

DIFFERENTIATION IN ELT – PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE.

WITH CHRISTOPHER GRAHAM, BELARUS JANUARY 2018



**Gallery
Teachers**

SESSION OBJECTIVES



MULTI-LEVEL CLASSES.

How do the different levels demonstrate themselves to you?

What challenges do they create for us?

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES WE FACE?

Hard to pitch the class

Strong students dominate

Quick students get bored

Weaker students hold things up

Weaker students switch off or give up

HOW CAN WE CLASSIFY STUDENT LEVEL AND ABILITY?

An accurate assessment needs interaction and observation.

Pre-assessing - placement testing. Not just which level but *where within the selected level*.

New unit or section – mini assessment to determine the level of mastery the students already have of the topic and targeted outcomes.

HOW TO MANAGE MULTI LEVEL CLASSES.

Your ideas.



DIFFERENTIATION

WHAT IS DIFFERENTIATION IN ELT?

With a

..... class of differing abilities, motivations and background knowledge of the target topic or outcome.....

.... a teacher who differentiates skilfully can work with several different groups in a way that is relevant, engaging and approachable by using a range of techniques.

TWELVE CONSIDERATIONS FOR MULTI-LEVEL CLASSES.



1. ASSESS THE LEVELS

Get the levels assessed. Dividing the class into three levels may help.

'Pre', 'on' and 'higher than' the core level is a useful categorisation.

Skill-by-skill assessment will give you the most accurate picture.

2. WHAT IS LEVEL, BEYOND THE LANGUAGE?

Remember that students can also vary in terms of:

Motivation

Maturity

Aptitude

3. SINGLE THEME LESSONS.

Class cohesion is very important.

To ensure this cohesion each lesson should have only one core theme.

4. DIVIDE THE ACTIVITY INTO LEVELS AND ADJUST LEARNER AUTONOMY FOR EACH GROUP.

Topic: Daily Routines

Pre: Identify every day activities

On: Talk about a daily routine

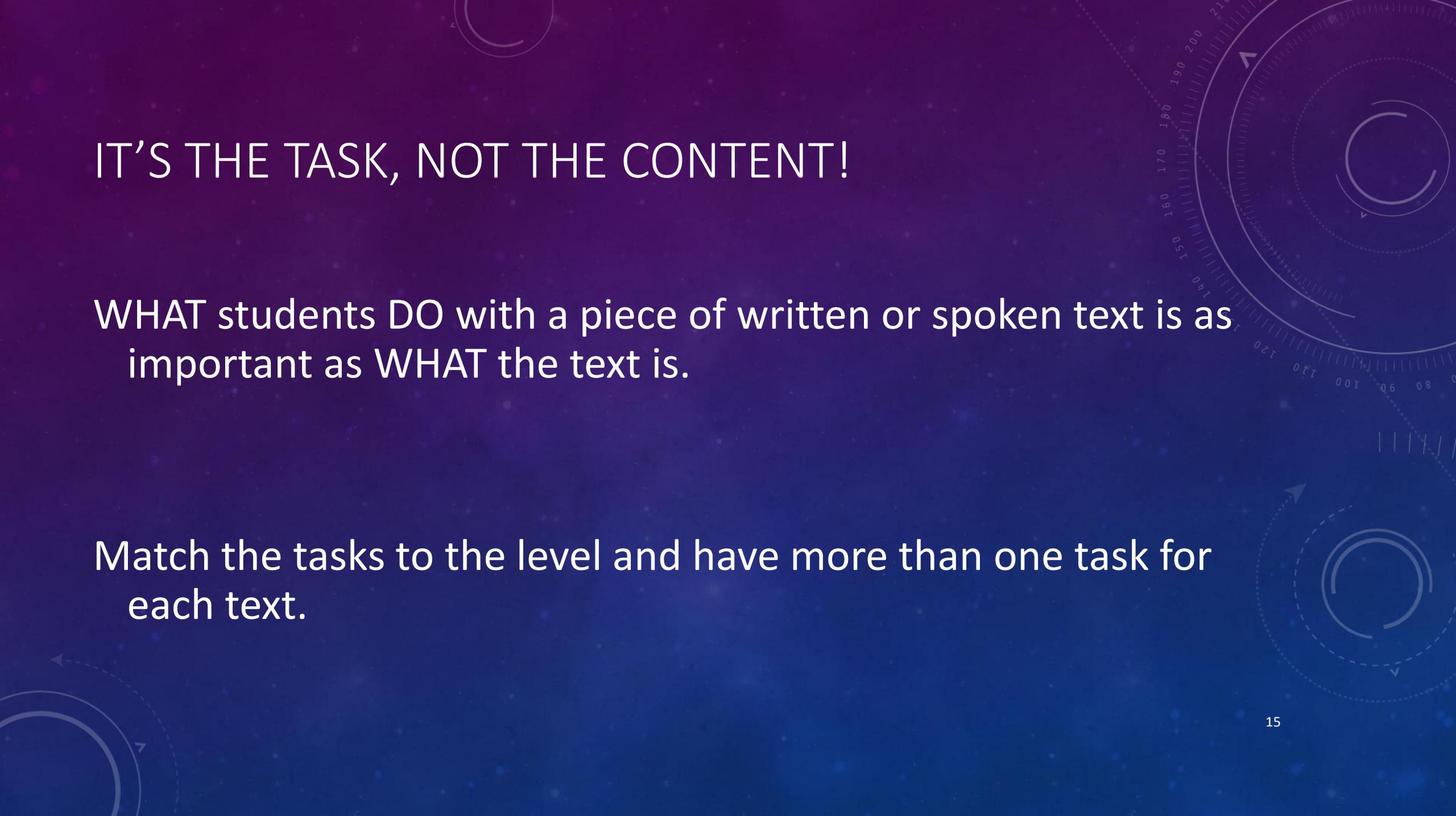
Higher: Discuss their personal time management

You control the degree of autonomy from the teacher that each level has.

5. RESOURCES.

Visuals, audio, and written materials can work across levels.

You just need to take a long hard look sometimes as to how you can use them!

The background features a dark blue gradient with a starry space pattern. Overlaid on this are several technical diagrams, including circular gauges with numerical scales (e.g., 100, 110, 120, 130, 140, 150, 160, 170, 180, 190, 200, 210) and arrows, and various circular and dashed lines.

IT'S THE TASK, NOT THE CONTENT!

WHAT students DO with a piece of written or spoken text is as important as WHAT the text is.

Match the tasks to the level and have more than one task for each text.

USING ONE TOPIC FOR DIFFERENT LEVELS

For example numbers 50-100

Pre-level, simple recognition of numbers, passively.

On level, recognition and production of 'target' numbers.

Above level – also experimenting with the generation of numbers outside the target sequence.

FOR EXAMPLE WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH



6 HOW SHOULD WE GROUP STUDENTS?

Same abilities together?

Mixed abilities?

I DON'T KNOW!

It depends!

7. USE LEVEL DIFFERENCES TO YOUR ADVANTAGE (1).

In same ability groupings, learners work on *accuracy*.

In different ability groupings, learners work on *fluency*, with more communicative activities.

USE LEVEL DIFFERENCES TO YOUR ADVANTAGE (2).

Establish the learners' roles in classroom and group management right from the start!

Timekeeper

Recorder

Reporter

Facilitator

USE LEVEL DIFFERENCES TO YOUR ADVANTAGE (3).

Sometimes, however, the stronger student dominates or resents a passive role and/or the weaker student feels embarrassed or says nothing.

If the strongest student is the scribe, this will prevent them from dominating.

If a weaker student takes this role, the pressure is taken off them to produce language spontaneously.

8. PEER TEACHING. GOOD OR BAD?

Do not over-use this as it can be very divisive.

Look out for bullying or arrogant behaviour.

Re-teach those who you see are struggling.

9 TTT – WHAT IS IT?

Any ideas ?

TTT

TEST

TEACH

TEST

TTT – AN OUTLINE

Language-related task or activity completed by ss without help from the teacher.

Teacher has noted the key language issues and then presents the target language.

Ss practise the new language with a new task.

TTT

Good?

Bad?

TTT – THE ADVANTAGES.

Identifies ss needs by practical demonstration.

Helps with differentiation and group management.

Useful when ss have been exposed to, but are not fully competent with items of language.

Involves tasks- a highly collaborative approach.

Encourages ss to think about and discuss the language.

TTT – THE DISADVANTAGES.

Ss may be uncomfortable with such a 'loose' structure.

Ss are used to classes that begin in a teacher-centred way.

Can be quite hard to prepare these classes for the teacher.

Starting with a task can be demotivating go for the ss - it lacks focus.

10. HOMEWORK.

Use differentiated homework in terms of pacing as well as complexity in order to meet the varying levels.

11. FINISHING OFF.

Always end as a group on a whole class activity – students need the cohesion that comes from being in a class.

12. FOR THOSE FEELING LEFT BEHIND.

Anxiety.

Look for and note the positives. Your feedback is key.

Make tasks that are relevant and engaging.

Break the assignments into smaller parts.

FOR THOSE FEELING HELD BACK.

Be sure that tasks are relevant and engaging.

Push the students to just beyond their 'comfort level'.

Encourage student choice in setting advanced goals and criteria.

Exempt students from practising premastered skills.

TO REMIND YOU

1. Assessment
2. What is level?
3. Single theme lessons
4. Dividing the theme into levels
5. Resources
6. Grouping students
7. Using level differences to your advantage
8. Peer teaching
9. TTT
10. Homework
11. Finishing off
12. Left behind/held back

NOW LET'S TRY IT OUT

Grab a book

A MOMENT TO REFLECT.

