RECOGNIZING LEARNERS’ UNIQUENESS: AN IMPORTANT KEY IN TEACHING

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Every learner is a unique individual. Pupils are said to have different sizes and shapes. They have differences when it comes to their intelligence, personality, socio-economic status, level of interests and learning styles. These so-called individual differences greatly affect their scholastic achievement.

The typical classroom contains a variety of these pupils. It is a big challenge to classroom teachers to deal with these differences. Here are some of the tips a teacher should consider in order to deal with this challenge successfully.

The first thing a teacher should do is to understand and accept that individual differences exist. With our everyday dealings with our pupils, we are able to know and determine their level of intelligence, learning styles and level of interests. Upon identifying these, it is our turn to develop strategies in dealing with this diversity. Always bear in mind that we, as educators should make the adjustments not the pupils themselves.

Applying different approaches in dealing with these individual differences will really help a lot. The intelligence of our pupils will determine the kind of material suitable to them. We should not give too challenging learning situations for those who are less intelligent in the same way that we should not give too easy exercises for the bright ones. For those who are really slow, discuss with them after class. Let them undergo remediation classes. These remediation classes should be done one on one so that you will know their strengths and weaknesses as well as their personalities too. This will give a hint on what technique will you adapt to challenge and motivate them to learn.
Grouping of learners in our daily teaching activities will also help a lot. Pupils learn best when there is interaction with each other. But when applying this, we should make it a point to employ both homogeneous and heterogenous grouping to have positive results. In homogeneous grouping, learners are grouped together based on their abilities. Fast learners are given more complex activities while those slow learners group is given simpler activities. This will give pupils the feeling of achievement because they can accomplish the given activities to them well. There is also a need to use heterogeneous grouping wherein the strong, average and weak pupils are mixed together in a group. Weak pupils will be given the chance to mingle with those bright ones and learn from them. This could be a good motivation for them to strive harder. Practicing both these groupings will surely increase our pupils’ achievement.

Differentiated instruction is also a must. Always remember that the most effective teachers vary their styles to encourage and inspire their pupils. Differentiating our instruction from discussions, PowerPoint presentations, audio visual presentations, video simulations, role playing, use of resource speakers, mini field trips or with mixed methods of teaching will energize our class. These will provide our pupils more chances to explore and actively participate in our class.

Now that we are faced with the task of developing the pupils’ 21st century skills under the new K to 12 curriculum, it is our duty to take into consideration their individual uniqueness while providing a learning environment that will encourage them to take charge of their own learning. A learner – centered instruction will be of great help to us in achieving this goal.

We teachers, are flexible. We can make the necessary adjustments in dealing with our pupils’ differences. Always bear in mind that we have the power to help our learners learn more effectively. We can be the equalizing factor for all of them.
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