

Top Tips for Differentiation

As short course tutors, you are likely to have cohorts with mixed abilities. This is something you can mitigate by making sure that the course description is clear about any previous experience or skills necessary to undertake the course.

However, even if this is clear, you are likely to have learners who only just meet these criteria, well as those who well exceed them.

As learners self-select for a course (we do not interview or require learners to apply) you will sometimes get learners who do not have the skills required to complete the course. In this instance, please explain this to the learner. They may choose to remain, but you need to ensure that any “up skilling” they require your support for does not take away from the learners with the required skills. It may be more appropriate to refer these learners to CST to consider transferring to a more appropriate course.

Eg: if a learner arrives at a pattern making class unable to use a sewing machine. They could stay, but any time you spend showing them how to use a sewing machine must not be any more than you spend 121 with other learners, and the learner would not get that time working on pattern making skills.

Top tip for working with mixed levels (but who do have the skills specified for the course)

All Most Some- can be applied to a course, a session or a single task

Consider what are the outcomes you expect from the learners:

- ☐ All – what the absolute minimum is to achieve and understand to move on to the next task / session?
- ☐ Most - What most learners will be able to achieve and understand
- ☐ Some - what the more able learners may be able to achieve and understand before moving on to the next step

(Further info about what these objectives could be: <https://teaching.uic.edu/cate-teaching-guides/syllabus-course-design/blooms-taxonomy-of-educational-objectives/>)

It is important to know that Most and Some are not just a case of moving learners on to the next task, but considering what different levels can be achieved at each stage.

Eg: if a learner finishes drafting their pattern early, you might encourage them to try a different technique for blocking waist bands rather than moving on to cutting it out before others have completed the drafting



Top Tips for Differentiation

You can also consider using those excelling to support those not doing so well, Teaching is even better than Doing to support and reinforce learning!

Giving your Most and Somes in the class an additional “stretch and challenge” activity can also give you time to support the Alls to achieve the task.

