

Motivation

Differentiation by organisation involves differentiating by offering the curriculum in different ways initially, so that all the children are motivated and have access to the curriculum. This means that the children can start to identify for themselves their own problems or difficulties, and are then self-motivated to select a task which fits with their own current functioning or interest level rather than the teacher choosing a task for them.

Recording

Whilst the emphasis in differentiation by classroom organisation is oral, in that there is always an element of oracy in the process, once the children have talked about their topic they can then go on to record their new knowledge in written form. It may be helpful also for teachers to constantly remind themselves that differentiation by classroom organisation is *as well as* differentiation by task and outcome not instead of. In fact, the three types of differentiation fit into the teaching cycle thus:

- teach – differentiation by classroom organisation
- practise – differentiation by task
- assess – differentiation by outcome.

This is explored in more detail on page 9 – Teaching and learning styles.

Focus on oral approaches

Oral approaches are an essential part of curriculum delivery. Differentiation by classroom organisation needs to focus on oral methods of learning, reviewing, remembering and practising. The reason for this is twofold: it helps those with difficulties in reading and writing because they are not learning through reading and writing initially; it helps all the others because they can verbalise their current thinking, and then start to make connections for themselves between the new material and their present conceptual understanding. If children are not provided with this opportunity to verbalise their current thinking then they only increase or rehearse their current knowledge base – they do not add to their conceptual frame. This may be the reason why teachers find themselves having to teach the same thing over and over again, especially in subjects like Science, History and Geography.

The only realistic way for every child in a class of 30 to do this is for them to work in pairs and tell their partners. Whole class question-and-answer sessions conducted by the teacher are insufficient for individual exploration. To provide opportunities for such oral work, it is helpful to use the structures on Handout 1 (page 14) as a basis for differentiation by classroom organisation. Children need to be taught skills to use these structures properly and often teachers will not take the risk of embarking on a skills training programme or an oral approach to the delivery of the curriculum because of the behaviour of a minority of children. Again, if you use a structured training programme, you can use the majority of the class to change the behaviour of the minority in a positive way. Some suggestions for a skills training programme are in two other publications (McNamara and Moreton 1993, 1995).

Differentiation by outcome

Key elements:

- pupil–teacher negotiation
- more pupil choice
- more open-ended
- variety of ways of working (individual or in groups)
- variety of groups (ability or random or friendship)
- child-centred learning

Possible advantages for the teacher:

- less planning for individual children
- varied outcomes for individual children

Possible advantages for the child:

- less prescriptive (more motivating)
- varied outcomes
- less labelling (self-esteem intact)
- more open-ended tasks (therefore more motivating)
- individual aptitudes developed
- learning reinforced

Possible disadvantages for the teacher:

- less teacher control
- individual assessment may seem harder
- appears to be lack of clear progression
- task-pupil match less controlled
- task often still individual
- more preparation before the lesson for all children (workshops)

English Key Stage 1

Writing



Activity

Writing following an educational visit.



Outcome

To describe the place we have been to so that someone else can imagine just what it is like, and what they would see and do if they went there.



Materials and resources

Photos, leaflets, tickets, booklets, etc from visit. Variety of writing materials, soundsheets, dictionaries, etc to encourage independent spelling.



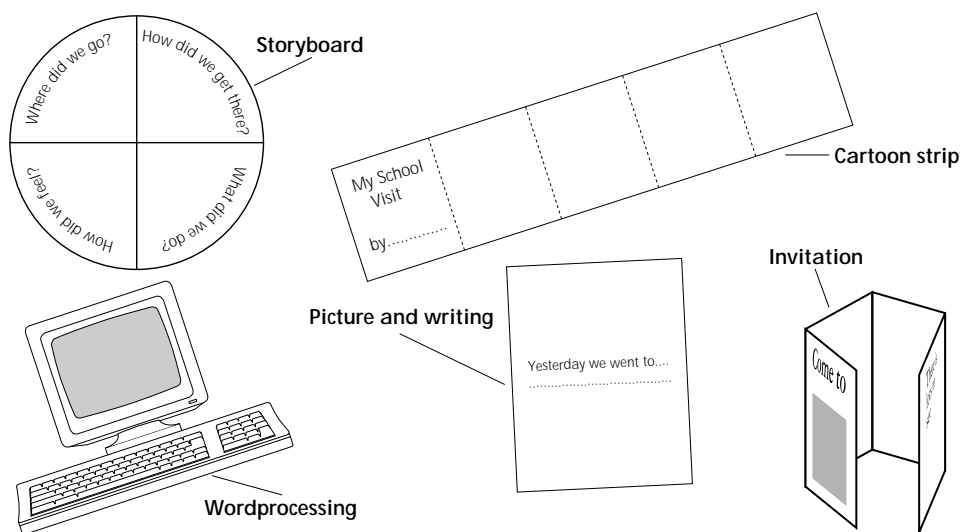
Advantages

The children experience many different forms of writing both directly and indirectly. They develop their independence skills in writing. The biggest block to children writing at Key Stage 1 is a belief by them that they can't do it or that it has to be right (or both). This activity motivates the children so that they overcome those fears.



Differentiation by outcome (varied approach)

Discuss the outline of the visit with the children. Ask the children to sit knee to knee in pairs and to take turns discussing their favourite part of the visit, how they felt, etc. Show the children examples of how they can record their ideas in written form (see suggestions below). They can choose their own method of recording. Examples below include a storyboard and a cartoon strip, both useful for sequencing. Both could also include speech bubbles. Children could also write a straightforward account like a diary entry, or an invitation to visit the place they have been to, which would include where, when and what to see. Emphasise that they should choose which activity they want to do and that they can work either individually or in pairs.



Differentiation



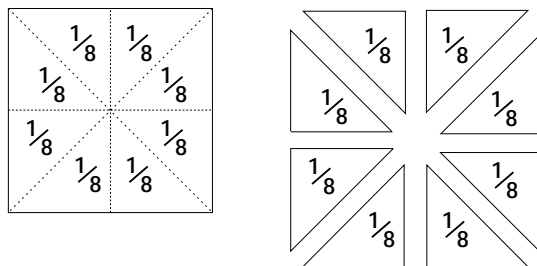
Differentiation by task

Each ability group or individual is given a shape, the complexity of which differs according to ability. The number of shapes that can be used is not limited, so that very able children will be able to tackle a greater amount of work, as well as more difficult shapes. Paper shapes can be cut out by the children using a template, or provided for the children, depending on ability.

Lower ability children can begin with squares or rectangles and divide them into squares, right-angled triangles and equilateral triangles. For some children, these can have the divisions and even the fractions marked on them by the teacher. More able children can be given the right-angled triangles, equilateral triangles, and regular shapes such as octagons, hexagons and pentagons. Even more able children can be given irregular shapes drawn on squared paper.

These shapes can then be divided into equal parts, the fraction written on each piece, and then the parts stuck onto contrasting paper as an exploded shape, with the number sentence written underneath.

A variety of number sentences can be formulated by the teacher using the fractions most likely to have been discovered by both groups. This may take the form of those generated by the children, or ones in which children have to write the missing fraction.



$$\frac{1}{8} + \frac{1}{8} + \frac{1}{8} + \frac{1}{8} = \frac{4}{8} = \frac{1}{2}$$



Differentiation by organisation

Distribute dough or Plasticine, dried peas, Unifix cubes, a jug of water, sand, a stack of plastic cups, etc. Pair children into peer-tutoring pairs. Part of the instructions for the activity should be that children need to work it out together and for those who find it easy to help those who do not to understand. They should now be regarded as one unit. Use your praise to ensure that children who are effectively peer-tutoring are recognised, not just those who get it right.

Use pieces of coloured card with different even numbers on, adding up to the class size in a bag to put the pairs into a range of sized groups, eg 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 (total 30). One pair at a time takes a card out with a number on and asks other pairs to join them to get the right number in their group. The variety of sized groups is so that each group has to share the substance into a different amount. Each group now goes around to each table and divides