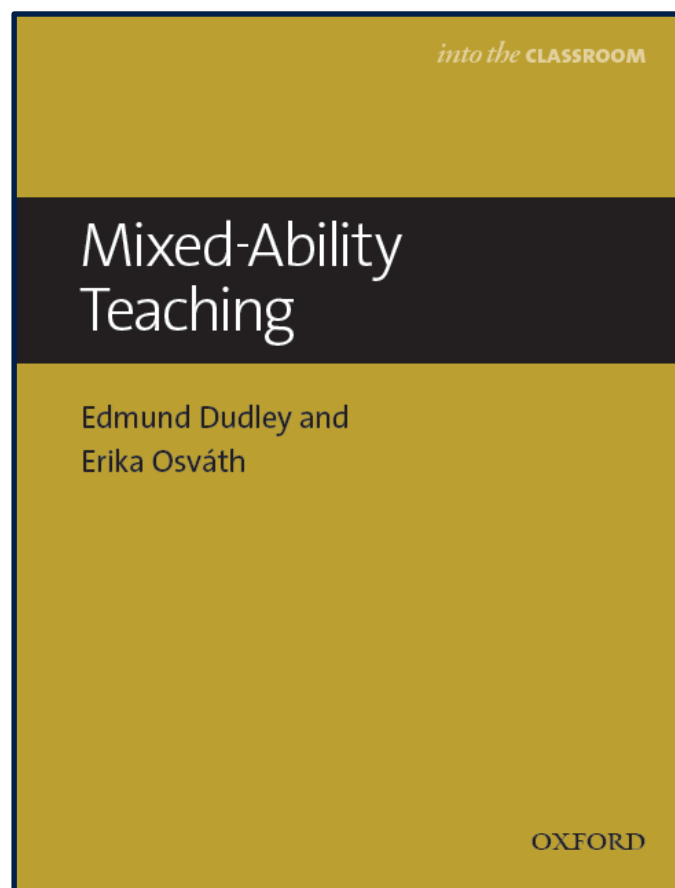


# Engaging All Learners in the Mixed-Ability Classroom

Edmund Dudley

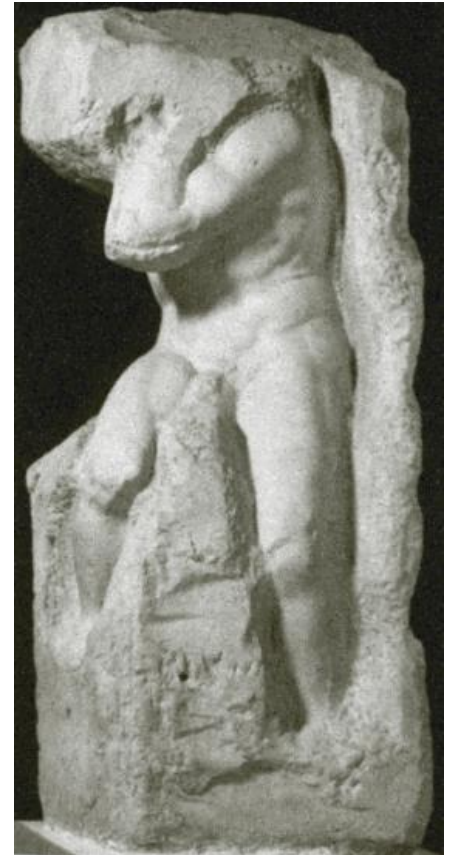
Kraków, 22 November 2016





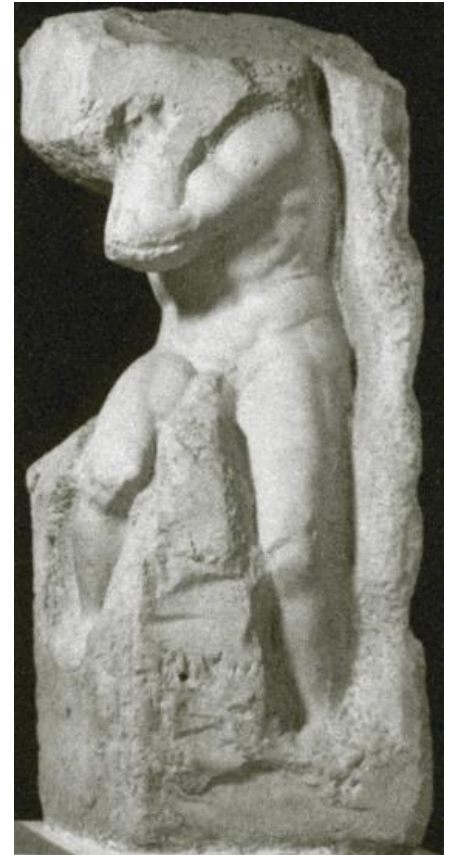
# In this talk

- What do we mean by *mixed ability*?
- Identifying variables and setting goals
- Handling materials and activities
- Approaches to differentiation
- Groups and roles:  
a positive learning environment
- A whole-person approach



# In this talk

- **What do we mean by *mixed ability*?**
- Identifying variables and setting goals
- Handling materials and activities
- Approaches to differentiation
- Groups and roles:  
a positive learning environment
- A whole-person approach



# 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

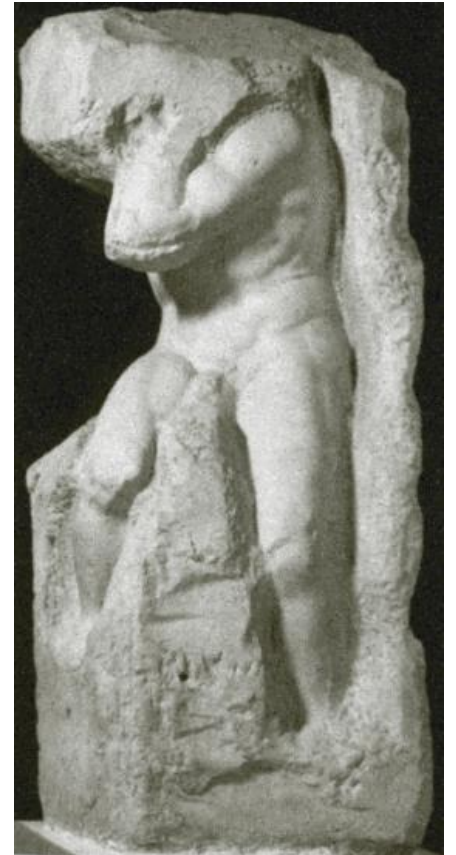
- language-learning ability
- language knowledge
- learning style
- attitude to the language
- cultural background
- mother tongue
- intelligence
- world knowledge
- learning experience
- knowledge of other languages
- age or maturity
- gender
- personality
- confidence
- motivation
- interests
- independence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

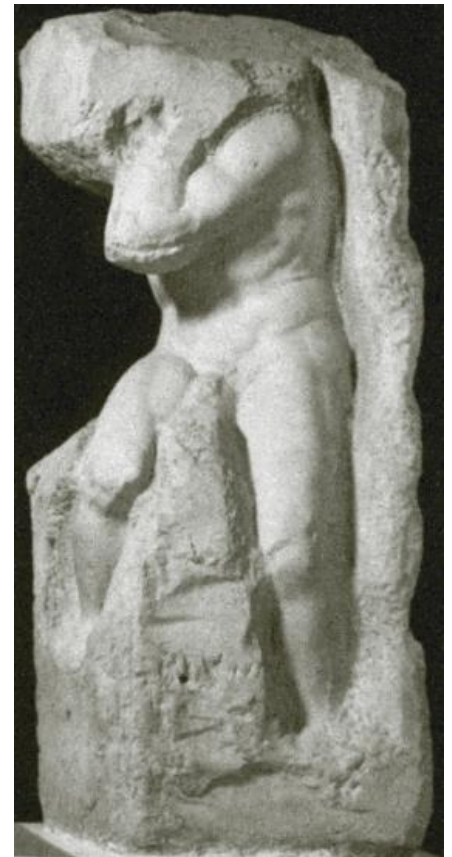




# In this session

## Preparing for a class and managing the classroom

- What do we mean by *mixed ability*?
- **Identifying variables and setting goals**
- Handling materials and activities
- Approaches to differentiation
- Groups and roles:  
a positive learning environment
- A whole-person approach




---

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

\_\_\_\_\_.

into the CLASSROOM

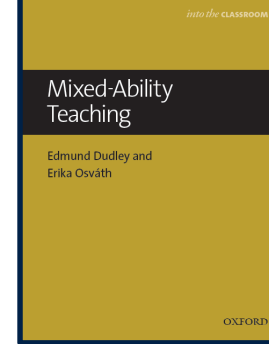
Mixed-Ability  
Teaching

Edmund Dudley and  
Erika Osváth

OXFORD

# 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.

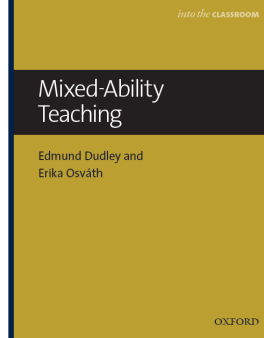
Think about:

- 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

# Setting appropriate goals

## Class goals and personal goals

Class goals		Personal goals
Language-learning goals		
Attitude goals		

# Setting appropriate goals

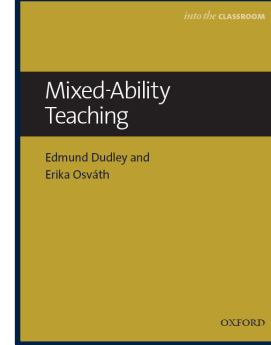
## Class goals and personal goals - examples

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



# Setting appropriate goals

## Goal points



### Try this

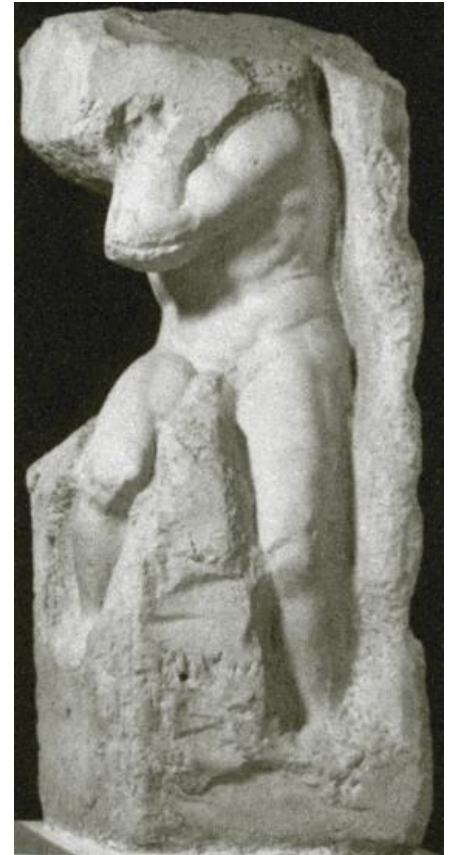
#### Goal points

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.)

# In this session

## Preparing for a class and managing the classroom

- What do we mean by *mixed ability*?
- Identifying variables and setting goals
- **Handling materials and activities**
- Approaches to differentiation
- Groups and roles:  
a positive learning environment
- A whole-person approach



- Where do you think this is?
- How sure are you (1-5)?

1: We have no idea. Let's say...

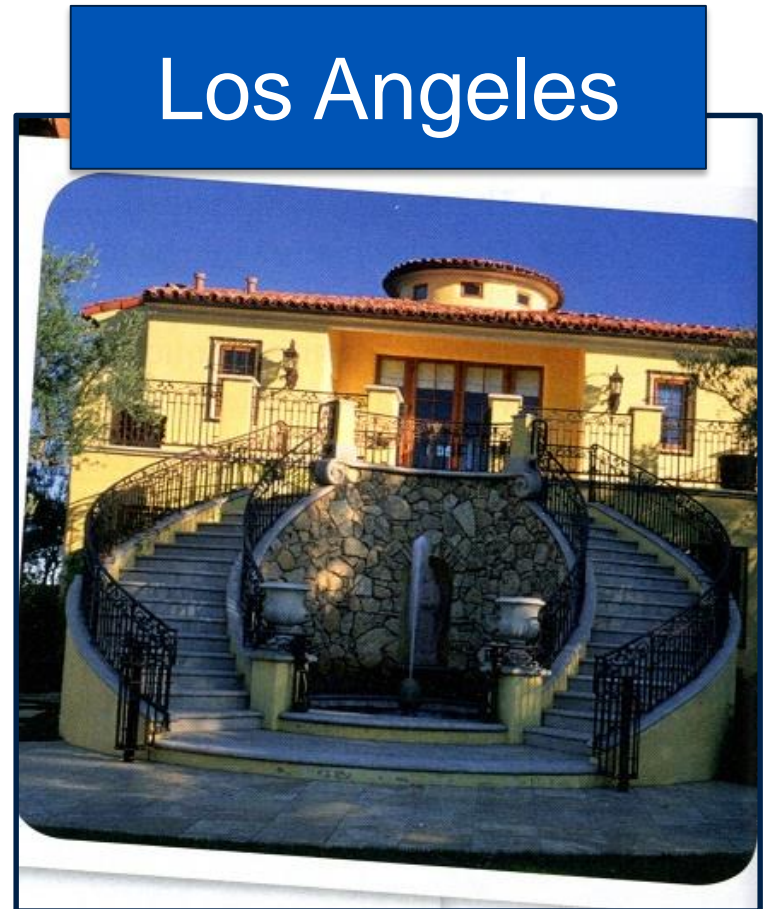
2: Our guess is that it's...

3: It looks a bit like... / It might be...

4: We're pretty sure it's...

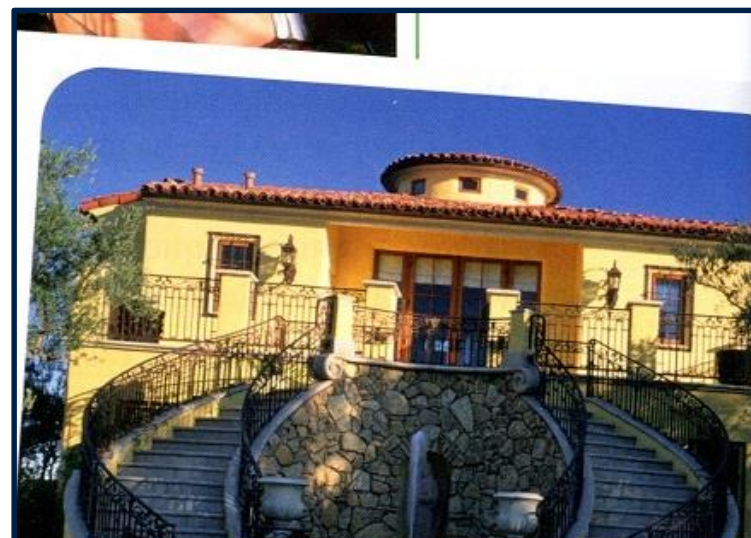
5: That's definitely...

## Los Angeles



Predict the answers:

1. It looks like a traditional Mediterranean \_\_\_\_\_.
2. I love the balcony and look at all the \_\_\_\_\_.
3. These people have got a great \_\_\_\_\_ of LA.



at the moment. He's making a film in London. Name:

Do you like the house on the front of this postcard? It's a **typical** Los Angeles home. It's really big and it looks like a **traditional** Mediterranean villa. I love the **balcony** and look at all the windows. These people have got a great **view** of Los Angeles.





OXFORD  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

- 5 Study the key phrases. Then in your notebook, write five suggestions for your partner.

### KEY PHRASES

Why don't we (jump into the sea)?  
Let's (cycle across Scotland in the holidays).  
Yes! That sounds (exciting). / That's a (good) idea.  
No! It's too (scary). / That sounds boring.

- 6 **SPEAKING** Work in pairs. Take it in turns to make and respond to suggestions.

*Why don't we go to the beach?*

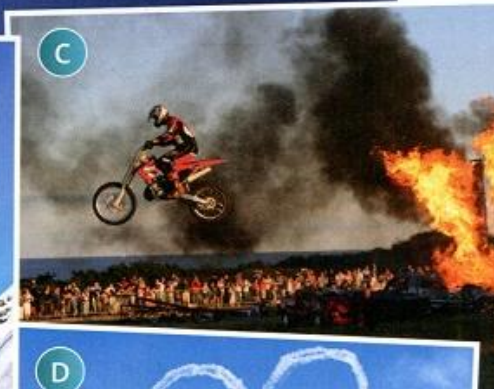
*That's a great idea!*

### FINISHED?

Choose five places and invent adventures there.

*Climb up the Tatra Mountains and ski down them ....*





**5 SPEAKING** Work in pairs. Look at the photos and imagine you saw one of these events. Describe what was happening to your partner. Use the questions to help you.

- 1 What were you doing when you saw the stunt?
- 2 What was the stunt person doing?
- 3 Who was watching?
- 4 What were the crowd doing?

### FINISHED?

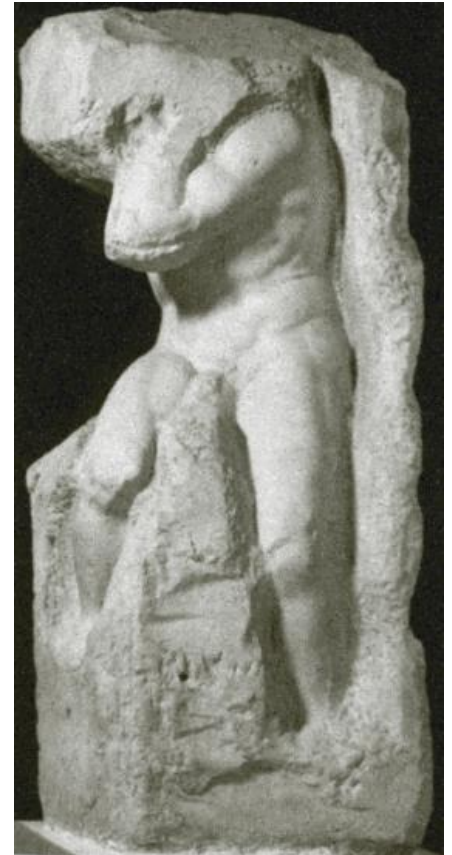
Imagine that you are one of the daredevils in this unit. In your notebook, write the story of one of your stunts.

*I was at Niagara Falls. I was walking across the falls on a tightrope ...*

# In this session

## Preparing for a class and managing the classroom

- What do we mean by *mixed ability*?
- Identifying variables and setting goals
- Handling materials and activities
- **Approaches to differentiation**
- Groups and roles:  
a positive learning environment
- A whole-person approach



# Differentiated learning

## 3 ways to differentiate

---

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



# Differentiated learning

## Differentiating the input



# Differentiated learning

## Differentiating the input

Blue group:

Pick the correct answer from three options provided (A,B or C)

- 1 How long was Laura and Emily's trip?  
A 700 kilometres    B 1,700 kilometres  
C 17,000 kilometres

# Differentiated learning

## Differentiating the input

Green group:

Match the questions and correct answers

- 2 Where were they skiing when Laura fell through the ice?
- 3 How far did they sail to North America?
- 4 What was the problem while they were cycling?

It was too hot.  
4,000 kilometres  
Greenland

# Differentiated learning

## Differentiating the input

Yellow group:

Questions only: Work out the answers yourself without any added help

5 How did they get to Quito?

# Differentiated learning

## Differentiating the process

---

### Hergé



1. When was he born?
2. Which country was he from?
3. Who was his most famous character?
4. How many languages are his books in now?

# Differentiated learning

## Differentiating the process



Guess, research and compare in groups



# Differentiated learning

## Differentiating the process

---





# Differentiated learning

## Differentiating the process

---



Guess, research and compare in groups



Information gap task in pairs





**BORN:** Brussels, Belgium, 1907

**WORKED:** 1927, as a cartoonist for a Belgian newspaper

**MOST FAMOUS CHARACTER:** Tintin (24 books) – about a young journalist and his dog, Snowy



**LIVED:** in Belgium, travelled all over the world

**DIED:** Brussels, Belgium, 3rd March, 1983

**QUALITIES OF HIS BOOKS:** very detailed, exciting, funny characters

**NOW:** Tintin books are in 91 languages, Steven Spielberg has made films of the books.

# Differentiated learning

## Differentiating the process



Guess, research and compare in groups



Information gap task in pairs



Read the text and find the answers

# HERGÉ

— writer and artist

**BORN:** Brussels, Belgium, 1907  
**LIVED:** in Belgium, travelled all over the world  
**DIED:** Brussels, Belgium, 3rd March, 1983  
**WORKED:** 1927, as a cartoonist for a Belgian newspaper  
**MOST FAMOUS CHARACTER:** Tintin (24 books) – about a young journalist and his dog, Snowy  
**QUALITIES OF HIS BOOKS:** very detailed, exciting, funny characters  
**NOW:** Tintin books are in 91 languages, Steven Spielberg has made films of the books.





# Differentiated learning

## Differentiating the process

---

### Hergé



1. When was he born?
2. Which country was he from?
3. Who was his most famous character?
4. How many languages are his books in now?

# Differentiated learning

## Differentiating the output

---

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



# Differentiating materials and activities

You have 30 seconds.

→ Write as many different fruits as you can!

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



OXFORD  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

- **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



OXFORD  
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.

# Differentiated learning

## FAQs

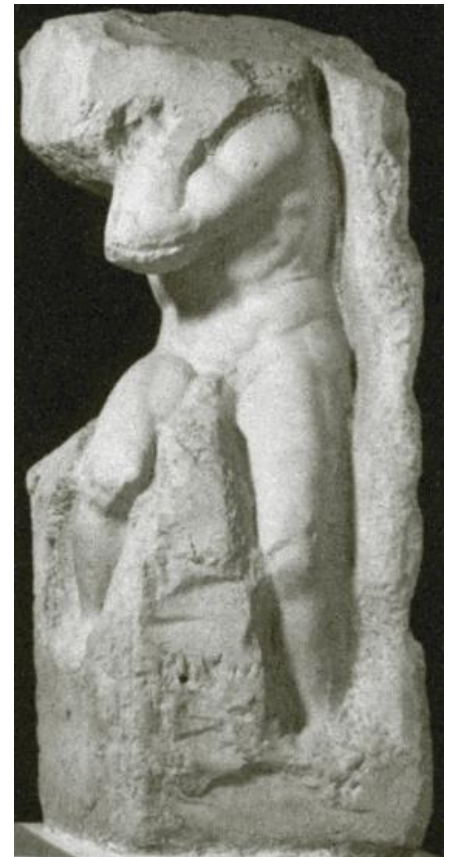
---

- 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?

# In this session

## Preparing for a class and managing the classroom

- What do we mean by *mixed ability*?
- Identifying variables and setting goals
- Handling materials and activities
- Approaches to differentiation
- **Groups and roles:  
a positive learning environment**
- A whole-person approach



# Grouping learners within lessons

What criteria should we use?

Some  
possibilities:

same level together

different levels  
together

choice of topic

at random

# Grouping learners within lessons

What techniques can we use?

---

- Post-it notes
- Grab the end of the string
- Lining up



# Classroom management and classroom roles

- Learner roles
- Teacher roles
- Creating a positive learning environment



# Learner roles

## Day-to-day involvement in...

- ...decision-making
- ...supporting the teacher
- ...providing expertise



# Teacher roles

---

- Facilitating involvement
- Creating options and openings for involvement
- Promoting learning in frontal teaching

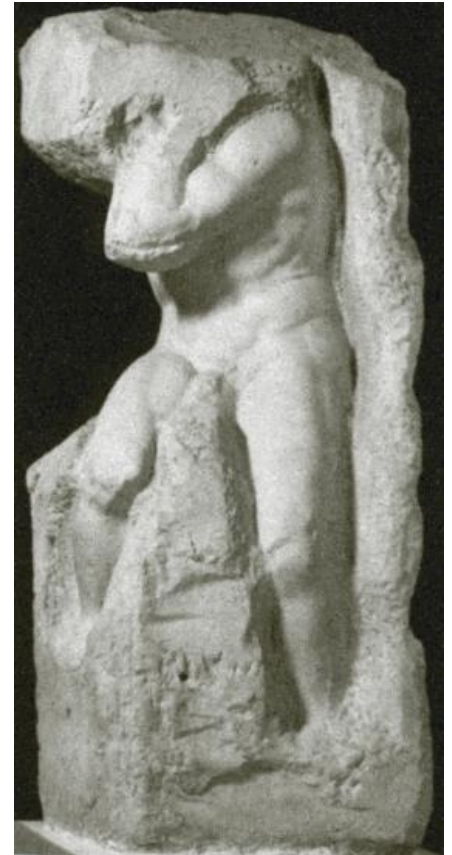




# In this session

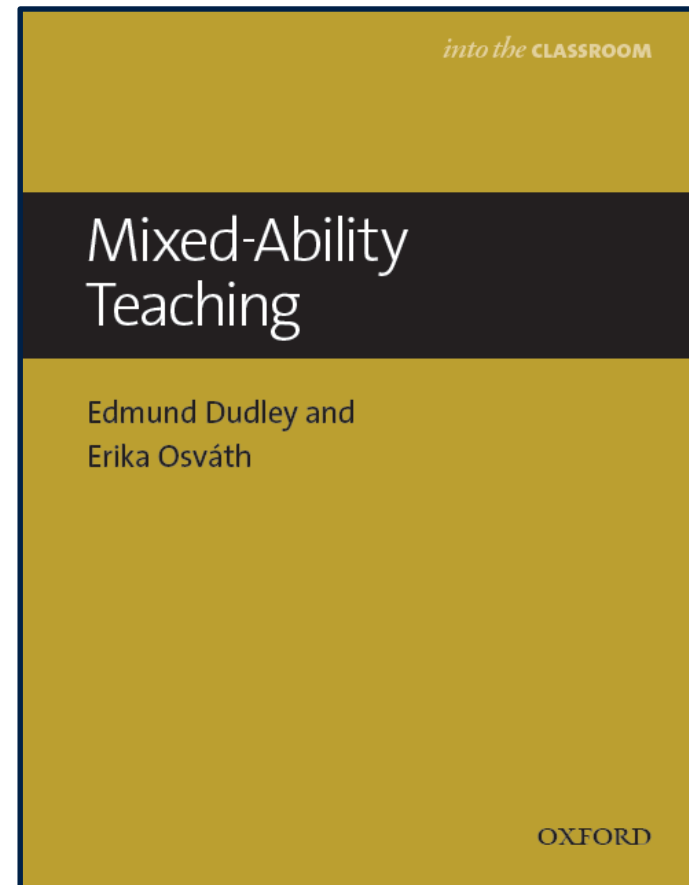
## Preparing for a class and managing the classroom

- What do we mean by *mixed ability*?
- Identifying variables and setting goals
- Handling materials and activities
- Approaches to differentiation
- Groups and roles:  
a positive learning environment
- **A whole-person approach**



# A wider context for learning

“It makes sense to think of the classroom as a miniature version of the world outside, in which success depends not only on gaining knowledge, but also on having social skills, values, and life skills.”



# Social skills

- turn-taking
- team work
- fair play
- respecting others' opinions
- willingness to compromise



→ reward attitudes as well as outcomes

# Life skills

Thinking about:

- success outside school
- life challenges

Focusing on non-cognitive skills:

- not giving up
- being brave
- seeking advice
- getting help



# Using group-work and pair-work

## Mediation task

**6 SPEAKING** Work in pairs. Choose an injury from exercise 5 or an idea of your own. Invent a dialogue. Change the words in **blue** in the model dialogue.

- Student A – Nurse: only speaks **English**
- Student B – Tourist: only speaks **L1**
- Student C – Friend: translates between **English and L1**

# Focusing on non-linguistic skills

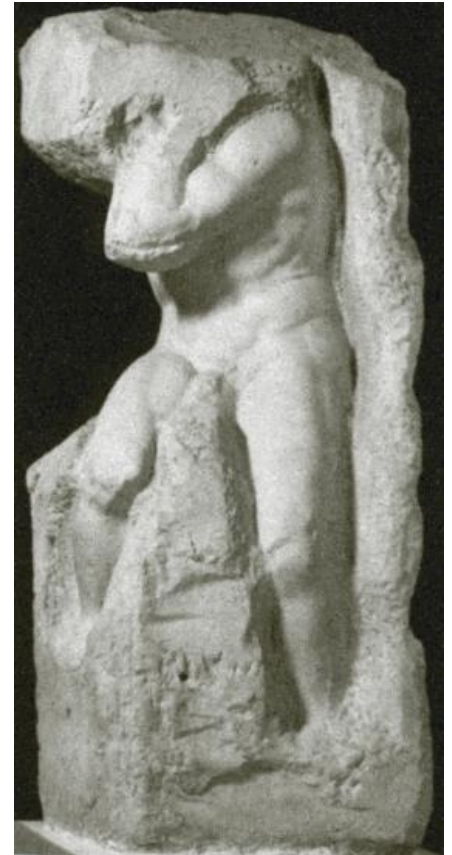




## In this session

### Preparing for a class and managing the classroom

- What do we mean by *mixed ability*?
- Identifying variables and setting goals
- Handling materials and activities
- Approaches to differentiation
- Groups and roles:  
a positive learning environment
- A whole-person approach





# Engaging All Learners in the Mixed-Ability Classroom

Edmund Dudley

Kraków, 22 November 2016

**[legyened.edublogs.org](http://legyened.edublogs.org)**