

GOING DEEPER WITH DIFFERENTIATION IN YOUR CLASSROOM

Moving beyond the basics to better meet the needs of all learners

Every classroom is filled with differences. Learners come with a wide mix of strengths, challenges, languages, cultures and life experiences. While many teachers know about differentiation, the real challenge is going beyond just the basics – making sure we truly understand and meet the many needs our learners bring with them.

At its heart, differentiation is about fairness. It's not about making things easier for some learners, but about making learning possible for everyone. Taking differentiation to a deeper level means moving away from a "one-size-fits-all" approach. Instead, we shape **what** we teach, **how** we teach it, how learners show their learning, and how the classroom works – so all learners have a chance to succeed.



Understanding Learner differences

To truly differentiate, we need to see that learning differences aren't the same as learning problems. A learner with dyslexia may have trouble reading, but that doesn't mean they can't think deeply. A learner with ADHD may struggle to focus, but they often have a lot of energy and creativity. Learners on the autism spectrum might find social situations tricky, but they may also have strong focus or memory.

When we take time to understand why a learner may be struggling, we're better able to support them. For example, a learner who avoids reading may not be lazy – they might be dealing with a reading difficulty that hasn't been found yet. **Deep differentiation** means going beyond just changing how much work a learner gets.

It means changing:

- how we teach,
- how we check for understanding, and
- how we set up the learning space.



Simple ways to deepen differentiation

1. Flexible grouping

Don't keep learners in the same ability groups all the time. Let them work in pairs, small groups, or one-on-one with the teacher, depending on the activity or goal.

2. Give choices

Let learners choose how to show what they know. This might be a report, a presentation, a poster, or even a podcast.

3. Use support tools for everyone

Tools like graphic organisers, word banks, and sentence starters help many learners – not just those who are struggling. Make them part of your regular teaching.

4. Watch and adjust

Listen to learner feedback and notice who is engaged or who seems stuck. If something isn't working, try a new strategy. Differentiation grows through reflection.

5. Keep learning

Stay up to date on how to support all kinds of learners. Learning more about things like neurodiversity, for example, helps us respond in better ways.

You're not alone – There's help

Deepening your differentiation practices isn't about working harder – it's about working smarter, using the tools and knowledge you already have, and adding to them. We're here to support you with practical, research-based training that fits your everyday classroom needs.

Join one of our upcoming Inclusion Workshops to build your skills and confidence in teaching all kinds of learners:

- ▶ **Don't let dyslexia get you down** – Learn how to support learners with reading difficulties using proven strategies.
- ▶ **Autism: The hidden disability already in your classroom** – Find out how to recognise and support learners on the autism spectrum.
- ▶ **Tame those Ferrari minds: Dealing with ADHD in your classroom** – Discover ways to turn busy minds into classroom strengths.
- ▶ **Strategies to assist learners with barriers to reading** – Explore hands-on strategies to help struggling readers succeed.
- ▶ **Inclusion** – Learn how to create a classroom where every learner feels welcome, supported and valued.

Let's grow beyond the basics – together. The more we understand how our learners learn, the more powerful and inclusive our teaching can be.



Register now for these online short courses:

- **Don't let dyslexia get you down**
- **Autism the hidden disability that is already in your classroom**
- **Tame those Ferrari minds: Dealing with ADHD in your classroom**
- **Strategies to assist learners with barriers to reading.**

Type this link into your browser or scan the QR code to view all our online short courses: <https://shop.motc.co.za/>

