Meeting individual learners needs

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It is a truth, now universally acknowledged, that differentiation is a feature of most good and outstanding lessons. Conversely, a 'one size fits all' approach usually characterised by too much teacher-talk and 'death by Powerpoint', is ananethma to deep learning and learner engagement.

Another truth is that learners start a course with varying levels of knowledge and prior experience, different levels of resilience and mental toughness, different ways of responding to feedback and constructive criticism, different learning style preferences, different motivation levels and concentration spans and different hopes, expectations and targets. Yet, some teachers focus disproportionately on the course content ("we've got a lot to get through") and not enough on how to meet individual learners' needs, increase motivation and improve achievement.

In this session the focus is on high impact techniques that meet the needs of individual learners. Most of these techniques take very little time to prepare and can be implemented immediately. By focusing on meeting individual needs, everything else – success, retention, progression, student perceptions of course, Ofsted and internal lesson observations – will look after itself.

Learning outcomes and benefits

Teachers who:

✔ Plan for differentiation (e.g. tasks, classroom management and materials)

✔ Think on their feet and respond to naturally occurring opportunities to meet individuals learners' needs (e.g. by asking questions at varying levels of difficulty, by giving immediate 'medal and mission' feedback and by changes to pace, focus of attention and group dynamics)

✔ Implement 'flipped classroom' techniques and are clear about the requirements to make this effective and the benefits of doing so

✔ Use a range of co-operative learning methods where learners have designated roles requiring different skills

✔ Develop learners study skills (e.g. note making and research methods) so they can study at their own pace and sometimes independently

✔ Foster resilience and 'growth' mind-sets in learners