

RESOURCE

EFFECTIVE DIFFERENTIATION:

RESOURCE PACK 1



COMPLEXITY OF MATERIALS/TASKS

One consideration is of the texts and topics you are asking learners to deal with.

Topics

- Is the topic sufficiently complex to allow for subtle/ nuanced discussion?
- Are learners expected to research topics for themselves and evaluate the evidence/ arguments they find?

Texts

- How challenging is the text in terms of its content?
- How challenging is the text in terms of its style?
- Are learners expected to deal with more than one text?
- Who selects the texts that learners are exposed to?

Complexity of Task

- What are the steps that must be completed?
- How far are these steps dictated by the teacher/ devised by the learner?

Complexity of language demands

- What are the language demands of the task?
- Does it require understanding of unfamiliar language?
- Does it require the development/ acquisition of a new register?

ACTIVITY

Purpose: To consider the complexity of tasks that you set

Activity instructions:

- For a task that you currently set at GCSE, identify the levels of complexity in the input, process and output.
- How could you increase the complexity demanded in one or more of these elements?

RANGE

Over a period of time, students need to become confident in working across a range of text types and registers.

Text Types

Generally speaking, learners find non-chronological text types more challenging than chronological ones because they require information to be organised and structured before the writing starts.

Within the different categories of non-chronological text types, there are sub-types which may be more or less demanding, for example, factorial explanation is more challenging than a sequential one. Similarly, a simultaneous comparison is more challenging than a sequential one.

Introducing less familiar text types, analysing how they are put together and then recreating the form will add challenge in task setting.

ACTIVITY

PURPOSE: To consider opportunities for developing the independence of 'more able' or 'less able' learners in your classroom

Self-evaluate...

How much opportunity do your students have to:

1. Make choices about

- Texts
- Topics
- Task design – what question to answer
- Text type/ audience/ purpose/ style

2. Identify and address their own needs

- What can I do?
- What do I need help with?

3. Reflect on choices

- How well did that work?
- How could it have been better?
- How might I do it differently next time?

How could you increase their opportunities to learn independently?

ENGLISH LANGUAGE – STRETCHING STUDENTS THROUGH WRITING

The advice below was given by an English expert who read and assessed a sample of GCSE English Language scripts in 2016:

Key messages for writing effectively

Planning/outlining

Developing candidates' ability to spend five minutes productively on preparation for writing is likely to bear fruit in gaining a better global sense of the text before they begin writing. Teaching candidates how to jot down their possible content ideas, and consider the overall structure and sequence of their writing is helpful: various strategies such as spider diagrams, flow diagrams, notes, or linear sequencing may be helpful. The key thing here is that candidates know there are two things they need to think about: 1) the content and ideas of their text and 2) the overall structure and organisation of their text. The point of this activity is not so much to prepare a detailed outline plan of the text but to go through the thinking processes which help the writer think about the text as a whole and their authorial intentions before they start.

Task representation

It was evident that some students had an acronym to help them think about the requirements of the writing task, but it was less evident that they were using this in their writing. It is important that candidates develop the capacity to move beyond the identification stage to thinking about what that means: if the form is a newspaper article, what are the genre characteristics of a newspaper article? If the purpose is to provide information, what are the language features of an instructional text? If the audience is non-experts, how might the writing need to be adapted to make it accessible to this audience?

Reviewing during writing

Encourage candidates to pause regularly as they write to re-read what they have written and to remind themselves of their intentions in terms of form, purpose and audience. Often re-reading a paragraph helps generate new ideas for the next but it also helps keep the sense of the text as a whole in the writer's mind. Teach candidates how to 'read aloud in their heads': this helps us to hear our text and be the reader of our own writing. Encourage candidates to pause before they get to the end of the writing and think just for a moment about how to bring the writing to an effective ending.

Managing examination time

Many candidates did not attempt the writing task at all, or did not finish it, so one clear implication is supporting these candidates in how to manage time in an examination.

Re-reading sentences whilst writing

Weaker candidates have a tendency to write long, rambling sentences which managed information poorly. It is likely that these writers 'just write' and may need support with strategies that help them think a little



more about what they are writing and how best to say it. It may help these writers to learn how to orally rehearse sentences or parts of sentences in their head before they write them down. They would also benefit from looking at examples of poorly-managed, overlong sentences and playing with how to rewrite them to make them more effective.

Using some short sentences

The lack of text rhythm and a tendency towards rather monotonous structures was another feature of responses from weaker candidates. Look at examples of short sentences in different texts and discuss their effect, both on how the text sounds when read aloud and the impact on meaning. It is important to help these candidates understand that it is not just a case of having some short sentences, but making good choices as a writer about how to draw attention to an idea, description, point or so on by giving it the weight of a short sentence.

Avoiding repetition of similar structures in a text, such as I think/I believe

Using some authentic texts as models, look at alternative ways of expressing a personal stance, including alternative verbs to think and believe, and adverbial positioning, such as in my opinion, clearly, without doubt and so on. Look also at how the I think start point of a sentence can often be omitted but still retain a sense of a personal perspective.

Using paragraphs more effectively

Most candidates in general have understood well that paragraphs need to be organised thematically, and have also learned some standard adverbials which support the connection of ideas across a text. Their writing would be strengthened by a more sophisticated use of paragraphing, particularly using thematic organisation to build argument sequentially, rather than organising the text essentially around 'for' or 'against' paragraphs, or the bullet point prompts of the question. One element of this is developing a broader repertoire of ways to link ideas across paragraphs. This is not simply through a better use of a more varied range of adverbials, but also through: lexical connections, such as the use of repetition, synonyms or antonyms to link ideas in two paragraphs; the use of This to refer back to the previous argument; and stronger topic sentences (or thesis statements) in paragraphs to flag the line of argument.

Using clause structures which support the expression of arguments

The most basic way to express an argument is through simple subordination such as because, if and unless. However, it might be helpful to introduce high-attaining writers to some of the clause patterns which allow arguments or points of view to be expressed in a more sophisticated way through parallel structures such as: not only... but also; neither... nor; either... or; if... then; although...nevertheless.

Being creative in approaching the task

In the sample of scripts analysed, it was only the top candidates who took a different approach to the writing task, and even at the top grade there were few examples of this. Encourage candidates to feel able to take on different character roles to bring a different perspective to the task, or to develop an alternative viewpoint from the one implied by the question.



Avoiding overlong paragraphs

The points made above in relation to developing paragraphing also have resonance at a higher level, but as a consequence of candidates' ability to generate more ideas and write a greater length. Using some authentic texts presented as unparagraphed prose, experiment with different ways of paragraphing, including looking at the effect of the occasional short paragraph, and discussing the impact of different choices for subdividing by theme. Support these writers in understanding that theme can be an over-arching theme or a sub-theme, and that sometimes 'big ideas' need breaking down into smaller ideas to develop an effective argument.

Links could also be made here with using the pre-writing preparation stage to think about the number of ideas and sequencing in a more strategic way.

ACTIVITY

Purpose: To think about what tips you need to give your high ability students about the writing tasks.

Using the information from the key messages above about stretching students through writing, make a list of key tips?

These could include:

- An approximate number of words they need aim to write- 450-600?
- The need to plan- 10 minutes, proofread- 5 minutes?
- The importance of the start and finish?

QUALITY QUESTIONING

- Teacher: We know that Capulet is furious with Juliet in Act 3, Sc 5. Remind the class why this is and why it is important when we are thinking about context.
- Student: Juliet is disobeying him and an Elizabethan father (particularly a noble one) would not allow his daughter (who had few rights) to go against his wishes.
- Teacher: What does the imagery that he uses in this scene suggest about his feelings towards his daughter?
- Student: He is disgusted by her ('baggage', 'tallow face'); his pride has been hurt ('Doth she not give us thanks?
Is she not proud? doth she not count her blest...?'); he sees her as little more than a possession ('You be mine, I'll give you to my friend;/And you be not, hang, beg, starve, die in the streets,/For, by my soul, I'll ne'er acknowledge thee').

ACTIVITY

Purpose: Review the quality question bullets

- Look at the above discussion around Romeo and Juliet.
- How effective is this questioning for the most able students?
- Take a text that you have recently studied and devise a series of effective questions for the more able or less able students.

GUIDED GROUPS

Guided teaching is where a teacher delivers a teaching sequence with a small group of students of a similar ability for about 20 minutes during the independent phase of a lesson.

Introduction to text

Focus on and explain the objective. Explain what learners should do as readers and the purpose of this. Set a target for the session

Strategy check

Ask pupils to identify strategies they already use and to explain them. Depending on the needs of the group and the nature of the text, draw attention to specific reading strategies that pupils should be using,

Independent reading and related task

Set an independent reading task with a specific focus.

Return to the text: developing response

Draw the guided group together and discuss key features related to the developing response objective and the task set. Use focused questions to deepen and extend understanding. With more able readers encourage freer discussion and hand over some control of the group to the pupils, encouraging them to question and discuss with each other. Use drama approaches such as 'hot seating' a character

Review and next steps

Ask pupils to summarise what they have been doing and remind them of the review and next steps purpose of the session. Pupils might make brief notes in a reading journal, for example, in order to record ideas. Set next steps for the group: this may be a reading homework, or a target of completing the book independently, for example.

Evaluation

Record brief notes on how the session went, for future reference. This is also the time and/or place to note down any evidence as part of ongoing teacher assessment of pupils' reading progress. This sequence can be adapted to address objectives for writing or speaking and listening.

Using this approach for more able learners can:

- Add breadth (e.g. a broader range of texts and tasks)
- Give depth (e.g. more detail and complexity)
- Accelerate the pace of learning (e.g. tackling objectives earlier)

- Promote independence
- Support reflection and self-evaluation

ROLES IN GROUP WORK

The Facilitator...

- Provides leadership and direction for the group.
- Leads discussions.
- Helps members clarify points.
- Protects members from attack.
- Makes sure that every voice is heard.
- Focuses work around the learning task.

The Recorder...

- Keeps a public record of the team's ideas and progress.
- Checks to be sure that ideas are clear and accurate.

The Summariser...

- Restates the group's conclusions and responses.
- Prepares a summary of the group's efforts.
- Checks for clarity of understanding.

The Presenter...

- Presents the group's finished work to the class.
- Says, "How would you like this to sound?"
- Says, "How much of what we discussed should be shared with the class?"

The Elaborator...

- Connects discussions with prior material and activities.
- Supports ideas with further evidence and develops ideas

ACTIVITY

Purpose: Consider the different types of roles that could be allocated within groups.

Answer the following questions:

- Which would be the most suitable for your more able pupils?
- Which would stretch their particular skill sets?
- In what types of groups might they be most effective?
- With what type of task?

ASSESSMENT AND ITS IMPORTANCE IN THE CLASSROOM

Defining assessment:

Assessment can be defined as the systematic collection, interpretation and use of information about learning. It gives teachers a better awareness of what pupils know and understand, what their learning experiences enable them to do and what their skills and personal capabilities are.

Principles of assessment:

The five principles that underpin quality assessment practice specify it should:

- Be complementary to and supportive of learning;
- Be valid and reliable;
- Be fit for purpose and manageable;
- Support teachers' professional judgement; and
- Support accountability.

Types of assessment:

A range of assessment approaches can be used for different reasons at various stages in the learning sequence.

Formative assessment

Is a range of formal and informal assessment procedures used by teachers during the learning process so they can modify teaching and learning activities to improve pupil attainment.

Summative assessment

Comes at the end of a learning sequence and is used to acknowledge, record and report on pupils' overall achievement at a given point.

Diagnostic assessment

Is used to identify individual strengths, areas for improvement and to inform next steps.

Evaluative assessment

Is concerned with the overarching performance of arrangements in a department, school or system.

Formative approaches to assessment focus on improving learning while summative assessment captures a record of learning at the end of a period of study. However, formative and summative assessments are not in opposition; they are interrelated and complementary. The information from formative assessment, supplemented by class tests or tasks, helps to ensure dependable summative assessment.

The quality of assessment is based on the teacher's professional ability to use a range of assessment methods that produce accurate results. Good assessment practice involves teachers applying the five principles to every assessment approach they choose.

Purposes of Assessment

Assessment is central to successful teaching and learning. To determine the effectiveness of a sequence of instruction, teachers need to gauge pupils' progress in understanding what they want them to learn.

Assessment is the link between teaching and learning. It is important because without it there is no way to anticipate what pupils will actually take from their classroom experiences and this might be quite different from what was intended. Assessment helps teachers find out what has actually taken place in pupils' developing understanding during a sequence of teaching and learning.

Teachers may use a range of strategies that can provide information about pupils' progress:

- Teacher observation of pupils engaging in classroom activities;
- Teacher observation of pupils' performances;
- Teacher checking of pupil work;
- Pupils checking each other's work and similar forms of peer assessment;
- Questioning to check for understanding;
- End of topic tests;
- Exams; and
- Other tasks, projects and assignments.

Assessment is not measurement

It is important to emphasise that assessment is not synonymous with measurement. The varieties of assessment that are useful in an educational context will sometimes include aspects of measurement in terms of scores, grades and results. However, the range of approaches that teachers use in their everyday work to monitor how well their classes are doing will be equally prevalent. Assessment plays a crucial role in improving learning and raising standards. It's a key professional competence for teachers that enables them to make learning and teaching more effective.