The Four Blocks Literacy Model was first developed in the US for children in years 1-3 by Patricia Cunningham, Dorothy Hall and Cheryl Sigmon in 1990. Karen Erikson and David Koppenhaver built upon this basic program and published a book showing the universal design aspects that can ensure inclusion for all, in their book "Children with Disabilities- Reading and Writing the Four Blocks Way". Their underlying premise is

"We do not believe that a different curriculum is required in order for children with disabilities to succeed in learning to read and write. We have learned however that teachers must attend consciously and thoughtfully to the significant learning differences of children with disabilities to make good instruction accessible to these students".



The Four Blocks Literacy Model is broken up into four blocks of Working With Words, Writing, Guided Reading and Self-Selected Reading. The recommendation is that in Years 1-3 each block is taught for 30-40 minutes each day and all follow the premise of 5-10 minutes of explicit teacher instruction, followed by 20-30 minutes of child centred learning, and finally 5-10 minutes of sharing.

This article outlines each block, the underlying beliefs behind them, ways each can be differentiated, some challenges our teachers found and their evaluation of each.

Common words used on a Word Wall

the

then

them

Working with Words

Beliefs:

Children have access to common words and spelling patterns via the clearly displayed class Word Wall, which is added to each week. The basic philosophy of this block is to give children skills in understanding and using phonics and spelling patterns. This includes breaking words up into onset (the first part of the word up to the vowel) and rime (the rest of the word from the vowel) which is the spelling pattern used in writing.

Differentiation:

The writing load is easily decreased for those needing adaption in this block by having physical letters to manipulate. Individual word walls can be made to cater for those who need something next to them to refer to, or require some different words. Similarly technology such as communication devices, word processors and eye gaze boards can be incorporated into all activities.

Challenges:

The most challenging aspect for teachers is that these words are not learnt in a mass practice format, through a weekly spelling list. Rather, they are learnt through distributed practice, with the expectation of knowing the words by the end of the year.

Evaluation:

Teachers found the Word Wall extremely effective and children who had previously not been able to learn common words are now picking them up at a much faster rate.



Example of an A3 concertina Word Wall book (Kate Eldridge – McDonald Park Schools.)

“I DON'T WANT TO BE DIFFERENT!”

Beliefs:

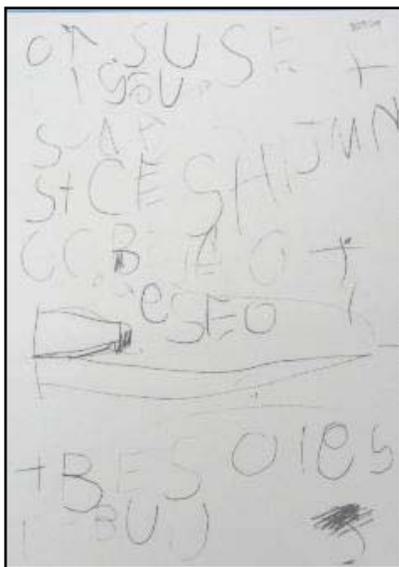
Classrooms should be set up as writing communities where all children work together in the class environment. It is important that children feel they are writing for real reasons and for an interested audience. Children also need freedom in their writing so they choose their own topic, the form, and its length. Writing is often the way into reading for non-verbal children so it is very important that they participate fully in this block.

Differentiation:

No matter what the child's abilities; physical and cognitive, you begin them writing immediately along with everyone else. Using “any pencil, any paper, any text” is important and any level of first draft is accepted and celebrated. Children can use portable AccessApps on a USB to adjust software accessibility, communication devices, talking word processors such as Clicker 5 or Write Online, voice activated software, physical letters and words to manipulate, Intellipens, all sorts of pens and pencils that might prove motivating by making a noise or lighting up, any forms of paper – coloured, textured, patterned, home-made mini books, envelopes, alphabet stickers, labels makers, whiteboards, chalkboards - let your imagination run wild.

Challenges:

Teachers found not correcting every piece of writing and allowing the children to just write, a challenge. Their other greatest challenge, but also a relief to many, was the ‘no copying, tracing or scribing’ rule.



New Reception child's initial 'driting' about going on the bus and then writing-“ I went swimming pool I had a race.” - 5 weeks later. (Melaleuca Park Schools)

Evaluation:

It was noted that new Receptions were progressing at a much faster rate from ‘driting’ to using recognisable words and letters and the conventions of writing. The freedom to write has actually lengthened their pieces and those older students who wanted to always know how many lines to write, were now confident to keep going until it was finished. Every age from Reception to Year seven absolutely love “Author’s Chair” which has become the highlight of each writing session.

Guided Reading

Beliefs:

Guided reading focuses on developing comprehension skills and strategies by developing children’s background knowledge, oral language and vocabulary essential to understanding what they are reading. It is important to provide children with a purpose for reading, whilst teaching them how to read different types of literature .

Differentiation:

Activating children’s knowledge can be helped by providing the non verbal child with a Talking Photo Album that can have remnants or photos incorporated and adult voice overs on each page to enable sharing of the prior experiences of the topic. This block teaches children explicitly about reading whilst still being multilevel, with all children participating in the same lesson.

“I DON'T WANT TO BE DIFFERENT!”

A huge variety of books and texts in all sorts of formats are encouraged including electronic - web based, CD, DVD, MP3 player, Braille etc. Story tools (characters and objects relating to the story) and communication boards (with the appropriate language added) can help all children access and 'talk' about the book.

mum 	Australia 	camper trailer 	leaves 	I like that 
dad 	Coorong 	swag 	pelican 	I don't like that 
Luke 	Barossa Valley 		shark 	Let me see 
Billy 	Nullabor Plain 		trucks and cars 	turn the page 
Grace 	Head of Bight 		whale 	

Communication Board for “Are We There Yet” by Alison Lester

Challenges:

Having another concept of what ‘Guided Reading’ is, confuses some teachers initially but incorporating the two methods together is not impossible. The theory behind each is sound but *Four Blocks Guided Reading* does not place children into reading groups according to ability level, rather differentiates how and what is read so they can all share the same text and be explicitly taught together.

Evaluation:

Many teachers found the mini-lessons beneficial as they focussed on teaching children strategies to use while reading.

Self Selected Reading

Beliefs:

The main aim of this block is to get children ‘to want to read when they don't have to’ by instilling in them a love and enjoyment of

reading. It differs from other silent sustained reading sessions teachers might currently engage in by having teachers become involved in what children are reading through regular ‘book chats’ and time to share their reading with the rest of the class.

Differentiation:

It is important that a huge number of books are available in a variety of formats to cater for all children's reading abilities, interests and physical capabilities. So there must be access options available for those who cannot turn pages independently, have sensory losses or difficulty with print and benefit from a book being read to them via technology. Tar Heel Readers are one initiative of Erickson and Kopenhagen to ensure a huge number of high interest electronic books for beginning readers of all ages are available in accessible formats. Sharing may be an issue for non verbal children, but by using accessible technology such as an iPod Touch with speakers and Proloquo2Go programmed text, Step by Step Communicators or click and ‘read aloud’ options on software this can be overcome.

Challenges:

Teachers need to be prepared by having enough books available in various formats, including plenty of non-fiction. One challenge is having enough books for those with more severe disabilities.

Evaluation:

Teachers reported that the “teacher read aloud” provided great opportunities for author studies and developing new interest areas for children. Teachers found that children (including Year seven's) love the book chat as they share their experience with someone else who will value it.

Conclusion

Regular written feedback collected from workshop participants are evidence of teachers having their current thinking challenged, the feeling that it is giving an injection of enthusiasm into their literacy programs, and their delight with the progress of children they are teaching.

All of us do not have equal talents, but all of us should have an equal opportunity to develop our talents.
John F. Kennedy

“I DON'T WANT TO BE DIFFERENT!”

Finally, a 2005 US study of effective schools who had large numbers of poor children but had done better than expected on the state's literacy tests, showed they all used the Four Blocks Literacy Framework. When forced to decide what contributed most to their success administrators ranked these as the most important factors

- Instruction – time spent reading and writing
- Engagement – of students in literacy activities
- Perseverance – in sticking with the Four Blocks Framework.

Our experience with this model would concur with this and as one teacher expressed in her feedback – *“it breathes new life back into literacy!”*

References and Resources

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 Cunningham, P. & Allington, R. 2007. *Classrooms that Work- They Can All Read and Write, 5th ed.* Pearson Education. (Chapter 1)

Editor's Note: SERU can advise on and provide many of the following resources

AccessApps

<http://www.techdis.ac.uk/getaccessapps>

Clicker 5 and Write Online by Crick Software

<http://www.cricksoft.com/uk/>

IntelliPen Digital Pen and USB Flash available from www.officeworks.com.au/

Talking Photo Albums available from AbleNet <http://www.ablenetinc.com/>

Tumble Books <http://www.tumblebooks.com/>

Story Online <http://www.storylineonline.net/>

Book Box <http://www.bookbox.com/>

Lit2Go <http://etc.usf.edu/lit2go/>

International Children's Digital Library

<http://en.childrenslibrary.org/>

“Tar Heel Readers” <http://tarheelreader.org/>

Proloquo2go <http://www.proloquo2go.com/>

Step by Step Communicators available through

Spectronics <http://www.spectronicsinoz.com/>

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Gwen Waters and Debbie-Anne Nearmy are presenting two workshops at the Special Education Expo outlining the “Four Literacy Blocks Model”. See back page for Expo details.

Every child can learn, just not on the same day, or in the same way.

George Evans

DIFFERENTIATING THROUGH PLAY

The Language Support Class at Ingle Farm Primary school is supported by a speech pathologist 2 days a week and an SSO until lunchtime 5 days a week. There are 8 students in the class with significant speech and language difficulties. Their ages range from 5-8 years (Reception to Year 2). In addition to their communication difficulties most have sensory, attention, motor planning and social and emotional issues which also impact on their learning.

Each child's language difficulties, prior knowledge, learning abilities and styles vary enormously so the curriculum must be adapted to suit each child's needs.

In order to address the diverse needs of the students in the Language Support class it is imperative to differentiate the curriculum. Differentiation is a ‘responsive’ approach that ensures learning experiences are appropriate for all students in the classroom (Olsen 2008). It views students as individuals and recognises that not all students learn in the same way or at the same rate. It allows children to take ‘different roads’ to the ‘same destination’ (Olsen, 2008). This is achieved by adjustment to the curriculum content, the teaching-learning process and the products from each lesson, and to manipulate the environment to accommodate individual learning styles (Westwood 2008, p.72).

DIFFERENTIATING THROUGH PLAY

When students in the Language Class reach the end of Year 2 they are required to leave the class and return to their local schools to attend year 3 mainstream classes. There are 9 types of adaptations that are discussed with their new teachers to help address their needs.

These include: size, input, participation, time, difficulty, alternate, level of support, output and substitute curriculum (Deschenes, Ebeling, & Sprague, 1994). Differentiation can be accomplished by addressing each of these areas (see table below).

Teaching Strategies “Children that learn together, learn to live together”		
<p>Size</p> <p>Adapt the number of items that the learner is expected to learn or complete.</p> <p>For example: Reduce the number of Social Studies terms a learner must learn at one time.</p>	<p>Time</p> <p>Adapt the time allocated and allowed for task completion, or testing.</p> <p>For example: Individualise a timeline for completing a task; pace learning differently (increase or decrease) for some learners.</p>	<p>Level of Support</p> <p>Increase the amount of personal assistance with a specific learner.</p> <p>For example: Assign peer buddies, teaching assistants, peer tutors, or cross age tutors.</p>
<p>Input</p> <p>Adapt the way instruction is delivered to the learner.</p> <p>For example: Use different visual aids, plan more concrete examples, provide hands on activities, place students in cooperative groups.</p>	<p>Difficulty</p> <p>Adapt the skill level, problem type, or the rules on how the learner may approach the work.</p> <p>For example: Allow the use of a calculator to figure out a maths problem; simplify task directions; change rules to accommodate learner needs.</p>	<p>Output</p> <p>Adapt how the student can respond to instruction.</p> <p>For example: Instead of answering questions in writing, allow a verbal response, use a communication book for some students, allow students to show knowledge with hands on materials.</p>
<p>Participation</p> <p>Adapt the extent to which a learner is actively involved in the task.</p> <p>For example: In Geography, have a student hold the globe, while others point out locations.</p>	<p>Alternate</p> <p>Adapt the goals or outcome expectations while using the same materials.</p> <p>For example: In Social Studies, expect a student to be able to locate just the states while others learn to locate the capitals as well.</p>	<p>Substitute Curriculum</p> <p>Provide different instruction and materials to meet a student’s individual goals.</p> <p>For example: During a language test, one student is learning computer skills in the computer lab.</p>
<p>From: Deschenes, C. Ebeling, D. & Sprague, J. (1994) <i>Adapting Curriculum and Instruction in Inclusive Classrooms: A Teacher’s Desk Reference</i>.</p>		

DIFFERENTIATING THROUGH PLAY

Before differentiation is implemented it is important to establish the current skill level of students, their interests and learning styles. This is accomplished through observations, questioning (levels of questions) and assessments. The classroom has a play area for both unstructured (free play) and structured play sessions. The play area reflects the class text/theme of the term. For example, a theme used was 'the beach'. The text was '*Grandpa and Thomas and the Green Umbrella*' and the play area was set up like a beach.

Firstly the children are asked what they can tell about the beach. Reluctant students and those with limited language are asked to draw what they know, and then their 'free play' is observed. This multi-pronged approach enables thorough evaluation of their topic knowledge, their strengths and weaknesses and development of individual curricula on their vocabulary, speech (articulation), grammar, narrative and language needs. This evaluation also includes assessment of their abilities to make inferences, imagine, problem solve, follow a story, as well as their general concept knowledge and social skills.

The Language Support Class at Ingle Farm Primary school has structured play sessions with a mainstream R/1 class every week. Children are in mixed ability groups of 6 and work with an adult (eg. an SSO, the speech pathologist or one of the teachers). These sessions involve explicit teaching of vocabulary, narrative, recount, play and social skills including problem solving. The more capable children act as role models to teach play, speaking and listening skills to their peers.

The play always includes a problem (a complication) and a solution (resolution). The text included rain as the complication. The adults make comments about the changes in the sky and then pretend it's raining and pack up the belongings to go home. The children are provided with role cards. These are laminated pictures/photos of each character tied to string which the children wear around their necks. In addition, A4 picture story cards which show the sequence of play are displayed in the play area.

The teachers take photographs and video the children as often as possible to evaluate the children's play and it provides evidence of the children's development over the term. Children enjoy watching their play and they are asked to evaluate their own play. Play is a wonderful vehicle for learning as it allows all students to participate at their own level.

At the end of each play session the teachers model how to write a recount on the Smartboard using a proforma with visuals. Afterwards the students are asked to recount their play. The students' recounts vary widely. Some children draw 'when they played', 'who they played with', 'where they played' and 'what they did' on a laminated sheet. They are allowed to lie on their stomach while working. This improves their core strength which in turn will improve their ability to sit at their desks and on the floor. Others work at their desk and draw and write key words in four boxes under the headings "First, Then, Next and Finally" (the sequence of play) and draw how they felt. Another student has a proforma and writes an orientation about the play events in order and then a reorientation statement (a concluding statement with feelings).

Play is just one of the approaches which can be used to differentiate. When using more 'formal learning' approaches it is crucial for students to recognise and accept that everyone is different. Theroux (2004) reports that students can often get 'hung up' on the idea that it isn't fair for the teacher to have different expectations for different students. They often feel that all students should be doing the same thing. This was initially true with the students in the Ingle Farm PS Language Class. Some students did not think it was fair that one student was allowed to chew gum while working, another was allowed to hold a fidget toy, and another could work independently at his desk while the others had to remain on the floor to practise a new skill.

It is important to use every opportunity to reinforce to the students that the differences we all have, make us the unique and special people we are. Explaining why students have different activities and are allowed 'different things' to help them learn has allowed the children to accept and embrace the differences.

DIFFERENTIATING THROUGH PLAY

For example, one student needs chewing gum to prevent him from putting other things in his mouth. So we explain, “*It stops him from chewing your things and helps him to learn. You can learn without gum*”. Theroux (2004) states, ‘students need to recognize that they are all different and treating them the same is not always appropriate or effective’.

To strengthen the concept of ‘differences’ the children are growing flowers and beans in the classroom. The seeds were planted at the same time, but are growing at different rates. This experience has reinforced to the students an understanding of individual differences. The current class text, ‘Leo the Late Bloomer’ includes the themes of growth, resilience, family relationships and similarities and differences between others. It has also highlighted to the students that learning takes time and we need to be supportive of others.

There are many ways to differentiate. It is important to know your students well, be flexible and adopt different strategies. “The experiences a student has while learning will shape, for better or worse, that student’s confidence, motivation, and perceptions of his or her own capabilities- and will therefore influence future learning” (Westwood 2008, p.17). It is the teacher’s role to develop a good understanding of each child’s unique characteristics to be able to adjust the content, process, products and learning environment to suit their students’ individual needs and abilities so that all students can experience

success and their learning opportunities are optimised.

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DIFFERENTIATED MIDDLE YEARS LEARNING AT OPEN ACCESS COLLEGE

The Open Access College (OAC) has an enormously diverse student cohort with individual students enrolled who are unable to access teaching and learning programs at their local school. This isolation could be due to geographic location, psychological issues (eg. school phobia, mental health issues), severe harassment, medical conditions, school exclusion, vocational study or family/work responsibilities. Students enrolled may be travelling with their family, pregnant girls, teenage mothers or at risk of not completing schooling due to their inability to access the subject they require locally. A significant proportion of this cohort are students with

disabilities and learning difficulties. The intersection of areas of educational disadvantage experienced by OAC students requires many complex levels of support to promote improved social inclusion and a curriculum that offers differentiated content, processes and learning environments.

The OAC uses a blended learning approach of interactive teaching and learning methodologies, such as virtual classroom through Centra, Moodle, chat lines, face to face opportunities, print and CD Rom, group and individual telephone conferences.

DIFFERENTIATED MIDDLE YEARS LEARNING AT OPEN ACCESS COLLEGE

Teachers develop a range of learning and assessment resources and use learning spaces (websites) where web-based communication tools are used to maintain currency of materials, differentiate and individualise programs and improve opportunities for teaching and learning.

The Moodle virtual learning environment offers a range of eLearning tools that support differentiation of the curriculum across learning areas to engage students through the R-12 range. An example of this has been the development of an online SACE Personal Learning Plan (PLP) course. This approach supports students through a simple, logical, sequential structure that provides opportunity for exploration and discovery. The journal tool has facilitated online, one-step reflection on their learning by students leading to informed decision making that teachers can respond to with immediate and ongoing feedback. Students are able to direct and control their own learning progress and store the product of their learning using an online ePortfolio.

Moodle also offers tools that enable collaboration between students including forums which are used extensively at OAC for students to participate in online social learning. Above all the capacity for anywhere-anytime at any pace learning via Moodle provides scope for differentiation where students don't feel embarrassed because they take longer to grasp concepts or need access to alternative content presented in smaller, more varied "chunks". They can access online video screen-capture tutorial content as many times as they need without anyone else knowing. They can also receive ongoing, multi-modal feedback as they work through assignments feeling better supported without the pressure associated with completing and submitting work without knowing whether they are "on the right track". For students with psychological issues this provides a more supportive, differentiated learning environment where they feel more comfortable knowing their progress is being monitored more frequently with relevant teacher (and peer) feedback helping them to achieve improved outcomes.

In 2007/08 the OAC conducted a review of the Middle school. It recognised that effective

partnerships between parents, students and staff are essential to improve learning outcomes for students. Recommendations included: the need to individualise learning and differentiate the curriculum to meet the needs and interests of students and the formation of Middle School Teams to maximise the relationship between teachers, students and parents.

During 2009 the planning and professional development of staff occurred. The value of working in teams was accepted and staff developed the principles by which teams would operate. This included: using an integrated (thematic) approach in line with the National Curriculum and the SACS Framework, developing Individual Learning Plans and differentiated programs and material for students and running Pastoral Care sessions. To facilitate this process an introductory four week unit called *My Plan* was developed. The unit allowed teacher and student to get to know each other better while focusing on the student's strengths, weaknesses, interests and included NAPLAN results and diagnostic testing in literacy and numeracy. This was the basis of developing the student's Individual Learning Plan in conjunction with the teacher and parent. It was the basis by which teachers could differentiate the curriculum to meet the student's needs, interests and abilities. The unit also introduced the student to the integrated approach where several learning areas supported a theme or topic.

This approach has been put into practice in 2010. Teams of three to four teachers work with up to 26 students from a year group for the year. Students have worked through the *My Plan* concept. Teacher teams meet weekly to review student attendance, engagement and work submissions. They plan and develop integrated units with tasks adapted to the individual student's needs and abilities. They also work together to help resolve any student issues. They support each other in program and material development as well as inducting new staff to the distance education modes used at the OAC. The aim is as teachers and students become more skilled and comfortable with the process that student directed short term programs will be undertaken.

DIFFERENTIATED MIDDLE YEARS LEARNING AT OPEN ACCESS COLLEGE

Results to date have been very positive. In particular the relationship between teacher and student is much stronger resulting in better attendance and work production in particular from students with learning disabilities who in the past would have found ways to opt out. All students, but these in particular, feel more valued, understood and supported. Parents have been very pleased with the concept and

more personalised attention and approach for their children. Staff have enjoyed the energy, enthusiasm and support from working in teams as well as the camaraderie that has developed.

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INDIVIDUALISING LEARNING

What do educators do to facilitate learning? Educators need to recognise and understand the class as individuals, each with varying skills, abilities, experiences and development. Student voice assists in making a curriculum relevant. Educators need to consider a variety of learning modes, the levels of complexity of thinking, the most appropriate and conducive learning environment and lastly a range of artefacts, products and performances that demonstrate student learning.

Howard Gardner's framework of 'Multiple intelligences' presents eight different learning modes that individuals can use to learn:

- Words (linguistic intelligence)
- Numbers or logic (logical-mathematical intelligence)
- Pictures (spatial intelligence)
- Music (musical intelligence)
- Self-reflection (intrapersonal intelligence)
- Physical experience (bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence)
- Social experience (interpersonal intelligence)
- Natural world (naturalist intelligence)

Providing students with a range of these learning modes gives every learner a means or vehicle to develop their learning. Technologies are incorporated across the learning modes.

An educator should consider the levels of complexity in thinking that learners experience. If the topic, content or concept is too easy or difficult learners can become disengaged. Bloom's 'taxonomy of thinking or cognitive abilities' provides a framework that identifies levels of complexity from lower order thinking

such as 'knowledge' to higher levels of thinking such as 'synthesising' or 'evaluating'. Individual students need to develop and use a range of thinking skills. For some students the starting point might be about knowledge acquisition or concept comprehension, because they may not have experienced or understood a particular piece of learning. A student's ability to evaluate a piece of learning may not be possible if they do not have the basic understanding or knowledge. Bloom's question matrix enables the learner to ask their own questions at a level that they can access. Educators need to design and ask questions that are pitched at a higher level than just knowledge or understanding. Using the question cues, students can design their own questions from each competency which enables the student to personalise the topic and present a more meaningful task at multiple levels.

The evidence / products / artefacts of learning should also be considered with individualised learning programs. Student choice is a key factor. Gardner provides a holistic approach by utilising different learning modes of individuals to allow students to present or showcase their learning through a variety of mediums. The table below is a document used to negotiate with students about their learning. The students are given a course outline of the subject highlighting the key concepts and desired learning outcomes of the course. Students are allowed to negotiate specific elements from the Classroom Accommodations table and incorporate them in their individual assessment plans

Every child can learn, just not on the same day, or in the same way

George Evans

INDIVIDUALISING LEARNING

The table is not definitive as students may wish to negotiate their learning in other ways not listed. Each student must experience, practise and learn new things through different modes of learning, thinking, behaviour and performance. Students should not always do what they know or can do best, as this may limit skills, experiences, knowledge and understanding.

Students use Bloom's Question Matrix as a tool to create a series of questions about their chosen topic. Students negotiate one question for each assessment task with the teacher. If a

student chooses a more difficult or challenging question they are given bonus marks. All assessments include a grade from the teacher, the student and from their peers. The three grades were equally weighted. This process provides greater feedback, ownership and better self reflection for individuals of their learning outcomes.

Stephen Simpson
Year Level Manager
Riverton High School

CLASSROOM ACCOMMODATION TABLE

Classroom Environment	Course Content	Classroom / Task Processes	Assessment Products
<p>Accessibility.</p> <p>Quiet / focus spaces (open & closed spaces).</p> <p>Distraction free spaces</p> <p>(No windows / clutter etc).</p> <p>Large visuals – (for cues, instruction, routines etc).</p> <p>Mentoring / shared learning tables / buddies.</p> <p>Readily available visual, hands on resources.</p> <p>Supportive ambience / acoustics / equipment.</p> <p>Negotiated and agreed set of rules, roles, behaviours, routines.</p>	<p>Interest based.</p> <p>Appropriate physical & cognitive level / ability.</p> <p>Relevance to personal development.</p> <p>Integrated topics.</p> <p>Small manageable concepts / skills.</p> <p>Culturally / socially / politically appropriate.</p> <p>Timely / popular.</p>	<p>Write / read</p> <p>Draw / illustrate/ show</p> <p>Verbalise / sound out</p> <p>Make / construct / design</p> <p>Listen / observe / sense</p> <p>Experience / feel</p> <p>Scribing / note taking.</p> <p>Reviewing / analysing.</p> <p>Orchestrated discussion.</p> <p>Group / team / support.</p> <p>Brainstorming/ sharing/</p> <p>Visualising / mapping.</p> <p>Research / inquiry.</p> <p>Collecting / collating / selecting.</p> <p>Role playing / performing.</p> <p>Instruct / mentor/ model</p> <p>Physical activity</p>	<p>Reports / presentations / summaries (written, oral, visual, multi - media).</p> <p>Visuals (posters, cards, drawing, sculpture etc).</p> <p>Displays /exhibits.</p> <p>Prose / verse (written or oral format).</p> <p>Performance pieces; song, dramatisation, role play.</p> <p>Test s/ exams / recall.</p> <p>Artefact / pieces / object.</p> <p>(Newspaper, model etc).</p> <p>Demonstration / modelling.</p>

A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO CURRICULUM DIFFERENTIATION

In 2009 Henley High School embarked on the journey of an International Accreditation Process through the Council of International Schools. This accreditation included an accountability framework which required an auditing process for all curriculum offerings across the school. Henley High School's philosophy was reviewed amongst the entire school community (staff, students and parents) and revamped as such: **"The Henley High School Community values a diverse learning environment supporting all students to achieve their best as future global citizens."** This philosophy gives a commitment to cater to the needs of all students and is addressed through an ongoing Quality Improvement Cycle.



The reasons for adopting a focus on curriculum differentiation:

- A curriculum audit of assessment plans, programs, overviews and resources in all curriculum areas generally lacked consistent evidence of any differentiation in content (curriculum topics), processes (way students learn), product (assessment tasks) or setting (learning environment). Nor was there any consistent evidence of any individual goals or opportunities for Higher Order Thinking and Enrichment.
- Data has become an increasing method of tracking whole school successes and identifying areas in need of improvements at Henley High School. Data had identified the need to strive for continuous improvement in maximising student potential. While student achievement data consistently demonstrates successful outcomes, questions were raised around the possibility of creating opportunities to raise the bar for all students which may mean supporting some students with learning difficulties into success and for gifted and talented students to be provided with creative challenges enhancing greater results and fulfilled young people eager to learn. Our philosophy reminds us of the need to nurture a diverse learning environment which caters to the needs of all students and to provide opportunities to



maximise the potential of all students.

- The introduction of the new SACE and the Performance Standards provided opportunities for quality curriculum planning.

Definition

In a differentiated curriculum teachers offer different approaches to *what students learn* (content), *how students learn* (process), *how students demonstrate what they have learned* (product) and *where students learn* (environment).

Tomlinson & Allan (2000) clarify the meaning of differentiation below:

"Differentiated programming is

- having high expectations for all students
- permitting students to demonstrate mastery of material they already know and to progress at their own pace through new material
- providing different avenues to acquiring content, to processing or making sense of ideas, and to developing products
- providing multiple assignments within each unit, tailored for students with differing levels of achievement
- allowing students to choose with the teacher's guidance, ways to learn and how to demonstrate what they have learned
- flexible – teachers move students in and out of groups, based on students' instructional needs.

Differentiated programming isn't:

- individualised instruction – it is not a different lesson plan for each student each day
- assigning more work at the same level to high-achieving students
- all the time – often it is important for students to work as a whole class
- using only the differences in student responses to the same class assignment to provide differentiation
- giving a *normal* assignment to most students and a *different* one to advanced learners
 - limited to subject acceleration – teachers are encouraged to use a variety of strategies."

Tomlinson, C.A. & Allan, S.D. (2000). *Leadership for differentiating schools and classrooms.*

A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO CURRICULUM DIFFERENTIATION

Curriculum differentiation was defined in simplistic terms at Henley High School as catering to the needs of all students to enrich their lives (physically, emotionally, socially and academically), maximise their achievements and prepare them for life beyond school valuing a diverse learning environment. How could any educator in the 21st Century not recognise this as a top priority within any educational setting? Is not this the key to success in any teaching / learning environment? At last, our own school philosophy and current analysis of school data had paved the way for this to become a necessary whole school focus!

A Curriculum Sub-Committee was formed in 2009 and a whole school approach to curriculum differentiation was adopted and mapped within a three year plan.

A Whole School Approach to “Differentiation of Curriculum”

A framework of a whole school approach was endorsed. (Appendix 1). This included a clear aim “to cater to the needs of all students (physically, emotionally, socially and academically), maximise their achievements and prepare them for life beyond school as global citizens.”

The Plan included eight clear objectives and each objective had an action plan including strategies and timelines over a three year period from 2009 -2011.

The eight categories as per the framework contributing to the success of this whole school approach include:

Leadership

An administrator was appointed to manage progress in differentiation of curriculum across all curriculum areas. Curriculum differentiation become a clear component supported within the whole school strategic plan.

Whole Site Planning

This included clear documentation and communication around the direction of curriculum differentiation within whole school curriculum planning.



Professional Development

It was recognised that all staff needed to be equipped with appropriate knowledge and skills to enable them to differentiate curriculum in their teaching and learning environments through professional development and modelling of good practice. In 2009 as Stage 1 SACE Units were developed in readiness for 2010, time was invested into supporting teachers to develop quality curriculum and design learning and assessment tasks which provided opportunities for all students to attain success at their highest level in line with the Performance Standards within all curriculum areas. Professional Development was provided by Dr. Jane Jarvis from Flinders University as well as our own school leaders from the Curriculum Differentiation Committee. Teacher planning time included the framework called the “Backward Planning Model” (Jay McTighe) approach to curriculum where tasks are designed after careful consideration of the skills and standards as the goal. This has been so successful that this approach to curriculum planning and mapping has been adopted across the school in both the Middle and Senior school curriculum which include evidence of differentiation supporting a range of methodologies catering to individual differences.

The roll out of 1 to 1 computers has also been supported with ongoing professional development in 2010 supporting teachers to develop virtual classrooms and to use computers to enhance diversity giving greater choice of learning activities aimed at meeting the individual needs and learning styles of all students.

Student Profiles

With the roll out of 1 to 1 computers for staff and students and the introduction to “Scholaris”, our online management system, information relating to individual students was paramount in supporting differentiation by learner profile and readiness.



A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO CURRICULUM DIFFERENTIATION

Teachers are aware of students with special needs and those who have any particular intervention plans (which include suggested strategies, accommodations and resources) and are able to use such information to assist in catering to the needs of individual students. Awareness of Student Profiles is the first stage of planning a differentiated classroom aimed at catering to the needs of the students in the classroom in relation to differentiation by learner readiness and learner profile. In 2010 student profiles are readily available to all staff and are used to support the 'teaching and learning' programs.



Teaching and Learning Programs

The original goal to focus on curriculum differentiation came about due to a recognition that teaching and learning programs needed to be reviewed outlining evidence of curriculum differentiation in relation to content, process, product and environment. While curriculum development has adopted a quality improvement approach with this in mind, there is currently far greater evidence of differentiation in the classroom and within the curriculum documentation. There is certainly a culture of designing tasks which aim to differentiate and the term Curriculum Differentiation is discussed with a common understanding in all meetings across the school. The development of SACE modified programs in 2009 and again in 2010, created to support success for students with disabilities also supported teachers to develop a differentiated curriculum as is always paramount when working with students with disabilities meeting the individual needs of personal goals for each and every student.



School Structures

School structures and meeting schedules needed to adjust to support curriculum differentiation. Planning of future structures within both middle-school, senior-school and whole school meeting schedules and opportunities were put into play to support the opportunities to work together and enhance a differentiated learning environment, giving groups of teachers opportunities to work together, meet together and group students in relation to the learning activities. The whole school approach to curriculum differentiation supported the success of this program and provided opportunities for key stakeholders to participate in discussions and planning for staff professional development as well as authentic curriculum planning.

Evidence of Learning

It was a requirement to develop a process for promoting evidence of improved learning due to curriculum differentiation using a variety of methods. In recent times data related to student learning has been captured on video, storyboards, photos and promotional materials as well as maintaining records of achievement data enhancing evidence of the diversity in the way students learn. This has been enhanced by our vast array of technology across the school including interactive whiteboards, laptops, large media screens, virtual classrooms and virtual students as well as our investment in Human Resources to include IT coaches and IT support staff.

A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO CURRICULUM DIFFERENTIATION

Funding / Staff Support

Funding and forward planning for Human Resource development was provided to adopt this whole school approach to differentiation. This included adequate professional development, teacher planning release time, consultants, data collection and purchasing of appropriate resources. This was a major contributor underpinning the success of the whole school approach to curriculum differentiation.

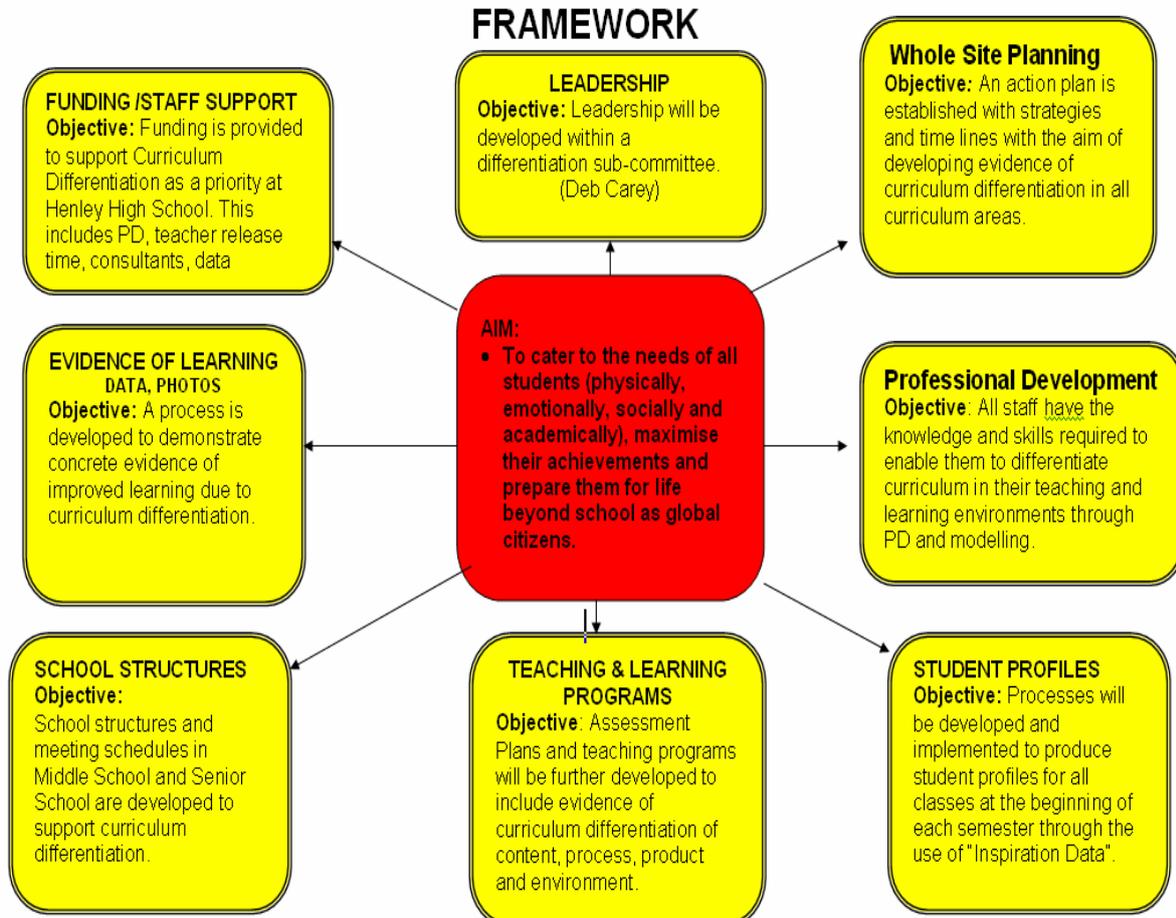
The commitment to curriculum differentiation has supported our aim to cater to the needs of all students to enrich their lives (physically, emotionally, socially and academically), maximise their achievements and prepare them for life beyond school. While we continue along our path of continuous improvement and attempt to maximise student potential,

curriculum differentiation continues to embed itself into whole school thinking and operations at Henley High School.



Deb Carey
Assistant Principal,
Students with Special Needs
Henley High School

A whole school Approach @ Henley High School: DIFFERENTIATION OF CURRICULUM



RESOURCES RELATED TO THE TOPIC

Making Differentiation a Habit: How to Ensure Success in Academically Diverse Classrooms, Heacox, Diane 2009.
34.0386.01

This book provides specific ideas, strategies, templates and formats that reflect authentic differentiation and help teachers to integrate differentiation into their daily practice.

Differentiation Instruction: Different Strategies for Different Learners, Forsten, Char; Grant, Jim and Hollas, Betty 2002.
34.0329.01

This book caters for students from pre-school to the end of the Primary years. The many strategies included have been designed to meet a diverse range of learning needs.

You're Going To Love This Kid! Teaching Students with Autism in the Inclusive Classroom, Kluth, Paula 2003.
19.0086.01

This is a practical guide to including autistic students in mainstream settings based on research and practical classroom experience. Relevant to the Primary and Secondary years, the author promotes an holistic approach to the education of autistic students, including differentiating the curriculum.

Differentiation in Practice: A Resource Guide for Differentiating Curriculum Grades 5-9, Tomlinson, Carol A. & Eidson, Caroline C. 2003.
34.0388.02

In this book the authors continue to explore how practicing teachers can incorporate differentiation principles and strategies. Although focused on years 5-9 it is applicable to all year levels.

How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-ability Classrooms, 2nd Edition Tomlinson, Carol A. 2001.
34.0380.01

Tomlinson provides classroom tested strategies and shows how to structure learning across all levels of schooling according to content, process and product.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Brown, Mavis 2009.
66.1415.01

This book offers differentiated learning experiences set in real-life contexts that are relevant to early years students.

Rex Jones Press to Explore Series., Zucker, Jonny, 2009. 63-3258-01.

Set of 4 high interest/low vocabulary books; action hero adventure stories intended for 9-14 year olds.

Differentiating with Graphic Organisers, Drapeau, Patti 2009. 34.0390.01

In this text the author presents graphic organisers based on Bloom's 9 thinking processes, and provides examples of how to apply these in different subject areas, and across different year levels, to differentiate curriculum.

Differentiation through Learning Styles and Memory, Sprenger, Marille 2003.
34.0387.01

This resource gives a general overview of how the brain processes, stores and retains information and offers teachers ideas to help students access information by using their individual learning styles and strengths. It also shows teachers how to tailor lesson plans for visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learners to differentiate curriculum.

Leadership for Differentiating Schools and Classrooms, Tomlinson, Carol A. & Allan, Susan D. 2000.
34.0376.01

The authors explore what school leaders must understand about differentiation and how they can then support classroom teachers to develop differentiated programmes.

Differentiation Instruction in the Regular Classroom, Heacox, Diane 2002.
34.0206.01

Using the work of Bloom and Gardner as a basis, Heacox offers a wide range of scenarios across various content areas, in order to demonstrate how to differentiate instruction.

Differentiation in Teaching and Learning: Principles and Practice, O'Brien, Tim and Guiney, Dennis 2001.
34.0373.01

The authors of this text stress the importance of teachers understanding the principles of differentiation so that it can be put into effective practice. Real-life examples from a range of classrooms are given.

RESOURCES RELATED TO THE TOPIC

Small-group Reading Instruction, Tyner, Beverly and Green, Sharon 2005. 36.0267.01

This resources presents a small group systematic, research based, differentiated reading programme for Middle School learners.

Differentiating Instruction with Style: Aligning Teacher and Learner, Gregory, Gayle 2006. 34.0389.01

Gregory discusses learning styles, intelligences and thinking styles as a means of determining student needs in the classroom, and then uses these for planning differentiated curriculum.

ARTICLES RELATED TO THE TOPIC

Facts and Fallacies: Differentiation and the General Education Curriculum for Students with Special Education Needs

King-Sears, Margaret.
Support For Learning
Vol 23 No 2, May 2008

→ SERU 1800

Backward Design - Targeting Depth of Understanding for All Learners

Childre, Amy, et al
Teaching Exceptional Children
Vol 41 No 5, June 2009

→ SERU 1725

NEW RESOURCES

Ian's Walk: A Story about Autism, Lears, Laurie, 1998. 60-1009-01.

'Ian's Walk tells the story of two sisters who take their autistic younger brother Ian on a walk to the park. This is a sensitively told story about sibling relationships.

I Am Blind, Haydon, Julie, 2006. 60-1007-01.

This book is written in simple text and from a child's perspective and illustrated with coloured photographs. It briefly discusses blindness, how the child is able to read and write and some of the aids she uses to help her in daily life.

Money Matters Primary, Swan, Paul; Marshall, Linda, 2009. 64-1408-01.

Money Matters offers a comprehensive collection of practical ideas and resources for introducing and developing money concepts with primary years students based around everyday scenarios.

Who's On The Money, Miles, Chris, 2007. 64-1414-01.

This book is about the general history of money in Australia. It also relates the history of the people who are depicted on our bank notes. The final two pages explain the faces on the pre-polymer (paper) notes and the coins.

Smart But Scattered, Dawson, Peg, 2009. 18-0194-01.

This book gives a general overview of executive skills and offers a set of principals adults can utilise when deciding on the best approach to use when working with a child. Individual executive skills are also discussed.

Go! Series Pack, Tompsett, CL, 2008. 63-3263-01.

This set of 4 High Interest/Low Vocabulary novels are intended for readers aged 11+ who have a reading age of approximately 6 years. These titles would appeal to both boys and girls.

Aussie! Aussie! Aussie! Series, Aussie Schools Books, 2008. 63-3257-01.

This set of Australian themed stories would appeal to both girls and boys in the Primary Years and have a RR level of 22-28.

Differentiated Learning: Language and Literacy Projects... Paterson, Kathy 2005. 34.0375.01

'Differentiated Learning' uses constructivist pedagogy, inquiry learning and Bloom's Taxonomy to demonstrate how teachers from Kindergarten to Year 9 can create motivating and authentic language and literacy learning opportunities for students.

NEW RESOURCES

Homespun Remedies: Strategies in the Home and Community for Children with Autism Spectrum and Other Disorders, Betts, Dion & Patrick, Nancy, 2006. 19-0236-01.

This resource offers practical strategies for helping children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) to function more effectively at home and in the community. The book covers the broad areas of *Home Life, Hygiene, Community and Schools and Organisations*.

What Teachers Need to Know about Learning Difficulties, Westwood, Peter, 2002. 18-0189-01.

This title is one in the series “What Teachers Need to Know About...” Westwood explores what is known about Learning Difficulties, focuses on the importance of early intervention and discusses the social and behavioural problems often experienced by these students. Considerable attention is given to the teaching methods that work most effectively for these students.

Play as Therapy—Assessment and Therapeutic Interventions, Stagnitti, Karen & Cooper, Rodney, 2009. 27-0094-01.

Play as Therapy focuses on the therapeutic use of play and offers a perspective from the Australasian region. Theoretical views of play and the fundamentals of assessment are discussed. Three new assessments and some therapeutic play interventions are introduced.

What About Me? The Autism Survival Guide For Kids, Koutsis, Athanasia, et al. 60-1015-01-01.

This book, with coloured illustrations, helps siblings of children with autism to understand what autism is and why their siblings exhibit some of the behaviours they do. Much of the text is in speech bubbles.

Play to Learn: Building Literacy in the Early Years, Stagnitti, Karen & Jelli, Louise 2006. 61-0922-01.

This resource contains a range of activities designed to help teachers use imaginative play with children in the classroom in order to extend their oral language, narrative competence, symbolic thinking and problem solving skills.

Matter of Time Game, Kod Kod International Games, 2008. 64-1410-01.

Students move through three levels of difficulty from telling the time by the hour (digital and analogue), to precise reading of minutes, to differentiating between am and pm.

Executive Skills In Children and Adolescents, Dawson Peg & Guare, Richard, 2004. 59-0076-01.

Beginning with a discussion about what executive skills are and how they develop from birth, the authors then address the assessment of executive skills in children and adolescents, linking them to behaviour and offering multi modal intervention strategies. They also offer classroom wide intervention options to reduce the need for individually designed interventions.

Fun with Messy Play, Beckerleg, Tracey, 2009. 27-0095-01.

This text contains background information and practical ideas and activities to develop sensory awareness in children with special needs. It aims to stimulate sensory perception through the use of everyday ‘messy materials’ such as baked beans and jelly to explore unusual textures, tastes and smells.

Australian Autism Handbook, O’Reilly, Benison; Smith, Seana, 2008. 19-0232-01.

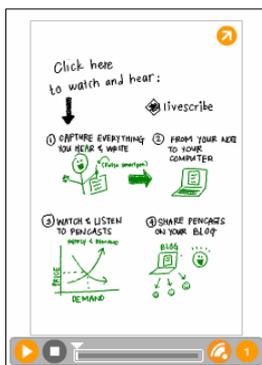
This comprehensive Australian resource covers every aspect of raising a child with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). It includes information about early signs and symptoms, diagnosis, intervention programs, medical theories and schooling options as well as a state-by-state guide to resources available for ASD families in Australia.

Building Social Relationships : A Systematic Approach, Bellini, Scott, 2006. 66-1402-01.

This book addresses the need for social skills programming for children and adolescents with autism spectrum disorder and other social difficulties. It provides a comprehensive 5 step model which can be used to incorporate the many strategies and resources available into one comprehensive programme.

TECHBITS - DIFFERENTIATING WITH PENCASTS

As highlighted in the November 2009 issue of the SERUpdate, a range of digital pens are available to support the process of students recording curriculum content and creating the products that demonstrate their learning achievement. The Pulse Smartpen enables students to capture text and graphics produced by hand on specially coded 'dot' paper and simultaneously link them to recorded audio in the same time sequence.



software, a teacher can combine their text and diagrams with recorded audio to create a Flash video. These pencast video files play back the pen strokes in unison with the related audio descriptions and explanations. They can then be added to websites, including Moodle course pages, for student access online.

Through this approach the curriculum can be differentiated across learning areas and developmental levels providing a powerful tool for student engagement. It is particularly relevant to learning where there is an emphasis on sequenced symbolic and diagrammatic representation such as learning in mathematics and science.

Examples of pencasts can be viewed under the Community section of www.livescribe.com

David Horsell
Project Officer
Learning and Technology

Mark Parker from Smartpens Australia will be one of the guest interstate presenters at the Special Education Expo. His presentation will be supported with hands-on workshops. See back page for Expo details.

The common misconception is that the successful application of this technology is dependent on the ability of the user to hand produce good quality text and graphics efficiently. This is often problematic for students with disabilities and learning difficulties but the capacity of the Smartpen to record significant amounts of spoken description and explanation provides support to fill their skill 'gaps'. Smartpen digital content (graphics and audio) can be uploaded to the Livescribe Desktop software on their computer and then to Livescribe Online as required.

Smartpen technology also enables teachers to differentiate the curriculum content presented through virtual learning environments in the form of *pencasts* that students can access online. Through the Livescribe Desktop

WEB LINKS

<http://www.caroltomlinson.com/>

Professor Carol Tomlinson's website has links to articles, presentations and other resources on differentiated instruction.

<http://www.cast.org/teachingeverystudent/>

This website supports educators in learning about and practicing Universal Design for Learning (UDL). UDL is a framework for designing curricula that enable all individuals to gain knowledge, skills, and enthusiasm for learning. UDL provides rich supports for learning and reduces barriers to the curriculum while maintaining high achievement standards for all. A report on differentiated instruction and UDL can be found at http://www.cast.org/publications/ncac/ncac_diffinstructudl.html

http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational_leadership/sept00/vol58/num01/Baby_Steps@_A_Beginner%27s_Guide.aspx

This article gives ideas on how to change your classroom into a differentiated classroom while taking small steps. It gives practical changes and examples that can be made and used in the classroom.

http://www.k8accesscenter.org/training_resources/readingdifferentiation.asp

An article entitled Differentiated Instruction for Reading.

SERUpdate

WORKSHOPS

Program details and registration forms for all SERU workshops and the Special Education Expo are available on our website. <http://web.seru.sa.edu.au>

Understanding The Child With Autism In Your Class

Wednesday 11th August 4-6pm

Promoting Effective Communication For The Child With Autism In Your Class

Wednesday 18th August 4-6pm

Clicker 5

Wednesday 25th August 9.30-3.30pm

Bookbuilding with Clicker 5

Thursday 26th August 9.30-12.30pm

Basic Boardmaker 6

Friday 27th August 9.30-12.30pm

Digital Note taking with a Pulse Smartpen

The Pulse Smartpen pen has the ability to record synchronized audio to handwritten notes and diagrams. Participants will have the opportunity to explore how this multimodal feature can support students with all stages of the note taking process. The scope for teachers to create instructional content that can be posted on the web will also be explored.

Information about the Pulse pen can be found at www.smartpen.com.au.

Wednesday 25th August 4-6pm

Boardmaker Plus

Friday 27th August 1-3.30pm

Oral Language in the Curriculum

Wednesday 1st September 4-6pm

Practical Strategies / Simple Activities (Combined workshops)

Wednesday 8th September 10-3pm

Practically Oral

Wednesday 8th September 4-6pm

Discover the Magic of...Chess

For students with Autism/Asperberger's aged 7+

Tuesday 28th September 9.30am-12 noon

NEW

Introduction to Proloquo2Go

This workshop will provide an overview of Proloquo2Go, an innovative new augmentative communication application for the iPhone, iPod Touch and iPad. Participants will utilize an iPod Touch to explore the application's features. This will include setting up and customizing Proloquo2Go to provide a portable solution to support students who experience difficulties with communication.

Information about Proloquo2Go can be found at <http://www.proloquo2go.com/>.

Thursday 26th August 1-3.30pm

Reminder:

Making a Difference: A Special Education Expo

Monday 5th July – Wednesday 7th July 2010; Education Development Centre - Hindmarsh

Term 3 SERUpdate

The theme for next term's SERUpdate is **Mathematics**. Articles will explore elements such as the language of maths, remediating maths and life skills. An invitation is extended to all readers to consider contributing an article to SERUpdate.

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A/Manager SERU

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