

TRANSCRIPT: Differentiation

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Typically in my class, I'll have between ten and twelve children. Those ten or twelve children could be working anywhere from P6 right the way through to Level 3, so it's a very, very wide range of ability. So, the first thing I've got to do is to make sure I can teach and assess affectively.

I generally group the children very broadly into ability bands, so that I might have a small group working at P levels, I might have a group working within Level 1 and another group working within Level 2, and I will start off the lesson with differentiated oral exercises to include the whole class. So, for example, the P8 children I might get them doing a little game sequencing numbers to six, with children working in Level 1 I'll differentiate it so that they're working on adding to six, for the more able children I might go up to 60 or to 600, but we all work around the same numbers. I'll then split the groups up and they will work on their own tasks.

It's terribly important that, all the way along, children are asked questions that will inform you about the level at which they're learning and how far you can progress their learning. So, for example, I might say to a child, 'How did you do that, you've got the answer four but how did you get there?'. I might say to another more able child, 'Now what strategy did you use, did you look at the number bonds, did you count on?'

At this stage, within each group, I'm working very, very closely with the assistants. I have to stress at this point that assistants are key to this whole process of assessment and learning. It's always a problem finding time to work with your classroom assistants but, in an ideal setting, if you've got time at the beginning of the day and you can quickly go through your lesson plans with them so they know the structure of the lesson, and they're going to be working only with two or three children each, and if I've shown them what the targets are for those children and they've observed in that in the first part of the lesson, the style in which I'm teaching and the style of questions I'm asking, so that I can then ask them to replicate those questions.