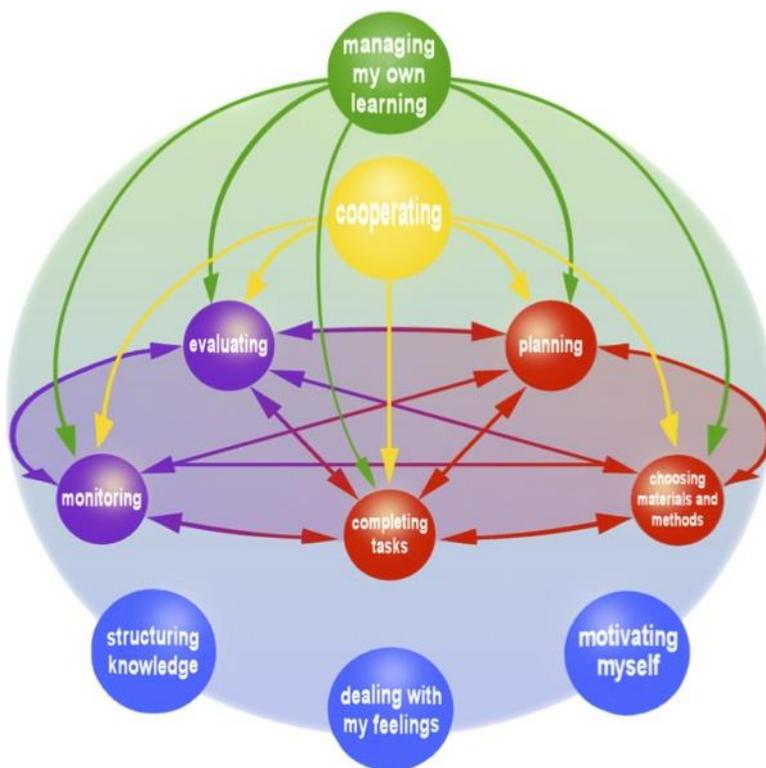# THE AUTONOMOUS LEARNER – A VERY BRIEF SUMMARY

- takes an (pro-)active role in his or her learning
- in charge of the learning process
- successfully uses
    - learning strategies
    - cognitive strategies
    - metacognitive strategies
- has a positive attitude towards learning and is motivated to take part in shaping the various stages of learning
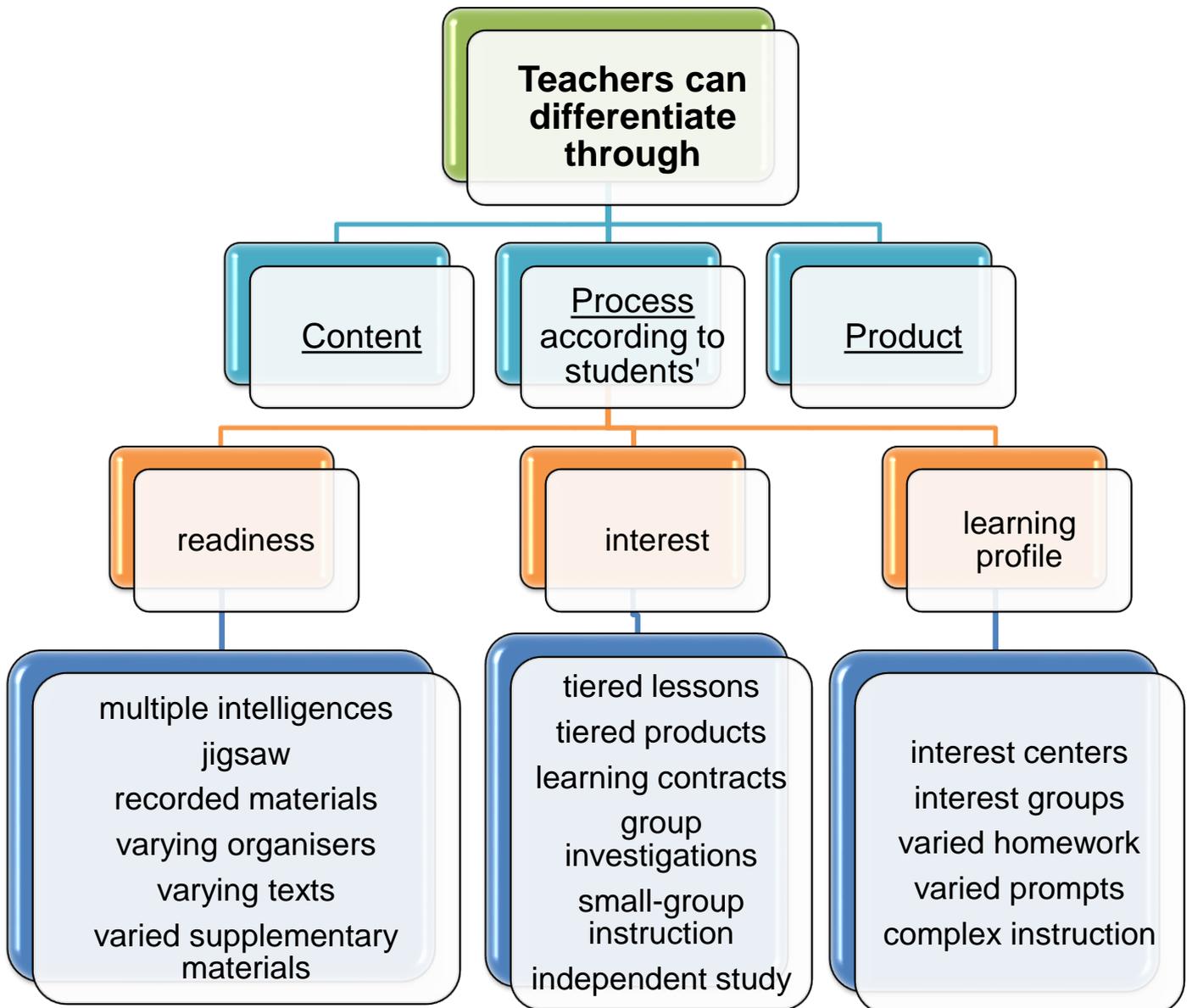
DIFFERENTIATION

Definition

Differentiation is giving students multiples options for gathering information; through observation and understanding of differences and similarities among students, the teacher can plan instruction.
/Tomilson, 1999/

The Main Principles of Differentiated Instruction

Teachers can differentiate through

Content | Process according to students' | Product

readiness | interest | learning profile

readiness
- multiple intelligences
- jigsaw
- recorded materials
- varying organisers
- varying texts
- varied supplementary materials

interest
- tiered lessons
- tiered products
- learning contracts
- group investigations
- small-group instruction
- independent study

learning profile
- interest centers
- interest groups
- varied homework
- varied prompts
- complex instruction

The elements of differentiation

1. diagnostic test
2. differentiated task
    a. catering for multiple intelligences
    b. using thinking organisers
    c. creating a product of choice
3. reflection
4. formative assessment

1. Diagnostic / Formative assessment tools

1. *Zipgrade* – quick online tool to analyse multiple-choice answers. It requires some time to understand how it works, but can be an excellent tool in the classroom, especially if one has numerous groups.

2. *Kahoot!* – a SEN-friendly online tool, which is a lot of fun and very easy to set up. Requires Internet connection and electronic devices.

3. *Plickers* – an off-line quiz tool, very useful in a non-digital environment. Can be used with big groups as well.

4. *ELIs* – Evidence of Learning – a type of task that the teacher needs to set up based on the covered material. It aims at checking students' understanding or of a certain topic/subject area or their progress in a certain skill.

5. *Initial Confidence Quadrant* – a tool based on Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive processes. Immediately shows at which point students need further help or whether there is a need for differentiation.

1. Remember e.g.: A gap fill drilling the form of the Future Simple	**2. Understand** e. g.: Situational use of the Future simple
3. Apply e.g.: Write a dialogue using Future Simple	**4. Analyse** e.g.: What will happen in 2076?

6. *KHWL - grid* – another tool based on Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive processes. It integrates a diagnostic test, self-reflection and can also be used as part of the formative assessment.

What you already **know at the start** of the session K	What you **wonder** about the upcoming learning W	What you **have learned** at the end of the session L	Reflection on **how** you learned H

7. *PACE (Practice, Analyse, Correct, Extend) task* – Yet another tool using Bloom's Taxonomy by dividing tasks according to the cognitive challenge. Can be used as diagnostic test, self-reflection grid and or part of the formative assessment.

I think	Lesson Objective: To practice family relationships and physical description of people.		My teacher thinks
☺	💡	**Understand it!** Read the sentences and name the family members Stella is talking about.	
☺	✏️	**Write it!** Choose a family member and describe him or her.	
☺	❌✅	**Correct it!** ✏️👉 Can you find the mistakes about the family members and their description?	
☺	🧠	**Recall it!** Play 'Guess who?' with your partner.	
☺	🧑‍💻	**Research it!** Find out more about a family member of yours. Ask questions and take notes at home. Think about how you will present the information to your classmates.	
P A C E			

2. Bloom's Taxonomy

The taxonomy is the result of Benjamin Bloom's efforts to categorise the domains of cognition and create a hierarchy based on lower and higher order thinking processes. It is extremely useful for teachers when they're looking at scaffolding a task or breaking down a certain subject area into smaller chunks. It is almost indispensable when devising a lesson based on differentiated instruction.

There's plenty of information on the web, you could start your research by checking out the following websites:

https://thesecondprinciple.com/teaching-essentials/beyond-bloom-cognitive-taxonomy-revised/

http://ttdev.teachthought.com/tag/blooms-taxonomy/

3. Thinking organisers – a non-exhaustive list

- flow chart
- double bubble
- mind map / spidergrams
- fishbone structures (www.classtools.net)
- Venn diagram
- T-chart (e.g.: True or False)
- concept map
- idea sorting boxes
- Fray –model

You can also try these mindmap generator sites:
https://www.text2mindmap.com/

https://bubbl.us/

https://imindmap.com/ (free trial for 7 days only)

https://www.mindmeister.com/

4. Dynamic differentiation tool

Designed to cater for individual needs. Students follow their own paths and autonomously decide about which exercises to choose and the aid they might need in order to successfully finish the task.

- steps based on Bloom's revised taxonomy
- highly personalised
- matching the needs of each and every student
- can be performed individually or in pairs/groups (given that the students have received the same challenges)
- solutions are available after each stage
- students have access to all materials necessary to successfully finish the task, where the teacher is the last resort
- teacher can monitor, provide guidance

Based on these you can design your own or use the ones we've looked at:
- Frame task
- Pyramid task

5. Reflection Tools

Differentiated instruction in the classroom is only possible if there is a nurturing, healthy environment where students enjoy the learning process and feel safe to express their ideas, collaborate and co-operate with each other or openly state if they need help or are experiencing a problem.

For this reason, reflection on the tasks is essential during the process. As mentioned before, some of the diagnostic/assessment tools have a built-in reflection section. Further examples are:
- the Frayer model (can be easily folded and using pastel coloured paper is ideal for dyslexic students)

- Self-reflection grids, for example this one:

Successes	**Problems**
"Eureka" moments	**Questions**

6. Formative Assessment

In the case of differentiated instruction, the assessment is 'ongoing and diagnostic' (Tomilson, 1999) in order to provide a day-to-day picture of students' understanding. Some examples are:
- homework assignments
- project work presentation

- self-reflection and student opinion
- entry or exit cards
- pair/group or whole-class discussions
- interest survey

Some of the previously mentioned diagnostic tools can also be used for formative assessment as well. I recommend you to look at and experiment with the tools described on Edutopia:

https://www.edutopia.org/blog/5-fast-formative-assessment-tools-vicki-davis

My top three online formative assessment tools are *Kahoot!, Seesaw* and *Recap*.

In case you have further questions, queries or need some more information, please email me @ katalin.csuba@britishcouncil.es