

Activity 2- evaluating teaching methods

Group work activity with plenary.

Objectives

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

Resources

- A set of cards for each group
- 'Answer sheet'
- While completing these tasks you should take 'differentiate' to mean 'can address the different needs, interests and abilities of all learners'.

Note.

Create sets of cards from the templates provided. You will need sufficient sets for the number of groups that you are planning. It would be useful to laminate the cards so that they can be used on other occasions.

The cards describe a range of teaching methods. There are blank cards so that trainees can describe methods that they use that are not included on the cards. There are three further cards labelled A, B and C. These can be used as 'column headings' (see below).

You are strongly advised to familiarise yourself with the cards before you do this exercise and to check the meaning of any that are unclear.

You are provided with cards describing commonly used teaching methods. Some blank cards are also included.

Ask the group to:

- Deal out the cards so that each member of the group has a batch. Read out the cards in turn and ensure that all understand what the card means.
- After discussion of each card, place it in one of the following categories on the assumption that the teaching method is used by itself:

A Can differentiate well

B Can differentiate reasonably well

C Does not differentiate well.

- (optional activity) When the group have finished categorising the cards they should rank them in order within each category, starting with the best, in terms of differentiation, at the top.

Note.

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

Encourage participants to see patterns. For example, there are three cards on questioning. Participants frequently place one of these under A, one under B and one under C. What is the difference between the three types of questioning? Many of the techniques that differentiate well require the learners to be active. What does this tell us?

Be careful, though, that participants do not automatically equate learner activity with good differentiation. The question should always be: 'Does this teaching technique enhance the learning of all learners?' There are times when learners need to work quietly and on an individual basis.

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

Answer sheet

As the categorisation of any teaching method depends on exactly how it's used, the following answers are only suggestions and assume the method is used in a conventional way. The task objective is not so much for you to get the 'right' answers as to explore which methods differentiate best, and how to differentiate better. It's particularly difficult to be firm about which methods should be in Category B.

Note that the categories use the word 'can'. 'Can differentiate well' is not the same as 'Does differentiate well' in every context and circumstance. No method will differentiate well if you have not got the teaching skills to use it well and you use it badly!

A. Can differentiate well

Assertive questioning
Buzz group (assertive style)
Learners create a leaflet or poster
Individual writing task for learners – depends on the task though!
Worksheet
Formative tests and quizzes
Experiment/practical 'discovery style'
Learners create a handout
Case studies
Visits or visitors
Explaining tasks
Learner presentation
Guided discovery.

B. Can differentiate reasonably well

Teacher or trainer questions with 'wait time'
Buzz group
Paired-learner practice
Pair checking
Trainer or teacher-led whole-group discussion
Researching – this works better if you can discover less-skilled learners, or those not working well, and give them the help they need.

C. Does not differentiate well

Teacher or trainer talk/lecture
Teacher or trainer questions, learners answer
Teacher or trainer demonstrates
Learners watch a video or film

Past-paper exam questions - though this could differentiate well if you graduated the questions well and used those of varied difficulty, allowing all learners to succeed and all to be stretched

Tests and quizzes

Experiments/practical 'recipe style'

Reading

Activity 2: Which teaching methods differentiate best? - cards

<p>Teacher or trainer talk/lecture The teacher or trainer gives a verbal input, explaining and describing etc. perhaps with OHT or board to assist.</p>	<p>Teacher or trainer questions, learners answer 'Question and answer' used in the traditional way. The teacher or trainer asks a question, then learners either put up their hands or call out the answer.</p>	<p>Teacher or trainer demonstrates The teacher or trainer shows learners how to do something. This could be a practical procedure. It could also be showing learners how to do something on the board/OHT. For example, a teacher or trainer showing learners how to punctuate a sentence or solve a mathematical problem.</p>
<p>Teacher or trainer questions with 'wait time' 'Question and answer' in pairs. The teacher or trainer asks a thought provoking high order question (or at least an open question) and then leaves learners to work on this in pairs for, say, one minute. Then the teacher or trainer asks for answers from volunteers.</p>	<p>Buzz Group Learners work in a small group for a few minutes to answer a question or complete a task. The teacher or trainer asks for volunteers to give their group's answers.</p>	<p>Assertive questioning Learners are asked an open question. Learners work on this individually, or better in pairs, for one to five minutes. The teacher or trainer asks learners if they have an answer. If they don't, help is given. The teacher or trainer nominates learners to give their answers, (not volunteers).</p>
<p>Buzz Group (Assertive style) Learners work in a small group for a few minutes to answer a question or complete a task. The teacher or trainer asks the groups if they have an answer and helps those who do not or who ask for help. The teacher or trainer nominates groups to give their answers (not volunteers).</p>	<p>Learners create a leaflet or poster Learners are given a 'design brief' such as 'design a leaflet/poster summarising the main means of ensuring effective dental care' and work alone or in pairs to create it.</p>	<p>Teacher or trainer-led whole group discussion The teacher or trainer asks learners a question and then volunteer learners, or nominated learners, give their answer to the group. Some learners may also ask questions or make contributions.</p>
<p>Individual writing task for learners Learners are asked to write an assignment, essay or similar in the teaching and learning session or on their own.</p>	<p>Learners watch a video or film This just involves watching the video or film. No other activity is set. However, you might like to consider as a group how this method might be made to differentiate better.</p>	<p>Worksheet Learners are given a worksheet with a range of graduated questions: that is, starting easy and getting harder.</p>
<p>Past paper exam questions Learners are given a worksheet with a range of questions, starting easy and getting harder.</p>	<p>Tests and quizzes This is the usual way of doing tests or quizzes where questions are asked, learners respond. The teacher or trainer then establishes the correct answers and the learners or the teacher or trainer mark the responses.</p>	<p>Formative tests and quizzes Questions are asked by the teacher or trainer, and learners respond. Learners mark their own responses from model answers provided. Learners establish which questions they got wrong and work on these. The test/quiz is given again a day/week later but learners only answer the questions they got wrong the first time.</p>

Activity 2: Which teaching methods differentiate best? - cards

<p>Experiment/practical 'recipe style' Learners are given a task to do along with the materials needed, and are also given a detailed description of how to do the task.</p>	<p>Experiment/practical 'discovery style' Learners are given a task to do but not told how to do it. Learners plan a method, then check this with the teacher or trainer before starting. Learners who cannot work out how to do it are given a 'recipe style' help sheet or help in some other way.</p>	<p>Learners create a handout Learners are given a 'writing brief' such as 'write a handout summarising the main means of ensuring effective dental care' and work alone or in pairs to create it.</p>
<p>Paired learner practice Learners work in pairs on a written task to complete, which requires them to practise a skill demonstrated by the teacher or trainer. For example, doing calculations, punctuating a sentence.</p>	<p>Pair checking Learners check each other's work. For example, check each other's calculations, punctuation after this work has been done individually.</p>	<p>Case studies Learners are given a case study with graded questions. For example, Business Studies learners, after studying marketing, are given the marketing strategy of a small hotel and are asked questions about it. Both mastery and developmental questions are included.</p>
<p>Visits or visitors Learners have appropriate visits or visitors, perhaps arranging aspects of the visit themselves.</p>	<p>Explaining tasks Maths/science: Learners study worked examples and then explain the 'how' and the 'why' of the method to each other. Other subjects: Learners explain the key points of a session to each other at the end of that session. In both cases the teacher or trainer then gives model explanations.</p>	<p>Reading Learners read text selected by teacher or trainer.</p>
<p>Researching Learners are given a topic to research using books, internet, CD-ROM etc. Learners may be given references or asked to find the material for themselves. Learners' understanding is then checked with a short test.</p>	<p>Learner presentation Learners are given a topic to explain to the group. They may work alone or in a small group to prepare, plan and deliver the presentation. Materials and plans are checked by the teacher or trainer before the presentation.</p>	<p>Guided discovery Learners are given a question or task to reason out for themselves. For example, 'How should business meetings be run for maximum effectiveness?' Learners present their answer. The teacher or trainer comments on these, confirms good answers, and explains what learners have missed.</p>
<p>Other method (please state):</p>	<p>Other method (please state):</p>	<p>Other method (please state):</p>