Differentiated Instruction

What is it and why is this important?

- Differentiated learning is a method of incorporating different methods and styles of instruction in an effort to appeal to diverse groups of learners.
- Differentiated learning seems to be rooted in the idea of teachers developing relationships with students.
- By developing relationships and building trust, uncertainty in the classroom is reduced which gives way for teachers to be able to really assess the individual strengths and weaknesses of each learner.
- As uncertainty is reduced, so is the fear associated with it, and students who feel safe become more engaged than students who perceive threats, i.e., fear of getting something wrong, embarrassment, etc.
Similarities & Differences

*Embracing diversity and developing training*

- By developing relationships with learners, teachers can also identify similarities and differences amongst the class members, such as ethnic, cultural, socioeconomic, learning styles, etc.
- Teachers can then devise training and delivery methods that can be embraced by all.
- Differentiated learning is realistically a teaching method toolbox that mixes up different instruction delivery methods and techniques to appeal to diverse types of learners.
Differentiated Strategies
Supporting diverse and multicultural adult learners

- Have ice breaker activities at the beginning of class that get students to feel comfortable with working with each other regardless of differences
- Have lecture-based blocks of instruction
- Have group discussion
- Break the class down into smaller groups and ensure the teams are mixed up, i.e., if possible, each team has a female, a minority, an older person, younger person, etc.
- Properly plan out time allocated for blocks of instruction
Differentiated Strategies

Supporting diverse and multicultural adult learners

- Use problem-solving strategies and individual / team share-outs
- Appropriate blocks of instruction for class members to lead discussion on smaller aspects of the training, i.e., read and review
- Use diverse delivery methods and mix up testing methods to keep students engaged and interested
- “Differentiated instruction is a promising approach for supporting the diverse needs of students” (Chamberlain, 2011).
- Do not show favoritism towards one particular race, age, or gender
Examples & Scenarios of differentiated instruction & the multicultural learning environment

- Use smaller teams that consist of diverse members, i.e. one female, one minority, an older or younger learner, maybe a disabled learner with able learners, etc.
- Small group instruction that incorporates sharing previous experience and discussion amongst learners
- Verbal, group-based quizzes that encourage participation from all class members
- Foster a sense of unity versus divisiveness
Examples & Scenarios of differentiated instruction & the multicultural learning environment

- Have learners take turns reading aloud
- The teacher can go in order or random, maybe even mix the class up by counting off in threes, as an example
- Have individuals pick chapters from reading assignments and share a brief overview with the class
- Use lecture-based, project-based, problem solving-based methods of instruction
Activities that show the use of differentiated instruction

- Break classes down into smaller, diverse groups and have them all solve the same problem but with different methods.
- Have one group recite and review, one group write out key points, and another group present information.
- Have training that appeals to more than one sense at a time. Students who use more than one method of learning, i.e. listening, writing notes, formative assessments throughout the block of instruction, etc. tend to retain the information better.
- Have training materials and scenarios that incorporate diversity in instruction, topics, and subjects.
- “Reading instruction often does not focus on appealing to student interests, offering choice, or responding to the needs of advanced readers” (Little, McCoach, & Reis, 2014).

