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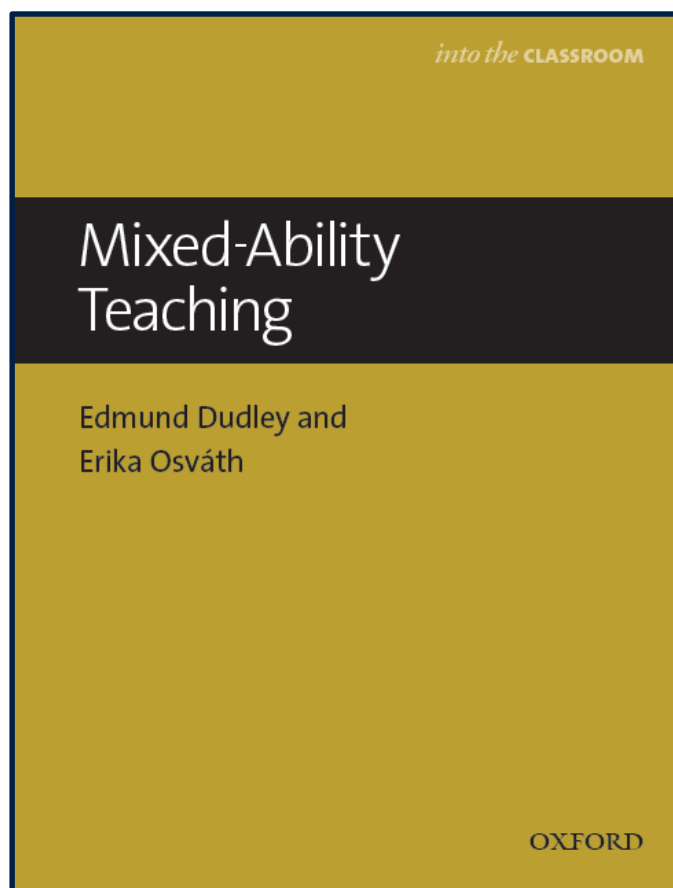
# Engaging All Learners in the Mixed-Ability Classroom

Edmund Dudley

Oxford Days

Vietnam, July 2016



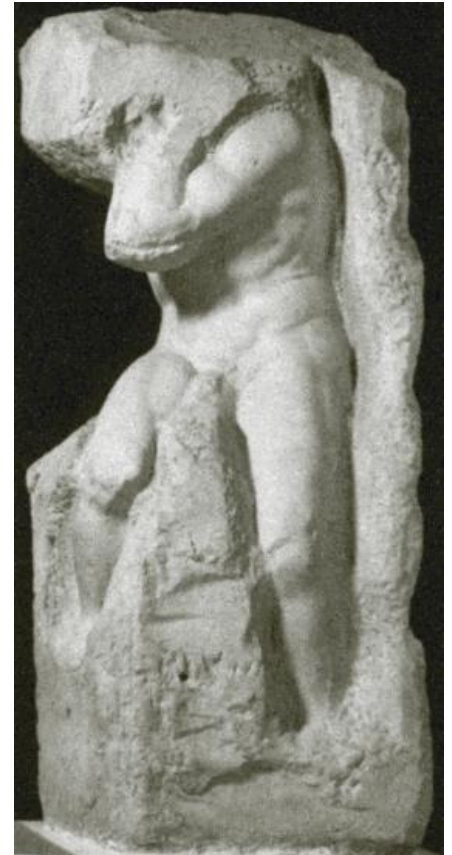


## In this session

Preparing for a class and managing the classroom

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- What do we mean by *mixed ability*?
- Identifying variables and setting goals
- Handling materials and activities
- Approaches to differentiation
- Groups and roles:  
a positive learning environment
- A whole-person approach

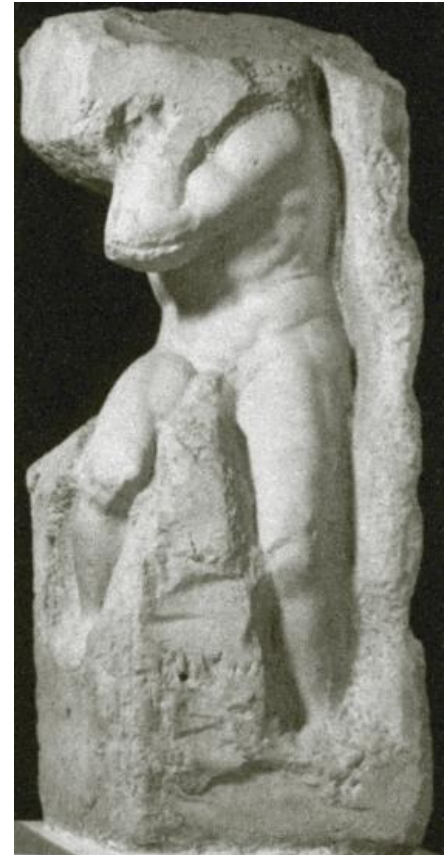


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# What do we mean by *mixed-ability*?

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Every learner has an individual range of levels.  
Every class is a mixed-level class.

Scrivener (1994/2005:69)

# What do we mean by *mixed ability*?

Differences between learners

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Here are four ways that learners in the same class can differ:

- language-learning ability
- language knowledge
- learning style
- attitude to the language

Is that all?

Can you think of any others?

# What do we mean by *mixed ability*?

## Differences between learners

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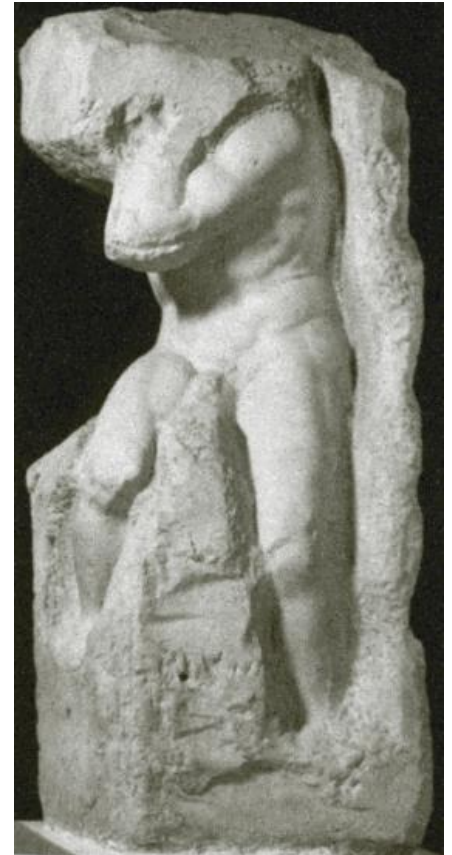
- language-learning ability
- language knowledge
- learning style
- attitude to the language
- cultural background
- mother tongue
- intelligence
- world knowledge
- learning experience
- knowledge of other languages
- age or maturity
- gender
- personality
- confidence
- motivation
- interests
- independence
- self-discipline
- educational level

Ur (1996:304)

# What do we mean by *mixed ability*?

“Every block of stone has a statue inside it and it is the task of the sculptor to discover it.”

- Michelangelo



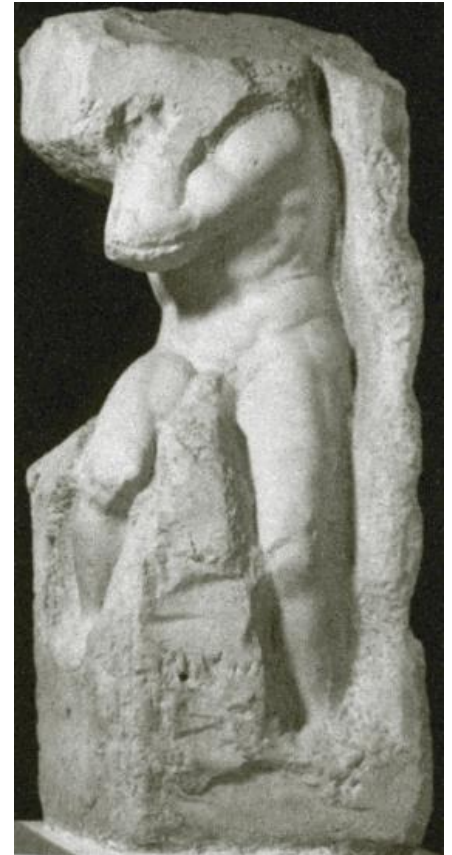


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# Collecting data

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Placement tests only tell one part of the story.  
We also need to ask:

- Why are the students learning English?
- What specifically do they need to learn?
- What is their attitude towards learning the language?
- How do they feel about being a member of this group?
- What are their interests outside school?

# Collecting data

## Questionnaires, surveys and worksheets

Try this 

### About me

Create a gap-fill text for students to complete about themselves. See the example below. The content and language level can be tailored to suit your students.

#### About me

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm from \_\_\_\_\_.

I live in \_\_\_\_\_, and in my free time I usually

\_\_\_\_\_. I want to learn English because

\_\_\_\_\_. I think I know a lot about \_\_\_\_\_.

I'm good at \_\_\_\_\_. I can \_\_\_\_\_. I don't

know much about \_\_\_\_\_ but I'd like to know more. I can't

\_\_\_\_\_ but I'd like to learn how.

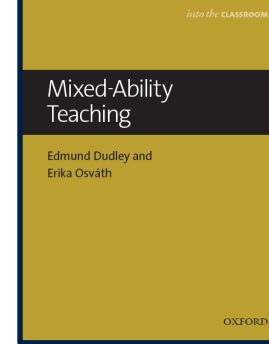
People often say that I'm \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

In the future, I'd like to \_\_\_\_\_ because

\_\_\_\_\_.

# Collecting data

## Predict and observe



### Try this **Teacher predictions**

Invite a colleague to observe one or more of your classes. Choose two students that you would like to focus on. Write some notes about each student.

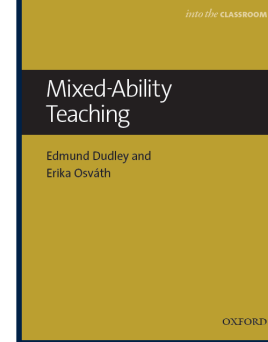
Think about:

- attitude towards learning
- personal traits and characteristics.

Make predictions about how you think each student will respond to the activities you have planned. Write simple sentences, as in Table 1.1.

# Collecting data

## Predict and observe



Maria	
1	I think she'll talk in L1 to her neighbours during the first activity. <b>Observer's comments:</b>
2	I think she'll be cheerful and enthusiastic about volunteering for the speaking task. <b>Observer's comments:</b>

Daniel	
1	I think he'll copy the answers to the first activity from Luis. <b>Observer's comments:</b>
2	I think he'll be shy and will not volunteer for the speaking task. <b>Observer's comments:</b>

# Collecting data

Benefits of *predict and observe*



Trying not to *pigeonhole*



Promoting peer collaboration

# Setting appropriate goals

## Class goals and personal goals

	Class goals	Personal goals
Language-learning goals		
Attitude goals		

# Setting appropriate goals

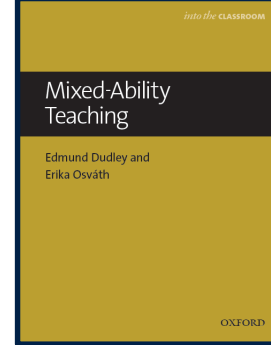
## Class goals and personal goals - examples

Class goals		Personal goals
Language-learning goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete a group project assignment for every unit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep a notebook for new words and review it after each lesson</li> </ul>
Attitude goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer to help others whenever we can</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrive on time for class</li> </ul>



# Setting appropriate goals

## Goal points



### Try this

#### Goal points

Acknowledge the importance of goal setting by allocating students points when individual and group goals have been achieved. Keep a running score of the points awarded. When students have collected an agreed number of points, they can be awarded a top grade. Alternatively, points awarded for goal achievement can be incorporated into formal assessment, for example by including a goal-achievement component in continuous assessment. (See Part 7 for more information on assessing mixed-ability groups.)

# Setting appropriate goals

## 4-question checklist

Can it be done?

Is it clear?

How will it be  
achieved?

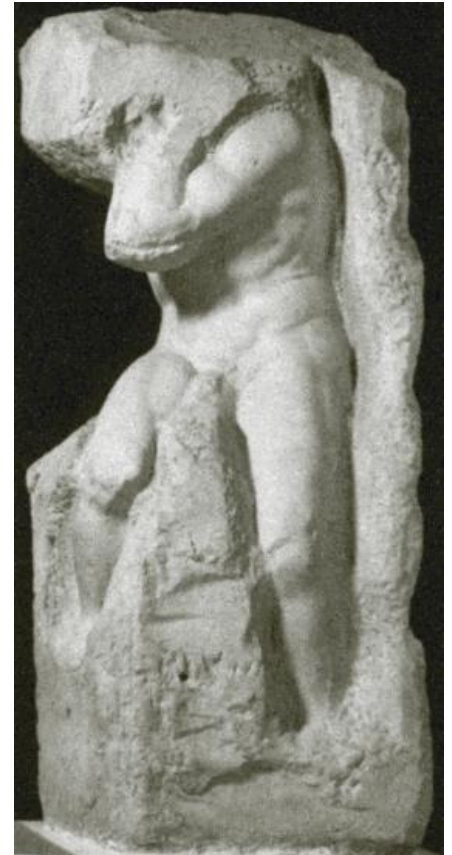
Is it what the student  
wants?

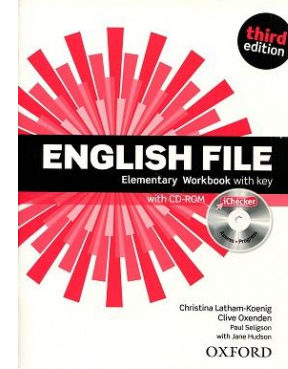
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### Preparing for a class and managing the classroom

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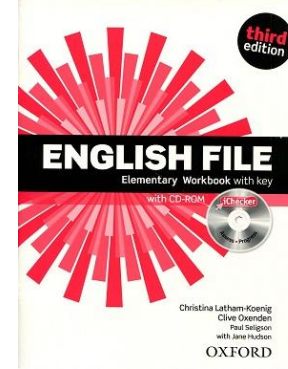
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- Where do you think this is?
- How sure are you (1-5) ?





- Predict the answers

**Speaker 2 Reykjavik, Iceland**

4 When do people go to swimming pools and hot tubs?

5 What are there very few of in the Icelandic countryside?

6 How many people are there...? in Reykjavik in the second-biggest city

7 What kind of things do Icelandic people make?

4 Before work, at the weekend, or sometimes to have business meetings

5 trees

6 a) fewer than 250,000

6 b) 15,000

7 Music, paintings, drawings, books, and their own clothes.



- 1 Read the text about the new sports and answer the questions.
  - 1 Which sport is a team game?
  - 2 Which sport do you play in a park or on a special course?
  - 3 Which sport do you think is the most interesting?

- 2 Invent a new hybrid sport. Follow the steps in the project checklist.

## Hybrid sports

Take two sports and put them together. What have you got? A new sport! There are a lot of these new sports – or 'hybrid sports' – around the world. For example, if you're into football, why don't you try one of these?

### Footvolley

Octavio de Moraes invented footvolley in 1965. He wanted to play football with his friends on Copacabana beach, but in Brazil there was a rule: no football games on the beach. So Octavio and his friends invented a new game: footvolley.

It's similar to beach volleyball, but you play it with a football and you can't use your hands! There are normally two players on a team.



## PROJECT CHECKLIST

- 1 Choose two sports in the box.
 

cycling   football   basketball  
 tennis   swimming
- 2 Think of a name for your new hybrid sport.
- 3 Write about your sport. Include:
  - the name of the sport
  - which two sports it is a hybrid of
  - what you need
  - where you play it
  - rules: what you can and can't do
  - why you think it's a great sport
- 4 Draw a picture of your sport or use a computer to make one.
- 5 Present your new hybrid sport to your class.
- 6 Collect all the ideas for the new hybrid sports and make a class poster.

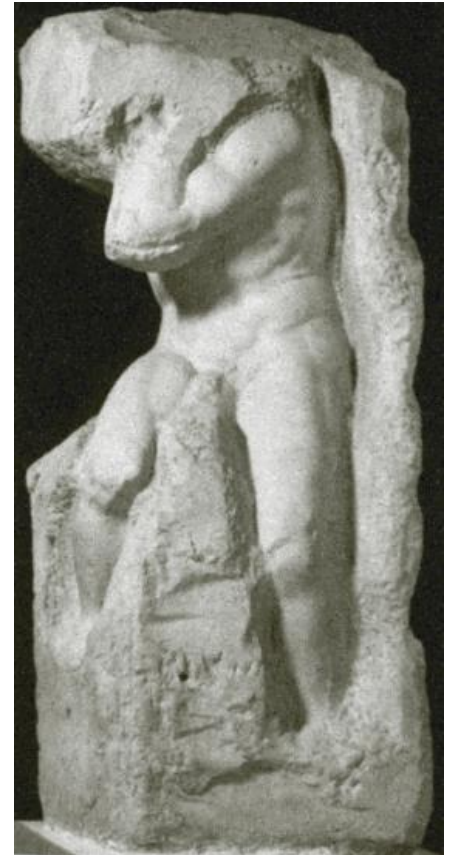


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# Differentiated learning

## 3 ways to differentiate

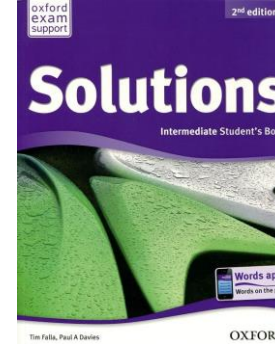
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- Differentiating the input
- Differentiating the process
- Differentiating the output



# Differentiated learning

## Differentiating the input



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**8 SPEAKING** Work in pairs. Read the headline below and think about possible explanations. Use the words below to help you or your own ideas.

drug-dealers in hiding kidnapped murdered  
on the run robbers stolen

**25-YEAR-OLD  
BUSINESSMAN  
DISAPPEARS FROM  
HOTEL IN MEXICO,  
LEAVING \$100,000 IN  
CASH IN SUITCASE**



# Differentiated learning

## Differentiating the input

Blue group:

What do you think happened?

*He might have ...*

*He could have ...*

Green group:

What do you think happened to the  
businessman?

...

Yellow group:

Choose the best explanation:

- *He might have left it there to collect later.*

- *He could have been kidnapped by  
somebody.*

# Differentiated learning

## Differentiating the process

---

The tallest building in the world:

1. Which city is it in?
2. What is it called?
3. How many metres high is it?
4. How many floors has it got?



# Differentiated learning

## Differentiating the process

---



# Differentiated learning

## Differentiating the process



Read the text and find the answers



Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates, is different from other cities. It is a city of glass skyscrapers in the desert. One of these is the incredible Burj Khalifa skyscraper. It is 828 metres high and has got more than 160 floors. You can see it from about 100 kilometres away! The temperature in the desert is sometimes 50°C, but it's cool inside this modern building.



# Differentiated learning

## Differentiating the process

---



Read the text and find the answers



Information gap task in pairs



Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates, is different from other cities.

One of these is the incredible Burj Khalifa skyscraper.



It is a city of glass skyscrapers in the desert.

It is 828 metres high and has got more than 160 floors.



# Differentiated learning

## Differentiating the process



Read the text and find the answers



Information gap task in pairs



Search online to find the answers

**READING** ■ A description of a modern city

I can understand an article about a city.

- 1 1.22 Look at the photos and choose six words that you can use to describe the building. Then read, listen and answer the questions.

lift museum stairs skyscraper mountains modern



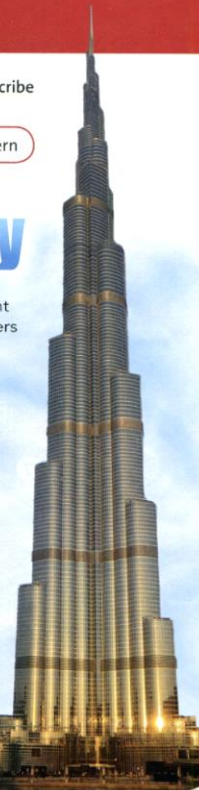
## City in the sky

Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates, is different from other cities. It has lots of glass skyscrapers in the desert. One of these is the incredible Burj Khalifa skyscraper. It is 828 metres high and has got more than 160 floors. You can see it from almost 100 kilometres away! The temperature in the desert is sometimes 50°C, but it's cool inside this modern building.

This amazing skyscraper is large enough for 25,000 people. It has a luxury hotel, offices, restaurants, swimming pools, libraries, a gym and 900 expensive flats. From the visitor area on the 124th floor, the cars in the streets below are tiny. The tower has got 57 very fast lifts, but there are also lots of stairs if you've got lots of energy!

In the Burj Khalifa area there are parks and a large lake. There is a big shopping centre next to the tower.

This enormous building has got over 1,200 luxury shops. The city of Dubai is a fantastic place, but only if you are very rich and you like shopping.



# Differentiated learning

## Differentiating the process

The tallest building in the world:

1. Which city is it in? **Dubai**
2. What is it called? **Burj Khalifa**
3. How many metres high is it? **828**
4. How many floors has it got? **160+**



# Differentiated learning

## Differentiating the output

---

- Provide options
- Allow students to choose a task
- Use open-ended prompts



# Differentiated learning

## Differentiating the output



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- **Go to the fruits and vegetables section of a market or supermarket near your home. Choose one of the following tasks:**

a.) Write down as many of the fruits and vegetables as you can in English. You can use your phone to take photographs of the display and finish the task at home.

# Differentiated learning

## Differentiating the output



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- **Go to the fruits and vegetables section of a market or supermarket near your home. Choose one of the following tasks:**

b.) Which fruit/vegetable is

- the most expensive
- the cheapest
- the most delicious
- the most beautiful
- the heaviest
- the longest
- the ugliest
- not from your country

# Differentiated learning

## Differentiating the output



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- **Go to the fruits and vegetables section of a market or supermarket near your home. Choose one of the following tasks:**

c.) Interview the person selling the fruits and vegetables – or the people buying them. Use your phone to record the interview. Translate the questions and answers into English.

# Differentiated learning

## FAQs

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- Doesn't it take loads of time to prepare differentiated activities?
- Does it matter which part of the lesson we use differentiated activities in?
- Won't students feel that differentiation = discrimination?

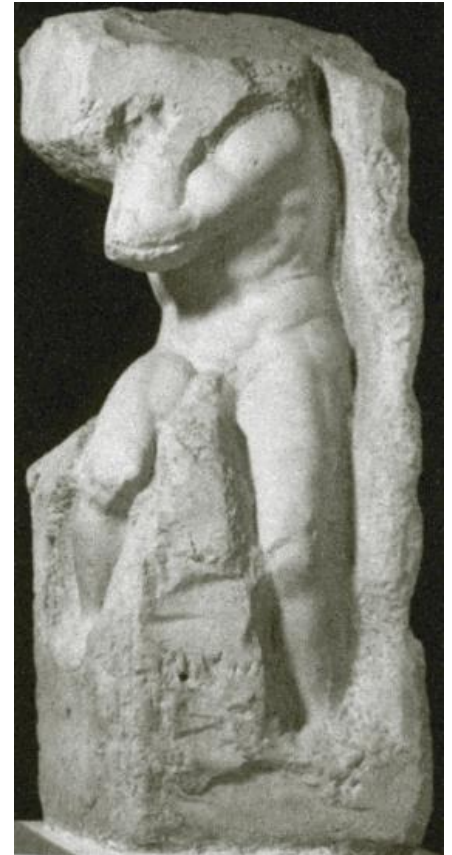


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# Grouping learners within lessons

What criteria should we use?

Some possibilities:

same level together

different levels together

choice of topic

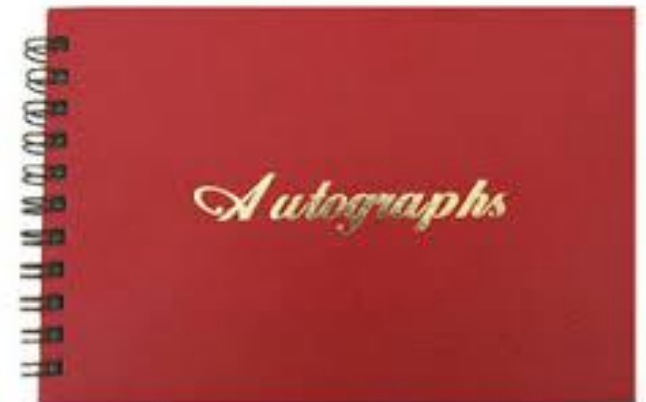
at random

# Grouping learners within lessons

What techniques can we use?

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- Post-it notes
- Grab the end of the string
- Lining up



# Classroom management and classroom roles

- Learner roles
- Teacher roles
- Creating a positive learning environment



# Learner roles

## Day-to-day involvement in...

- ...decision-making
- ...supporting the teacher
- ...providing expertise



# Teacher roles

- Facilitating involvement
- Creating options and openings for involvement
- Promoting learning in frontal teaching

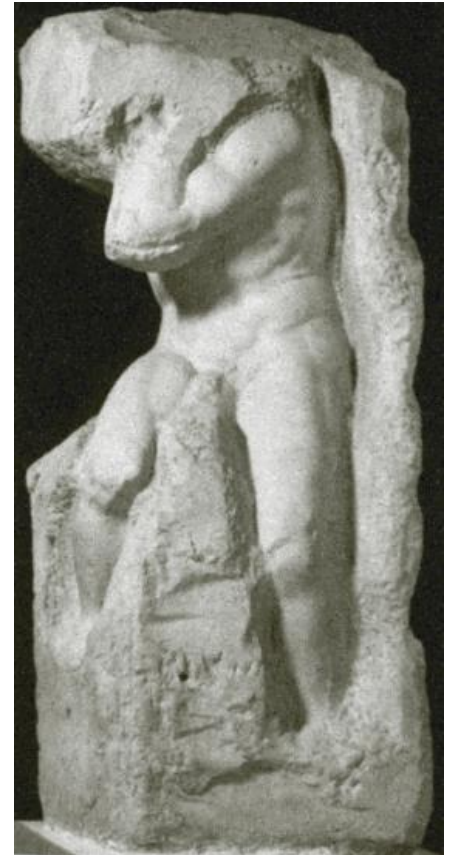


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# Who is he?

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# IQ

- Average person IQ of 100
- Extremely smart person IQ of 130+
- Albert Einstein IQ of 160
- **Chris Langan      IQ of 200**

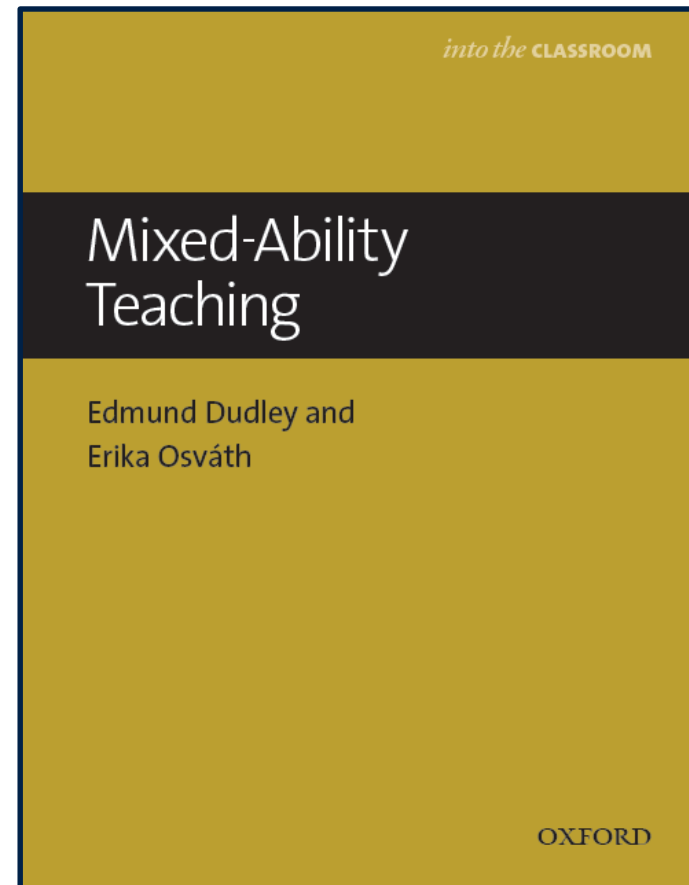


# What does he do?

- 
- Construction
  - Farm-hand
  - Ranch-hand
  - Cowboy
  - Firefighter
  - Forest ranger
  - **Bouncer**
- Teacher
  - Lawyer
  - Astronomer
  - Army General
  - Economist
  - Professor
  - Physicist

# A wider context for learning

“It makes sense to think of the classroom as a miniature version of the world outside, in which success depends not only on gaining knowledge, but also on having social skills, values, and life skills.”



# Social skills

- turn-taking
- team work
- fair play
- respecting others' opinions
- willingness to compromise



→ reward attitudes as well as outcomes

# Life skills

Thinking about:

- success outside school
- life challenges

Focusing on non-cognitive skills:

- not giving up
- being brave
- seeking advice
- getting help

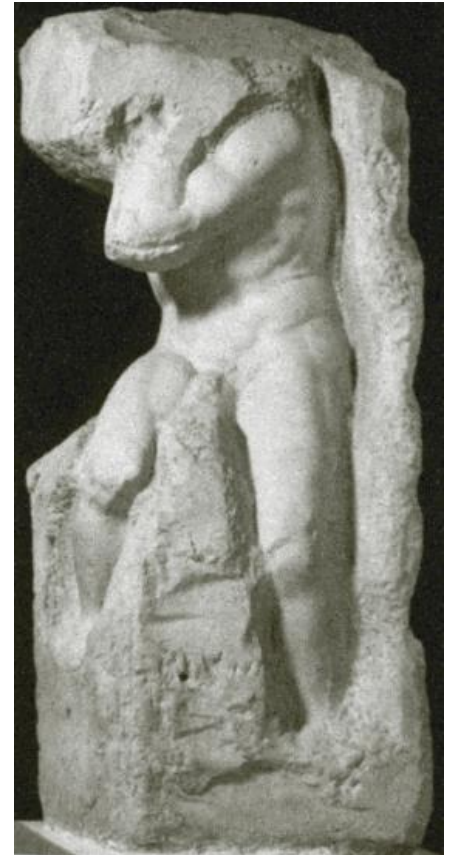


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