1 INTRODUCTION
We all have specific individual differences which should unite us in respect and care for each other. South Africa's Inclusive Education policy is built on the belief that all children's basic needs are the same, and that children benefit from learning together at a school which takes a supportive approach to teaching and learning.

2 WHAT IS DIVERSITY?
Diversity means that each person is unique in his or her own special way. This can be according to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, parental status, age, physical abilities, and religious or political beliefs. When a teacher values the diversity in the classroom, learners will feel that they are all equally important and that their differences are positive and enriching, not negative and devaluing.

3 HOW ARE OUR LEARNERS DIFFERENT FROM EACH OTHER?
- Different interests, abilities, family circumstances
- Different levels of accessing the curriculum
- Different local or foreign cultures, races or religions
- Different ways of learning in different situations

4 HOW DOES THIS DIVERSITY IMPACT LEARNING IN THE CLASSROOM?
These differences will condition the learner’s ability to participate well and learn meaningfully. It is vital to include these individual and diverse needs in classroom management, lesson preparation and assessment.

5 TEACHING AND SUPPORT STRATEGIES

VARY THE WAYS OF PRESENTING KNOWLEDGE
- Tell or read a story or news article and discuss
- Look at a picture/diagram/video, concrete objects
- Play a game with the learners
- Ask learners to draw/debate/dramatize the material of the lesson
- Design a cover for a book, a CD or a poster

VARY THE LEARNERS’ ACTIVITIES
- Brainstorm and solve a problem with peer interaction
- Make a timeline or a chart showing…
- Make up a song or a chant to a set rhythm
- Plan an event, a radio show, a TV programme
- Learn a poem by heart and recite it, write a recipe, a song, a play
VARY LEARNER GROUPING

- They could work individually or in pairs, threes or groups
- Different groups could do different activities and share results afterwards
- All groups could do the same thing, and present their results afterwards
- You could use groups for guided practical activities

In same-ability groups:
- Learners who work at more or less the same pace
- Quicker learners can do more challenging work
- Slower learners can have more direct contact with the teacher

In mixed-ability groups:
- The stigma of same ability grouping is avoided
- Criteria other than academic ability can be used: an articulate learner, an organizer, an actor, a reader or an artist
- A group culture can be developed

In home groups:
- Teamwork promoted with names and roles can be changed regularly
- The management of large classes is supported
- Peer teaching is facilitated

Accommodate different levels in accessing the curriculum

Consider the following:
- What you want everyone in the class to be able to do by the end of the lesson
- What you want most of the learners to be able to do
- What you want some of your learners to do

Here are some ways in which to plan a lesson so as to give extra support:
- Scaffolding: learners often need support reach the goal
- Re-explain: more examples, practise and maybe technology
- Give easier/shorter texts help with vocabulary
- Pair a child who is struggling with a peer

RESOURCES

- The NCS: Curriculum, Assessment and Policy Statement: Guidelines for Responding to Learner Diversity in the Classroom Grade R–12
- www.cast.org Universal Design for Learning
- www.udlcenter.org
- www.thutong.doe.gov.za responding to diversity through curriculum and policy statements
- Differentiation Central www.diffcentral.com
- www.teachhub.com
- Queensborough Community college NY USA

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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WITH THE SUPPORT OF

Let’s stop believing that our differences make us superior or inferior to one another.

Don Miguel Ruiz

Tips

- Don’t forget that children are also similar in so many ways: All children can learn, explore, need love, play, are curious, need to belong.
- Learners need to be taught procedures, routines and roles, so that groups can be formed quickly and operate efficiently.
- Always try to provide extra enrichment in the form of more and more in-depth activities and tasks for quick learners.

Inclusive teaching strategies are those which address the needs of students coming from a variety of backgrounds, with different learning styles and abilities. These strategies create an overall inclusive learning environment, one in which students feel equally valued.

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