

Differentiation in Inquiry

- Male: **[00:00]** How could you possibly differentiate, right? For different learners ...
- Female: Mm-hm.
- Male: ... in an inquiry context.
- Male: Mm-hm.
- Male: And, I think, you know, that it's such a misconception, because, in a way, inquiry is differentiation.
- Male: Yes.
- Female: Absolutely.
- Male: Right? Like, it just is ...
- Male: By definition.
- Female: Mm-hm.
- Male: ... differentiation, by definition. Because every child will be taking their approach. They'll be ...
- Female: Yes.
- Male: They'll be contributing their questions ...
- Male: Mm-hm.
- Male: ... their ideas and it's our job to give them the ways to do that. Right? But, it's such a natural fit for differentiation because there are so many ways, right? You can—you know, I have children contribute their understanding by writing, by presenting in front of a class, by making a video, by making an animation, by doing all kinds of things.
- Female: Mm-hm. Yeah
- Male: **[00:46]** They're, they're able to do it. But I think the, the great part about it, in terms of differentiation too, is that for even the child whose skills make it difficult for them, too difficult for them to contribute in the traditional way, say, writing, you know, they're still doing ...
- Male: Yeah.
- Male: ... the high-level ...
- Male: They're contributing, yeah.
- Female: Thinking, mm-hm.
- Male: The high-level cognitive work that usually we reserve only for the gifted children.
- Male: Yeah(?)..

Female: Mm-hm.

Male: **[01:14]** Right. They're still doing it, right? They're still asking questions. They're still coming up with hypotheses. They're still doing experiments. They're doing all of those things and—that, that normally, you know, we think, “Oh well, no, no, no.”

Female: They're not ready for that.

Male: Yeah.

Male: You know, once you learn to write, then you can do those things.

Male: Then, yeah.

Female: **[01:32]** And they're also experiencing enormous success.

Male: Yeah.

Female: Because there aren't 20 pieces of information that the teacher is holding ...

Male: Mm-hm.

Female: And that only some of the kids in the class are going to get to.

Male: Right.

Female: You don't have these other, you know, 12, 14, 16 kids think ...

Male: Mm-hm.

Female: “Oh, I'm never going to know as much as they know.” Because that's not what about ...

Male: Mm-hm.

Male: Yeah.

Female: ... it's about. It's not about a competition.

Male: Yeah.

Female: **[01:50]** It's not about a race to the finish to see who's going to get the highest mark on the test.

Male: Mm-hm.

Female: It's—this is fascinating.

Male: Mm-hm.

Female: How can I find out more?

Male: Yeah.

Female: And so the individual levels of engagement and the individual levels of these deep, deep feelings of success and motivation are so high.

Male: Yeah.

Female: Because it's not about a—an expectation of 22 across the board ...

Male: Right.

Female: **[02:11]** Or 30 across the board ...

Male: Mm-hm.

Male: Mm-hm.

Female: Or whatever it is. And I think that's, that's what makes it so exciting as you go along. You don't have kids pulling out because they, they've, the door's been opened for them to find a way that's right for them.

Male: I—I, you know—for me, hearing you talk, it's about making learning go back to how children, adults naturally learn.

Female: Mm-hm.

Male: **[02:34]** You know, when we—the idea of a knowledge-building talk, discourse, is about having people share ideas, people listening, building onto those ideas, asking questions. And that the discourse is sort of going all over the place. When we think of a classroom, often in a traditional classroom, the discourse is teacher, student ...

Male: Mm-hm.

Male: Teacher, student. And even a well-intentioned teacher will repeat what a child has said ...

Female: Mm-hm.

Male: ... to project it. We're depriving children of those skills, of listening and projecting your voice and building on. And you've talked about how—you know, children, it—it—what we're doing is making their thinking visible when we create these discourse opportunities.

Male: Mm-hm.

Male: **[03:13]** They, they come to us with such rich, sophisticated explanations of the world around them. And often, you know, again in a more traditional setting, we ignore those or we feel our job is to correct those misconceptions. And a discourse allows us to really sto—stop and, and address that misconception the job's—that the job of a teacher is to talk. But really our primary sense should be listening.

Male: Mm-hm.

Female: Mm-hm.

Male: Listening ...

Male: Yeah.

Male: ... to what the children are saying as they build on each other. And also, as you've mentioned, our goal developmentally is to hold back, so that the children own that discourse, that they see the purpose in sharing and building on and, and taking on the role of summarizing where we are and so forth. Because that's what happens in commu—you know, in all innovative communities.

Female: Mm-hm.

Male: You know, all areas of, of work, where people are planning, sharing ideas. We try to create this democratic environment where there isn't a hierarchy but a, a place for all forms of contribution. And, you're not limited by your skills in literacy, for example.

Male: Mm-hm.

Male: You can be contributing in, in many different ways.

Female: Mm-hm.

Male: Yeah, yeah.

Female: Absolutely. And the idea that you can—that it's av—so available, other people's knowledge is available to you.

Male: Mm-hm.

Male: Yeah, yeah.

Female: So when we're—when the kids were making these, these vehicles, these windblown vehicles, when they were doing their redesign, they're actively using the word copy. "I'm going to copy what this person did ..."

Male: Yeah, yeah.

Female: **[04:40]** "It worked really, really well."

Male: Mm-hm.

Female: That's not a bad thing. It's what happens in the real world all the time.

Male: That's right.

Male: (Inaudible), yeah.

Female: You find out what are the ideas that really work, and you use them for your own.

Male: Yeah.

Male: Mm-hm.

Female: And, and hopefully improve them and then they can also use what you come up with. And the richness of that, again, it takes you so much further than you could ever imagine ...

Male: Absolutely.

Male: Mm-hm.

Female: ... if you, if you had put the boundaries around it ...

Male: Yeah.

Female: ... right from the start.

Male: Yeah.

[END OF RECORDING – length, 05:08]