

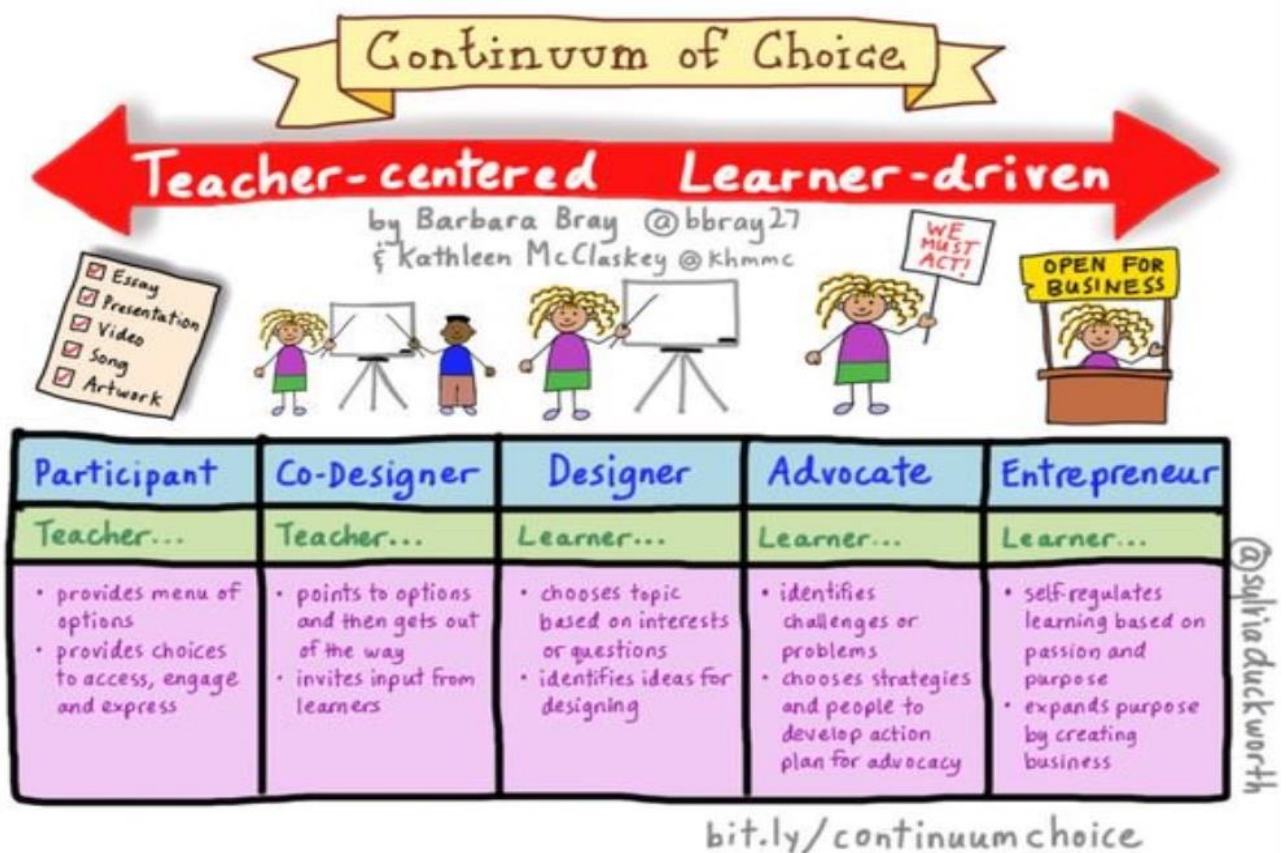
CYA Teaching & Learning theme: Differentiation

What OFSTED say:

Teachers planning shows deep knowledge and understanding which is used for effective differentiation, with embedded assessment for learning procedures to check understanding, building on prior learning to close gaps.

The CYA way:

Students will be challenged through differentiated activities which are targeted by the teacher using PA data with extension challenges available.



The differentiation basics

Differentiate by Outcome

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Plan tasks which can be accessed in different ways. This will mean that students can deal with the tasks at a level which they feel they can access (and thus feel happy with).

Such tasks will result in differentiation by outcome.

The model can be summarised as follows:

Create tasks which all students can do, but which are sufficiently open for them to do them to the best of their own ability.

The key is to avoid tasks which demand a very specific response. A final thought would be: 'Leave space in tasks for students to manoeuvre.'

Seating Plans

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Use seating plans to differentiate by:

- Placing students of differing abilities next to each other.
- Sitting students next to each other where you feel one will have a positive influence on the other.
- Setting up the room so that when you go into group work, the groups you want are already sat next to or near each other.
- Placing students with certain skills next to students who need to develop those skills.

Differentiation strategies

Task Explanation

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Think carefully about how you explain tasks in your lesson. The method I favour is as follows:

- Clear, simple instructions on the board.
- Pictures where appropriate to accompany instructions.
- Verbal explanation accompanied by modelling.

Other options include:

- Students who understand what is being asked explain the task to the whole class.
- The teacher shows work produced by last year's students (this will indicate how the end result of the task ought to look).
- Provide a checklist either on the board or in a hand-out. Students then work through this, one item at a time.

Students Teaching

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Create opportunities for students to take over the teaching. Here are three ways in which this might be done:

- Ask a group of students to create a presentation or lesson segment on part of the topic. They then deliver this to the whole class.
- Choose students who are particularly knowledgeable about the topic. Pair each of them with a group of their peers and ask them to lead some pre-prepared activities.
- If it is appropriate, ask students who have personal experience of a topic to teach the rest of the class about this (for example, different religions).

Stepped Activities

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Stepped activities take students on a learning journey that gets progressively more challenging.

Plan for your lessons to include tasks which get increasingly complex or which require increasingly sophisticated thinking.

It is not necessary for all students to reach the top of the steps. Encourage them to keep working upwards, but if some reach a point that is causing them problems, let them stop there and work through it.

Stepped activities can be based on Bloom's Taxonomy of educational activities. See my Bloom-Buster resource for ideas on how to use this.

Discovery Learning

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'Discovery Learning is a method of inquiry-based instruction, discovery learning believes that it is best for learners to discover facts and relationships for themselves.'

Taken from - <http://www.learning-theories.com/discovery-learning-bruner.html>

You can build discovery learning into your lessons through:

- Group work.
- Providing some of the information and letting students work out the rest.
- Setting students independent tasks such as research or a design brief.
- Experiments.
- Investigations.