

# Looking at Differentiation in a Different Way

Edmund Dudley  
24 October 2019



## In this talk

- adapting the materials we use
- exploring a variety of working modes
- shaping attitudes and beliefs

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- **adapting the materials we use**
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# Working with mixed-ability groups

There are no perfect materials



this text will be

- too challenging for some
- not challenging enough for others
- interesting for some
- boring for others

What can be done?

## FEEL THE FEAR

I hate spiders. A lot of people dislike spiders, but I'm really scared of them. If there's a spider in a room, I won't go in. I have stayed at friends' houses three times because there were spiders in our house. It sounds ridiculous, but if you haven't got a phobia, you won't understand. I have got a phobia – arachnophobia.

Two months ago, I went with my mum to see a specialist called Mark Tanner. Mark has helped a lot of patients with phobias. Some patients had 'normal' phobias, like being frightened of dogs, or snakes, or the dark. Some patients had really weird ones, like phobias of bananas, or eating in public. He's helped a girl with a phobia of school as well. She hasn't been at school this year!

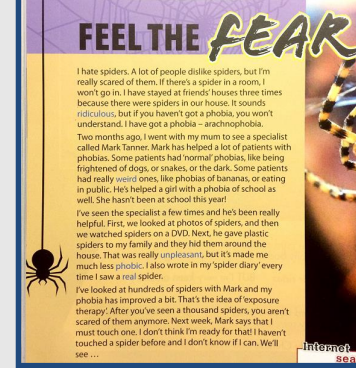
I've seen the specialist a few times and he's been really helpful. First, we looked at photos of spiders, and then we watched spiders on a DVD. Next, he gave plastic spiders to my family and they hid them around the house. That was really unpleasant, but it's made me much less phobic. I also wrote in my 'spider diary' every time I saw a real spider.

I've looked at hundreds of spiders with Mark and my phobia has improved a bit. That's the idea of 'exposure therapy'. After you've seen a thousand spiders, you aren't scared of them anymore. Next week, Mark says that I must touch one. I don't think I'm ready for that! I haven't touched a spider before and I don't know if I can. We'll see ...

Internet search

# Differentiating the input

## Jigsaw reading / peer dictation



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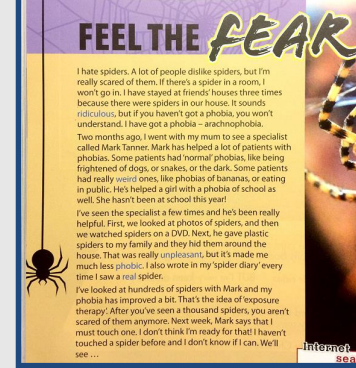
- take a short extract from a SB reading text

I hate spiders. A lot of people dislike spiders, but I'm really scared of them. If there's a spider in a room, I won't go in. I have stayed at friends' houses three times because there were spiders in our house. It sounds ridiculous, but if you haven't got a phobia, you won't understand. I have got a phobia – arachnophobia.

- create three gapped versions of the text (e.g. red, green, blue)

# Differentiating the input

## Jigsaw reading / peer dictation



I hate spiders. A lot of \_\_\_\_\_ dislike spiders, but I'm really scared \_\_\_\_\_ them. If there's a spider in \_\_\_\_\_ room, I won't go in. I \_\_\_\_\_ stayed at a friend's houses three \_\_\_\_\_ because there were spiders in our \_\_\_\_\_. It sounds ridiculous, but if you \_\_\_\_\_ got a phobia, you won't understand. \_\_\_\_\_ have got a phobia – arachnophobia.

Every 7th word missing

I hate spiders. A lot of people dislike \_\_\_\_\_, but I'm really scared of them. If there's \_\_\_\_\_ spider in the room, I won't go in. \_\_\_\_\_ have stayed at a friend's houses three times \_\_\_\_\_ there were spiders in our house. It sounds \_\_\_\_\_, but if you haven't got a phobia, you \_\_\_\_\_ understand. I have got a phobia – arachnophobia.

Every 9th word missing

I hate spiders. A lot of people dislike spiders, but \_\_\_\_\_ really scared of them. If there's a spider in the \_\_\_\_\_, I won't go in. I have stayed at a friend's \_\_\_\_\_ three times because there were spiders in our house. It \_\_\_\_\_ ridiculous, but if you haven't got a phobia, you won't \_\_\_\_\_. I have got a phobia – arachnophobia.

Every 11th word missing

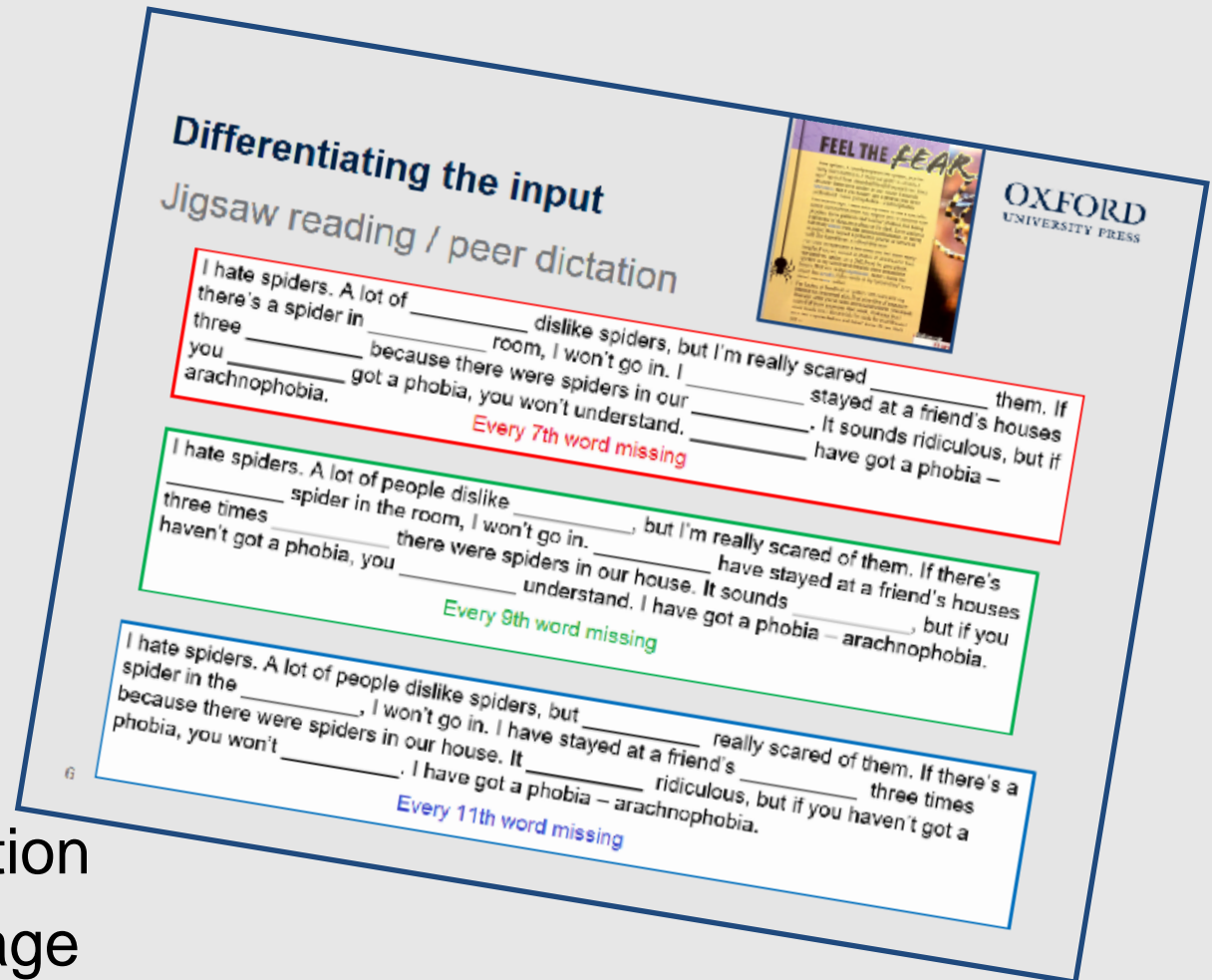
# Pros and cons

## Pros

- interactive
- co-operative
- multi-skilled

## Cons

- requires preparation
- not easy to manage
- not a realistic option to prepare for each class

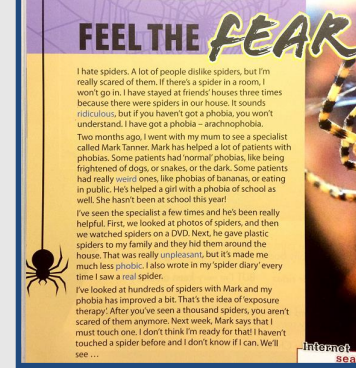




# Differentiating the process

## Instructions with options

- Look at the task instructions
- Could we add further options in the instructions to make the task
  - *more* challenging?
  - *less* challenging?



**5 SPEAKING** Work in pairs. Ask and answer the questions.

- 1 What do you think of spiders and insects?
- 2 Are there any animals you're afraid of?  
Which ones?
- 3 Are you scared of anything that isn't real?  
What?



# Differentiating the process

## Instructions with options

- less challenging: List or draw five animals. Your partner guesses which one you are afraid of

- standard prompts →

**5 SPEAKING** Work in pairs. Ask and answer the questions.

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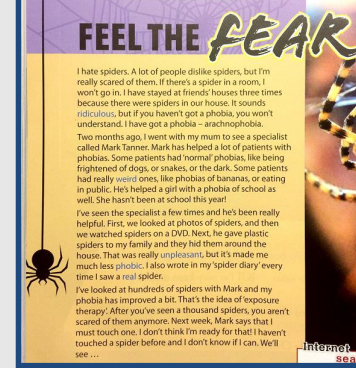
- more challenging: Imagine you are afraid of kittens. Explain why!



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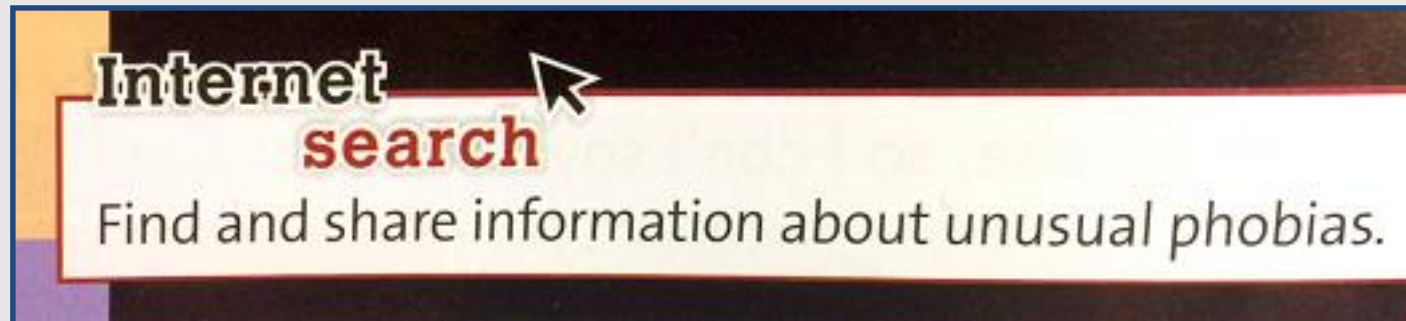
# Differentiating the output

## Open-ended options



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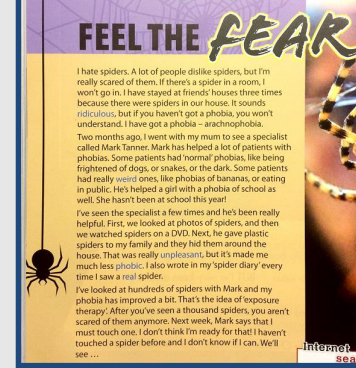
Tasks with *open-ended* prompts work well:



Are there any ways to make this task more accessible?

# Differentiating the output

Ways to make it more accessible

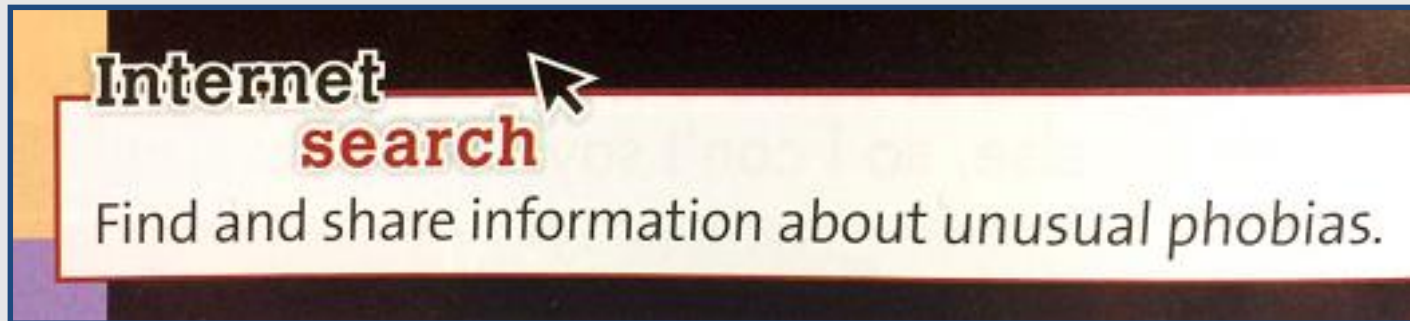


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give the option of  
pair work

use *Simple English*  
wikipedia

find L1 web pages



let sts use L1 to  
plan

do project work

encourage peer  
teaching

# Simple English Wikipedia

[simple.wikipedia.org](http://simple.wikipedia.org)



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## List of phobias (selected)

- **Bibliophobia** - fear of [redacted]
- **Ailurophobia** - fear of [redacted]
- **Ephebiphobia** - fear of [redacted]
- **Anatidaephobia** - fear that a [redacted], somewhere, is watching you
- **Hippopotomonstrosesquipedaliophobia** - fear of long [redacted]

## In this talk

- adapting the materials we use
- **exploring a variety of working modes**
- shaping attitudes and beliefs

# Exploring a variety of working modes

## Some simple techniques

- recognising differences between individuals
- pair work and group work
- giving students more of a say
- encouraging a spirit of enquiry

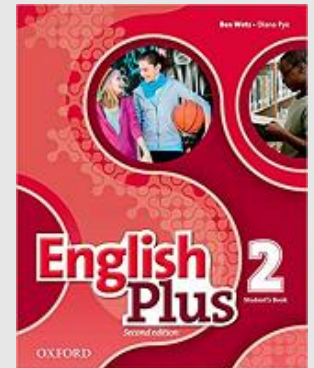


# Recognising differences between individuals

Time limits and word limits

## A TASK

Write a short text for a project about an author you know about. Use the notes on Hergé or details about another writer you admire.



Is it always important to have a word limit for writing tasks?

Different students work at different speeds.

→ Give *time limits* for writing tasks instead of *word limits*.

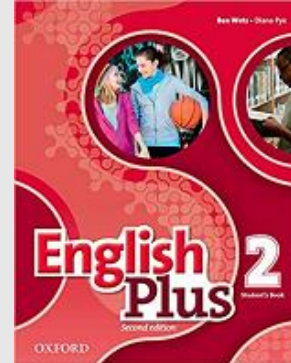
# Pair work and group work

Put different skills to the test

Students have different skills and strengths, e.g.

- vocabulary skills
- observation skills

When working with mixed pairs, do activities that exploit these differences



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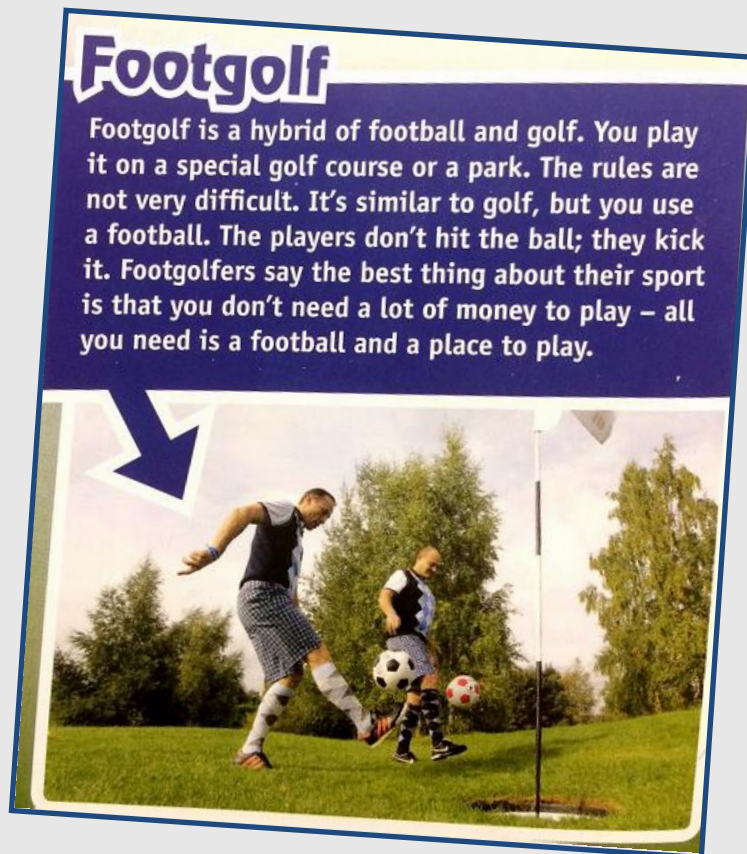




# Pair work and group work

## Collaborative work

Bring in other skills, such as artwork and presentation skills



**2** Invent a new hybrid sport. Follow the steps in the project checklist.

### PROJECT CHECKLIST

1 Choose two sports in the box.

cycling football basketball  
tennis swimming

2 Think of a name for your new hybrid sport.

3 Write about your sport. Include:

- the name of the sport
- which two sports it is a hybrid of
- what you need
- where you play it
- rules: what you can and can't do
- why you think it's a great sport

4 Draw a picture of your sport or use a computer to make one.

5 Present your new hybrid sport to your class.

6 Collect all the ideas for the new hybrid sports and make a class poster.





# Giving students more of a say

A less linear approach

When doing exercises in the SB or WB:

give students choices about:

- which exercise they do
- how many items they do
- the sequence followed when checking answers

**7 Write about your experiences. Use the affirmative or negative form of the verbs.**

- 1 ... (live) in another city when I was younger.
- 2 ... (have) different colour hair when I was a baby.
- 3 ... (like) sweets when I was young.
- 4 ... (go) to another country last year.
- 5 ... (see) a good film last month.
- 6 ... (watch) sport on TV last night.
- 7 ... (play) video games last weekend.
- 8 ... (visit) my grandparents in January.
- 9 ... (eat) soup yesterday.



# Giving students more of a say

Speak, pass, or nominate

After pair work, give students the option of *not* speaking; instead, they can choose to ***pass*** or ***nominate*** their partner

- builds trust
- is face-saving
- increases confidence
- works well try it and see for yourself!

**8**  **USE IT!** Work in pairs. Compare your sentences in exercise 7.

*I lived in another city when I was younger.*

*Me, too! I lived in Paris.*

*Really? I didn't. I lived here.*

## Encouraging a spirit of enquiry

Helping students to speculate

*Fear of being wrong*

Students are often reluctant to speculate

→ Praise guesses as well as correct answers

Give students useful language:

*I have no idea but I'll say...*

*It could be...*

*I think it's...*

*I'm pretty sure it's...*

*I know this one, it's...*





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- **shaping attitudes and beliefs**

# Shaping attitudes and beliefs

Teachers have an impact

Don't think of differentiation as a 'cure' for some kind of 'problem'.

There is nothing *wrong* with mixed groups.

Over time, students will prosper or struggle partly in response to the feedback they get from us.



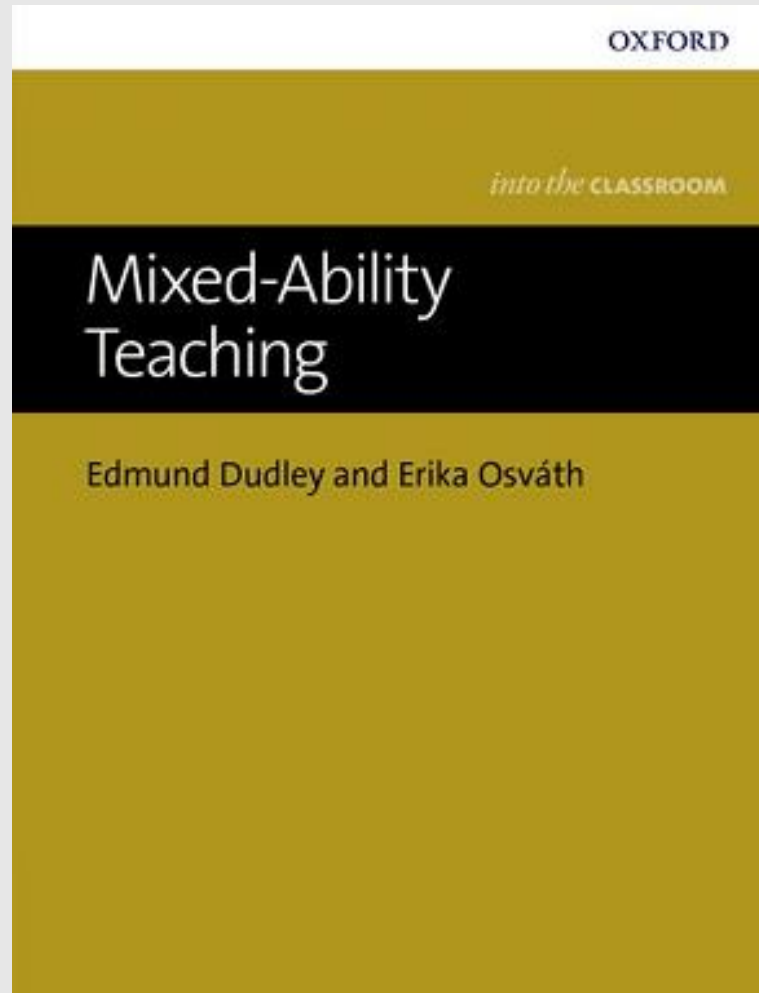
# Shaping attitudes and beliefs

A checklist for modelling helpful attitudes

Teachers should:

- a [ ] that students are heterogeneous
- look beyond [ ] when appraising students
- reinforce effective h [ ]
- be a role model for positive a [ ] and beliefs
- be a guide and a w [ ]
- give the students – and themselves – t [ ] to grow better

For further practical ideas...





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Slides here:

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