



## DIFFERENTIATION INSTRUCTION AS A TOOL FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING

**Turgunova Shakhnoza Tursunbayevna**

Uzbekistan State University of World Languages  
Teacher of English

### Annotation:

This article focuses on an approach in teaching EFL called “differentiation”. The method is described as an effective tool in creating a balance between academic content and learner’s individual needs. The author highlights the reasons and the importance of designing lessons using differentiated instruction method.

### Key words:

Language learning, learner’s needs, differentiation instruction, choice, motivation

Today many educators who teach a foreign language are doing their best to find effective ways to make learning process more productive, easier and less-time consuming. Thus, now, the demand for the best upgraded ways in teaching is as crucial as ever.

According to Diana Heacox, to ensure that learning happens, the teachers need to differentiate their instruction; i.e., enhance learning for all students by engaging them in activities that would better respond to their particular learning needs, strengths, and preferences [2, p. 5]. Therefore, the teachers need to ensure that if one strategy does not work, they need to «pull out» other strategies they know, have ever experienced in their teaching, or have seen their colleagues use, and try them. However, the fact is that too often the teachers follow only one strategy. For example, at many lessons the teachers tend to lecture about smith., and despite the fact that it does not work for all students (especially for visual learners who need to see new information in order to truly learn it), they continue using it instead of changing and responding to students’ needs. To avoid misunderstanding, it should be pointed out that differentiation is NOT [4, p. 2]:

- simply leveling students by academic ability only. When differentiating students, the teachers take into account not only their academic abilities but also their interests, needs, and physical condition;
- modifying only the amount of work and not its type. It does not mean simply taking fewer activities; it means taking diverse activities to cater to the needs and intelligences of all learners;
- an individualized lesson plans for each and every student. Differentiated instruction does not mean preparing an individualized lesson plan for every student or explaining each topic separately to each student. It presupposes preparing the same lesson, but adjusting it depending on students’ level, skills, etc.

Thus, every student is not learning something different; they are all learning the same thing, but in different ways. For example, Tom’s Diner plan (below). In other words, differentiation means creating different versions of the same lesson to meet the needs and skills of all students, from the most challenged to the most gifted ones. It can be achieved by the following formula identified by Diane Heacox for differentiating instruction: «First analyze your current methods of instruction; then modify them in response to students’ needs,

interests, and learning preferences» [2, p. 7]. Another important aspect of introducing of differentiated instruction into the process of language learning and teaching is understanding the reasons for differentiation.

The reasons may be the following:

- The most classrooms include students of different ability levels. As we have mentioned above, there are as many ways of learning as there are students. There are no absolutely equal students. The teachers need a way to get through to all their students and ensure that everyone learns something new every day.

- Students have different learning preferences and interests. Some students are strong in linguistic intelligence and learn better through talking, writing, and reading [1, p. 73]; the other students are strong in logical intelligence and enjoy critical thinking tasks, problem solving [1, p. 128]; the thirds are spatial [1, p. 170] and kinesthetic [1, p. 205]. Thus, teachers need to be flexible with their teaching methods to cater to all learning styles and intelligences.

- Students have different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. It is important for teachers to be sensitive to cultural issues and to promote cultural awareness in everything that they do.

- Students come from different socio-economic backgrounds. Economic factors of their families affect the type and qualities of experiences students have outside the school. If instead of scolding a pupil for not fulfilling some tasks the teacher helps him, understands him, and gives appropriate tasks that the pupil can cope with, he will be motivated, and as a result, he will study well.

- Students learn by improving the existing skills. By differentiating, teachers help students to learn from where they are, at their level of understanding.

- Differentiation encourages confidence and optimism.

According to Professor Carol Ann Tomlinson, teachers can differentiate at least four lesson elements based on student readiness, interest, or learning profile [3, p. 39]. They are content, process, product, and learning environment. Content is comprised of the knowledge, concepts, and skills that students need to learn based on the curriculum [3, p. 77]. While conducting pre-assessment to get the information about what learners know, teachers might find out that some students have already get some knowledge of the topics the teacher had planned to cover during the term. Then in order to keep those students interested in the topic, teachers can develop a more advanced content for them to extend their knowledge, at the same time teaching the original content the other students, who still do not have a grasp of that content. Process includes activities in which the student engages in order to make sense of or master the content [3, p. 80]. In other words, it is the way teachers help students to learn. Teachers create lessons that contain auditory, visual, kinesthetic, and other elements. Products are culminating projects that ask the student to rehearse, apply, and extend what he or she has learned in a unit [3, p. 83]. In other words, it is giving students options of how to demonstrate their knowledge, for example, by encouraging students to create their own product assignments as long as the assignments contain required elements. Finally, learning environment includes the conditions for learning [3, p. 85]. Teachers should make sure that in each class the students have opportunities to work individually, quietly and without distraction, as well as to collaborate with peers during group work or mingling activities.

Teachers who teach with the help of this approach are responsible to create a supportive environment to encourage learners to take risk in learning. This helps students to understand and value individual differences in their learning process. It is essential to learners to group and re-group students during the course, because flexible grouping allows students to work with various peers in a variety of situations.

To conclude, it is very crucial to use time to time differentiation instruction in order to meet students' learning needs. Creating instructional activities using multiple intelligences or encourage individual projects provide effective teaching and learning process.

## References

1. Gardner H. *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*. New York: Basic Books, 1983.
2. Heacox D. *Differentiating Instruction in the Regular Classroom: How to Reach and Teach All Learners*, Free Spirit Publishing, 2014.
3. Tomlinson Carol A. *Deciding to differentiate instruction in middle school: One school's journey*. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 1995.
4. Tomlinson Carol A. *How to differentiate instruction in mixed-ability classrooms* / Carol Ann Tomlinson- 2nd ed. by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), 2001.
5. Tomlinson C.A. *Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of All Learners*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2014. 4. Sherman W. *Differentiated Instruction: A Review of Literature*, VCU MERC Publications, 2008.