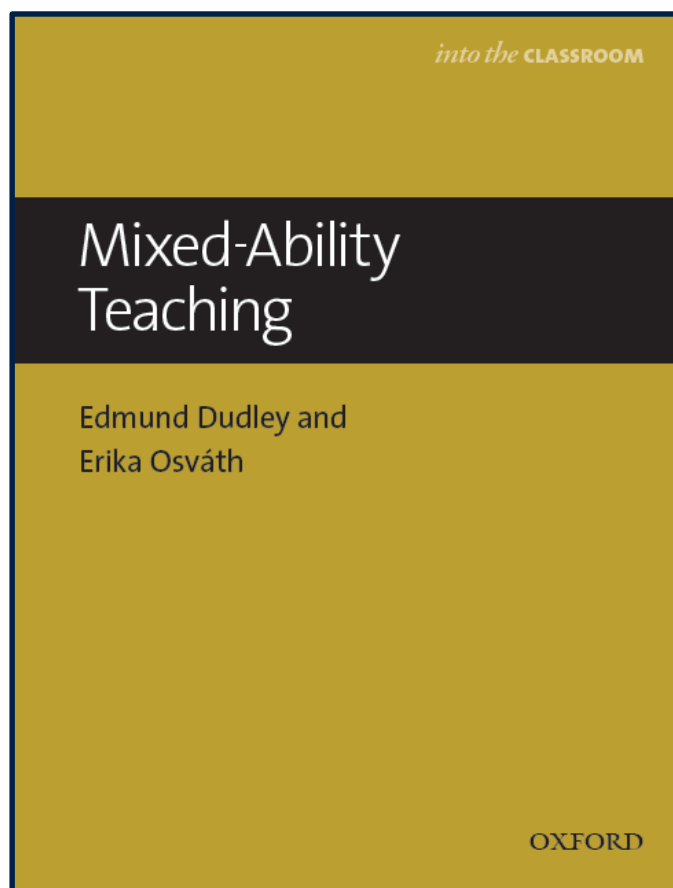

Mixed-Ability Teaching

Handling materials in the mixed-ability classroom

Edmund Dudley

Tallinn, 6 October 2016

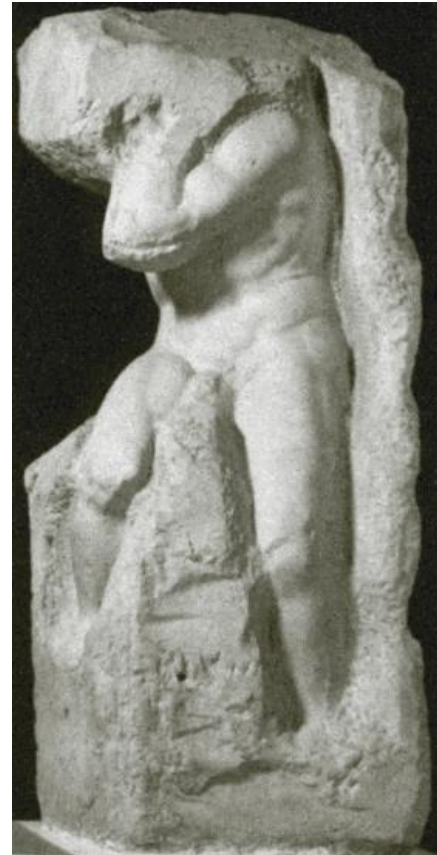




In this talk

Preparing for a class and managing the classroom

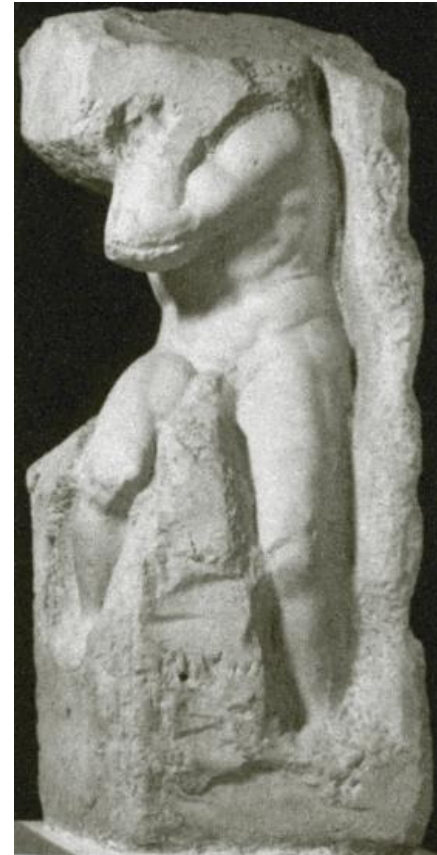
- What do we mean by *mixed ability*?
- Identifying variables
- Setting appropriate goals
- Differentiated learning



In this session

Preparing for a class and managing the classroom

- **What do we mean by *mixed ability*?**
- Identifying variables
- Setting appropriate goals
- Differentiated learning



What do we mean by *mixed-ability*?

Every learner has an individual range of levels.
Every class is a mixed-level class.

Scrivener (1994/2005:69)

What do we mean by *mixed ability*?

Differences between learners

Here are four ways that learners in the same class can differ:

- language-learning ability
- language knowledge
- learning style
- attitude to the language

Is that all?

Can you think of any others?

What do we mean by *mixed ability*?

Differences between learners

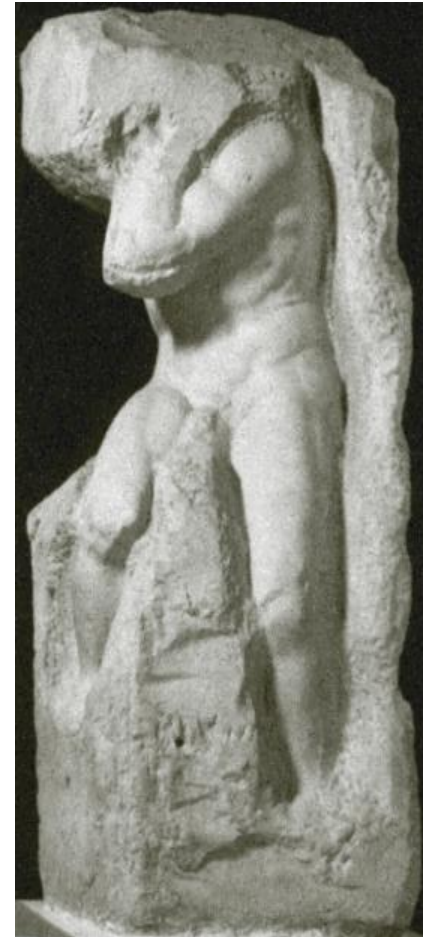
- language-learning ability
- language knowledge
- learning style
- attitude to the language
- cultural background
- mother tongue
- intelligence
- world knowledge
- learning experience
- knowledge of other languages
- age or maturity
- gender
- personality
- confidence
- motivation
- interests
- independence
- self-discipline
- educational level

Ur (1996:304)

What do we mean by *mixed ability*?

“Every block of stone has a statue inside it and it is the task of the sculptor to discover it.”

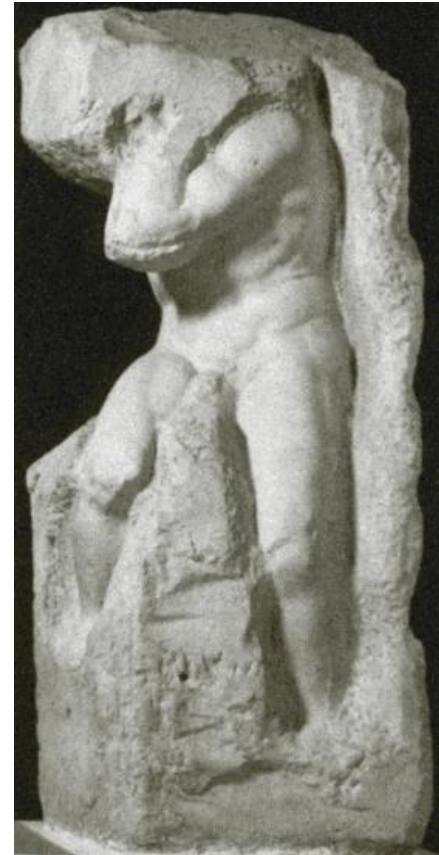
- Michelangelo



In this webinar

Preparing for a class and managing the classroom

- What do we mean by *mixed ability*?
- **Identifying variables**
- Setting appropriate goals
- Differentiated learning




Collecting data

Placement tests only tell one part of the story.
We also need to ask:

- Why are the students learning English?
- What specifically do they need to learn?
- What is their attitude towards learning the language?
- How do they feel about being a member of this group?
- What are their interests outside school?

Collecting data

Questionnaires, surveys and worksheets

Try this 

About me

Create a gap-fill text for students to complete about themselves. See the example below. The content and language level can be tailored to suit your students.

About me

My name is _____ and I'm from _____.

I live in _____, and in my free time I usually

_____. I want to learn English because

_____. I think I know a lot about _____.

I'm good at _____. I can _____. I don't

know much about _____ but I'd like to know more. I can't

_____ but I'd like to learn how.

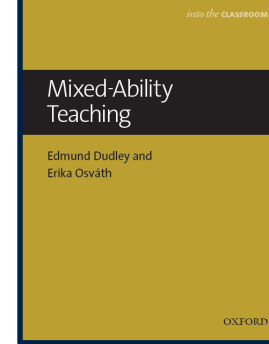
People often say that I'm _____, _____, and _____.

In the future, I'd like to _____ because

_____.

Collecting data

Predict and observe



Try this **Teacher predictions**

Invite a colleague to observe one or more of your classes. Choose two students that you would like to focus on. Write some notes about each student.

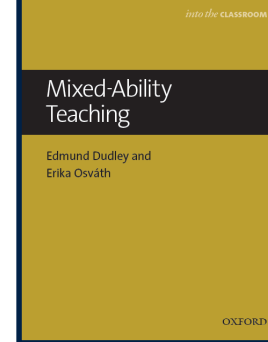
Think about:

- attitude towards learning
- personal traits and characteristics.

Make predictions about how you think each student will respond to the activities you have planned. Write simple sentences, as in Table 1.1.

Collecting data

Predict and observe



Maria	
1	I think she'll talk in L1 to her neighbours during the first activity. Observer's comments:
2	I think she'll be cheerful and enthusiastic about volunteering for the speaking task. Observer's comments:

Daniel	
1	I think he'll copy the answers to the first activity from Luis. Observer's comments:
2	I think he'll be shy and will not volunteer for the speaking task. Observer's comments:

Collecting data

Benefits of *predict and observe*



Trying not to *pigeonhole*

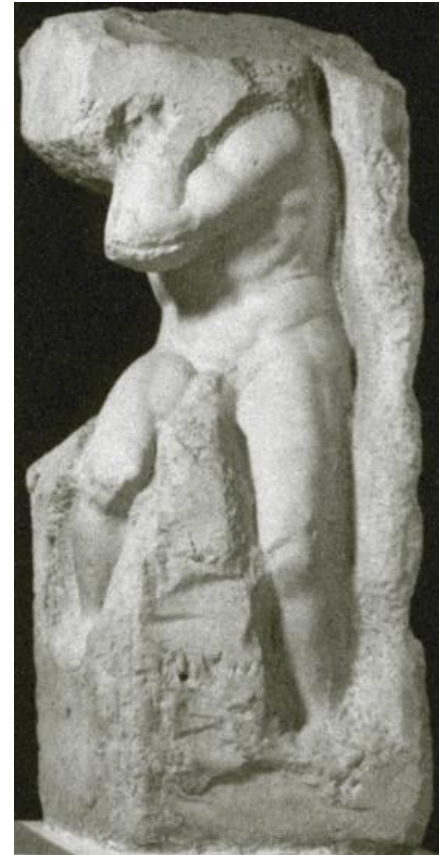


Promoting peer collaboration

In this webinar

Preparing for a class and managing the classroom

- What do we mean by *mixed ability*?
- Identifying variables
- **Setting appropriate goals**
- Differentiated learning



Setting appropriate goals

Class goals and personal goals

	Class goals	Personal goals
Language-learning goals		
Attitude goals		

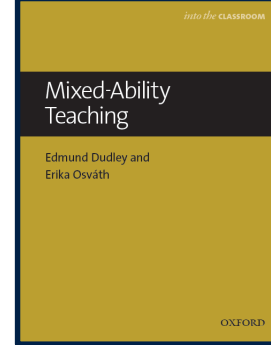
Setting appropriate goals

Class goals and personal goals - examples

Class goals		Personal goals
Language-learning goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a group project assignment for every unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep a notebook for new words and review it after each lesson
Attitude goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer to help others whenever we can 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrive on time for class

Setting appropriate goals

Goal points



Try this

Goal points

Acknowledge the importance of goal setting by allocating students points when individual and group goals have been achieved. Keep a running score of the points awarded. When students have collected an agreed number of points, they can be awarded a top grade. Alternatively, points awarded for goal achievement can be incorporated into formal assessment, for example by including a goal-achievement component in continuous assessment. (See Part 7 for more information on assessing mixed-ability groups.)

Setting appropriate goals

4-question checklist

Can it be done?

Is it clear?

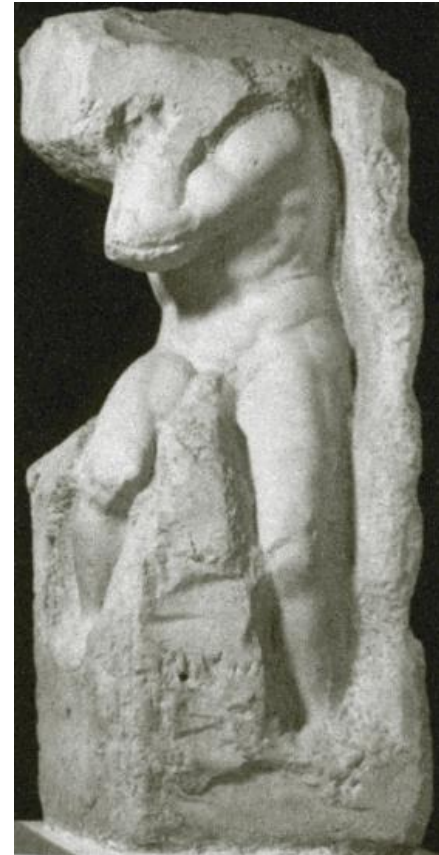
How will it be
achieved?

Is it what the student
wants?

In this webinar

Preparing for a class and managing the classroom

- What do we mean by *mixed ability*?
- Identifying variables
- Setting appropriate goals
- **Differentiated learning**



Differentiated learning

3 ways to differentiate

- Differentiating the input
- Differentiating the process
- Differentiating the output

8 SPEAKING Work in pairs. Read the headline below and think about possible explanations. Use the words below to help you or your own ideas.

drug-dealers in hiding kidnapped murdered
on the run robbers stolen

**25-YEAR-OLD
BUSINESSMAN
DISAPPEARS FROM
HOTEL IN MEXICO,
LEAVING \$100,000 IN
CASH IN SUITCASE**



Differentiated learning

Differentiating the input

Blue group:

What do you think happened?

He might have ...

He could have ...

Green group:

What do you think happened to the
businessman?

...

Yellow group:

Choose the best explanation:

- *He might have left it there to collect later.*

- *He could have been kidnapped by
somebody.*

Differentiated learning

Differentiating the process

Ted Ingram

1. What is his job?
2. Why does he do it?
3. Which *Guinness Record* could he break?
4. What three questions would you ask him?



Differentiated learning

Differentiating the process



Differentiated learning

Differentiating the process



Read the text and find the answers

Differentiated learning

Differentiating the process



Read the text and find the answers



Information gap task in pairs

Differentiated learning

Differentiating the process



Read the text and find the answers



Information gap task in pairs

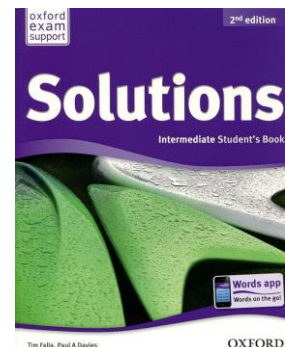


Create your own answers



Ted Ingram, who is 91 years old this year, could enter the Guinness Book of Records as the world's oldest paperboy. He has delivered newspapers in the village of Winterborn Monckton, where he lives, since he was 23. Ted moved to the village in 1938 and got a job on a farm, where he drove a tractor. He started delivering papers in

1942 to earn a bit more money. The 91-year-old, whose wife died twelve years ago, loves his job as it allows him to meet the neighbours and have a chat. During his career, which has lasted nearly seven decades, Ted has delivered over half a million papers. 'I'm not a paperboy – I'm more like a paperman!' joked Ted, who has no plans to retire.



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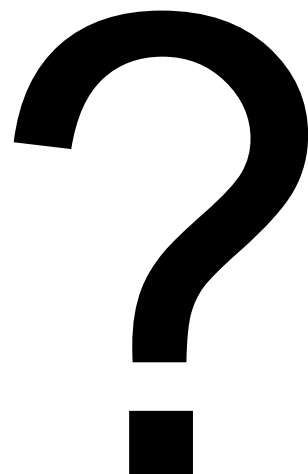
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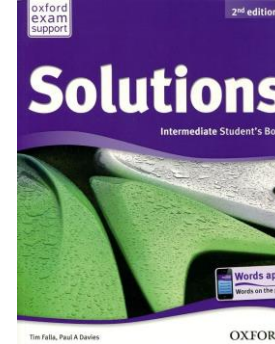
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Differentiated learning

Differentiating the process



Ted Ingram

1. What is his job?

Paperboy/Paperman

2. Why does he do it?

meets his neighbours / has a chat

3. Which *Guinness Record* could he break?

the world's oldest paperboy

4. What three questions would you ask him?

???



Differentiated learning

Differentiating the output

- Provide options
- Allow students to choose a task
- Use open-ended prompts



Using materials flexibly

Compulsory and optional

- Think of two more words to add to each group:
 1. **meat:** chicken, ...
 2. **vegetables:** potato, ...
 3. **fruit:** pear, ...
 4. **drinks:** juice, ...

- Now you have 30 seconds.
→ Write as many different fruits as you can!



Using materials flexibly

Compulsory and optional

What are the strengths of this activity?

- Everyone gets a chance to contribute
- Stronger students do not dominate
- Students need to listen to one other
- Students can learn from one other



Differentiated learning

Differentiating the output



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- **Go to the fruits and vegetables section of a market or supermarket near your home. Choose one of the following tasks:**

a.) Write down as many of the fruits and vegetables as you can in English. You can use your phone to take photographs of the display and finish the task at home.

Differentiated learning

Differentiating the output



OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

- **Go to the fruits and vegetables section of a market or supermarket near your home. Choose one of the following tasks:**

b.) Which fruit/vegetable is

- the most expensive
- the cheapest
- the most delicious
- the most beautiful
- the heaviest
- the longest
- the ugliest
- not from your country

Differentiated learning

Differentiating the output



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UNIVERSITY PRESS

- **Go to the fruits and vegetables section of a market or supermarket near your home. Choose one of the following tasks:**

c.) Interview the person selling the fruits and vegetables – or the people buying them. Use your phone to record the interview. Translate the questions and answers into English.

- Where do you think this is?
- How sure are you (1-5) ?
- Think of **five words** you think will be in the text





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- Work in pairs
- Change the words in **bold**
- Compare your answers

Last weekend, I took the bus from Uncle Mark's house on the coast to Cape Town. It was a **bright**, ¹**bright** day, but the ²**boring** journey into the city was really **boring**.

While I was staying at a ³**busy** hostel in the **busy** city centre, I visited the city's ⁴**old** houses and its **old** buildings and met its ⁵**nice** people. A **nice**, kind man gave me directions to Table Mountain. I took a crowded cable car up the mountain to see the ⁶**fantastic** view of the city. It was really **fantastic**. It was also a very ⁷**quiet** place. It was so **quiet** at the top of the mountain. Then I returned to the city centre and visited a ⁸**beautiful** market and had lunch in a **beautiful** restaurant. I loved the food there – it was really tasty!

Differentiated learning

FAQs

- Doesn't it take loads of time to prepare differentiated activities?
- Does it matter which part of the lesson we use differentiated activities in?
- Won't students feel that differentiation = discrimination?

Mixed-Ability Teaching

Handling materials in the mixed-ability classroom

Edmund Dudley

Tallinn, 6 October 2016

Thank you!

