

# ***ICRI-HASS CONFERENCE 2021***

## **ELT in a Multilingual Country: Is Differentiated Instruction the Way forward?**

NUR EHSAN MOHD SAID  
Faculty of Education  
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

### *Structure of Presentation*

• What is differentiated

instruction?

• Why do L1/EFL teachers

need to differentiate?

• Previous study

• Ongoing project



Image source: <https://populationeducation.org/differentiation-three-population-ed-lessons-for-all-learners/>

## *Suggestion for teaching differentiation is not new*

Washburne (1953: 139): the assessment system treats learners as if “all children could learn the same things at the same chronological age if they tried hard enough”

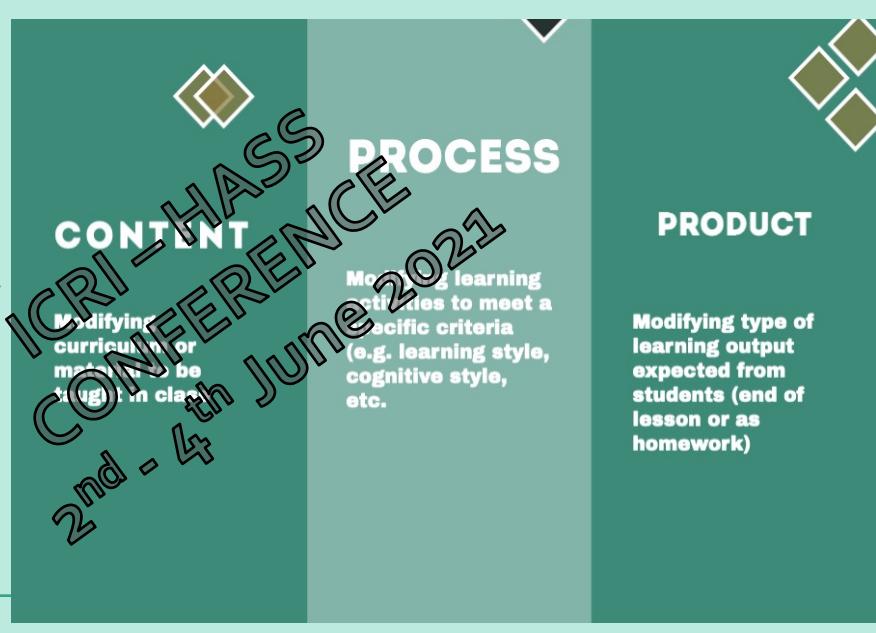
“It is generally and not unreasonably regarded as the sign of a good teacher that he should be able to differentiate between the abilities of his respective pupils and to know their natural bent. The gifts of nature are infinite in their variety, and mind differs from mind almost as much as body from body” (Quintilian, 95 CE, trans. Butler, 1922: 265)

## *Recurring general principles to be adopted for teaching differentiation in a single classroom*

1. focus on important ideas and skills in the respective content area (Rock, Gregg, Ellis & Gable, 2008; Tieso, 2003; Tomlinson, 1999)
2. modify learning content, process, and products to match students' needs (Gelder, 2012; Piggot, 2002; Subban, 2006; Tomlinson, 1999)
3. ensure space to respond to individual students' differences to help all students experience success (Chick & Hong, 2012; Pham, 2012; Rock, Gregg, Ellis & Gable, 2008; Tieso, 2003; Tomlinson, 1999)
4. allow flexible groupings (Ernst & Ernst, 2005)
5. provide a student-oriented environment where students are meaningfully challenged (Ernst & Ernst, 2005; Subban, 2006)
6. employ formative assessment by integrating assessment and instruction to allow for adjustments in instruction (Ernst & Ernst, 2005)
7. cater for students' prior knowledge, critical thinking, and preferred styles of expression (Rock, Gregg, Ellis & Gable, 2008; Tieso, 2003; Tomlinson, 1999)

## *Definition*

*Tomlinson (1999): a set of instructional modifications at three levels: content, process, and product*



## Selected Literature

### Fields of Study

Technical	Language	Special needs and gifted education
1) Mathematics (Butler & Lowe, 2013; Chamberlin & Powers, 2010; Tieso, 2005) 2) Science (Piggott, 2002) 3) Metacognitive thinking and classroom engagement (McQuarrie et al., 2008)	1) Reading fluency and comprehension (Fisher & Frey, 2013; Reis et al., 2011; Valiandes, 2015) 2) General English proficiency (Alavanja & Sadeghi, 2013; Lewis & Batts, 2005) 3) Language attitude - Turkish (Karadag & Yasar, 2010); ESL (Siti & Nur-Ehsan, 2019) 3) Learning motivation - Arabic (Najibah et al., 2014)	1) Special education (Abodey & Ansah, 2017; Pierangelo & Giuliani, 2008) 2) Gifted learner programme (Hamidah et al., 2011; Mohd-Hasrul et al., 2015; Mohd-Hasrul et al., 2017; Munro, 2012)

## Problems with teaching to the middle

Teachers attempt to find a middle point and focus on learners with middle academic ability mainly through whole-class instruction (Bondie, Dahnke, & Johnson, 2015).

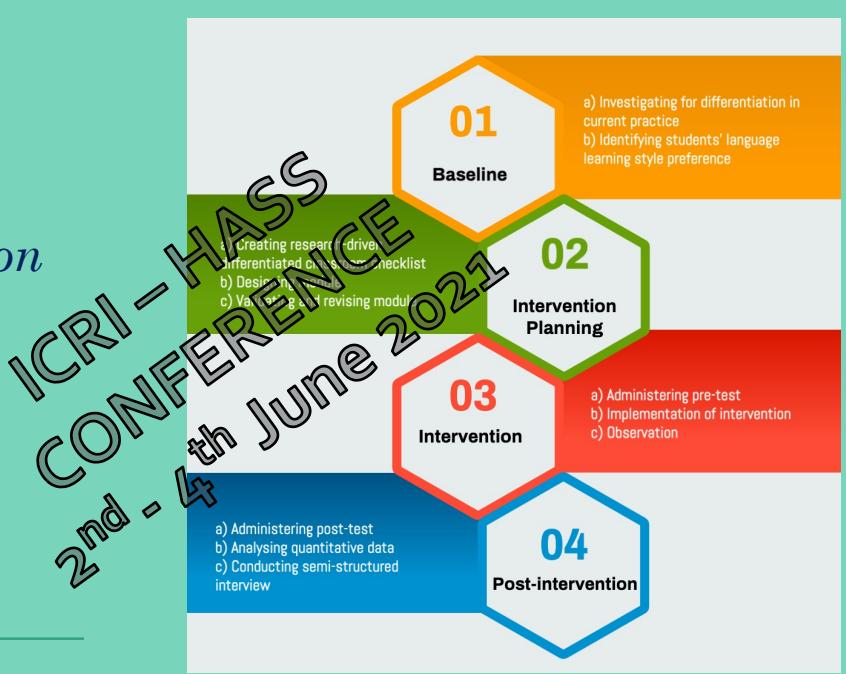
Some challenges to differentiate teaching:

- Time-consuming
- Lack of training

# Why differentiate in ESL classrooms?



## Preparation, Data Collection and Data Analysis



# Results

## QUAN DATA

- Student-participants scored significantly higher in the post-test ( $M=114.62$ ,  $SD=10.00$ ) than the pre-test ( $M=108.38$ ,  $SD=10.62$ )
  - Null hypothesis that there was no difference is rejected ( $t(35) = 4.581$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).
  - Cohen's  $d = 0.89$
- $\beta$  reaction in classroom
  - Increase in learner autonomy
- acknowledgment of differing learning tasks

## Textbook Analysis: Malaysian Curriculum

## Comparative Analysis of English Textbooks

### PULSE 2 - Current Textbook

55% target culture  
21% other cultures  
21% source culture  
(Hajar & Ali, 2020)

### Previous Textbook (pre-2017)

12% target culture  
21% other culture  
67% source culture  
(Hajar & Ali, 2020)

Mohd Sallehah (2021): PULSE 2 - difficulty in mapping content to students' proficiency; inaccessible multimedia components; difficult foreign content

Balanced cultural content (Dewi, 2021)

#### Advantages

- Good students' engagement (Nurul-Ain & Azlina, 2019)
- Various ELT strategies possible especially speaking activities
- Adequately challenging vocabulary lesson (Abdul-Hakim et al., 2018)

#### Disadvantages

- Limited cultural relevance (Nurul-Ain & Azlina, 2019)
- Negative effect on reading comprehension and recall (Indhira & Raja, 2021)
- Little synchronisation between textbook content and national curriculum (Abdul-Hakim et al., 2018)

# Ongoing Project



Differentiated ESL Module for  
learners from non-urban areas



English culture  
Increase affective  
component



Local cultures  
Acknowledge identity  
Avoid threat to national  
language  
UNESCO



Other cultures  
Inculcate appreciation  
for other groups of  
people

Thank you

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For list of references, please contact:  
[nurehsan@ukm.edu.my](mailto:nurehsan@ukm.edu.my)