Is this the best solution to the problem of engaging mixed ability classes?

Engaging mixed ability groups
Iain Murdoch, St Katherine’s and Richard Kennett, Redland Green School
‘Turning the light bulbs on for all’...

...engaging your entire class in 5 easy steps.

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Launch

When does learning begin in your lesson?

• After the bell?
• After the register?
• After they’ve written down the title and date?
• After you’ve shared outcomes?
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Launch

Why?
• To engage students we need to ‘hook’ the students in from the start

How do we do this?
• Low challenge, high access
• Think simple
• Link to rest of lesson
25.08.17     To Parsons. 54 Salisbury Rd, Redland, Bristol.
Deeply regret to inform you Lieutenant. H.F. Parsons, Gloucester Regiment was killed in action. August twenty first. The Army Council express their sympathy.
What does this tell us about Cromwell?

This is the skull of Cromwell. He had a full state funeral attended by hundreds and was buried...

BUT a few years later his dead body was dug up, hung and then this head was cut off and put on a pole in London. Later it was covered in metal.
Hyperinflation and occupation of Ruhr had made life hard for German people, and the Weimar Republic was on the verge of collapse.

By 1923, the Nazi party had 55,000 members and was stronger than ever before.

If you were Hitler in 1923. What might you do next to ensure you have power?

Crackdown on extremist groups: The army had recently put down a left-wing revolt in Saxony. Hitler could see a crackdown on right-wing groups coming next.

The SA: Hitler had a huge army of storm troopers, but he knew he would lose control of them if he did not give them something to do.

Stresemann’s government: Stresemann had been appointed chancellor in 1923, Hitler realised that his new government might get on top of Germany’s economic problems soon, so he needed to act before the unrest died down.
Relevance

Why?
To engage students they need to see the relevance of what they are learning

How do you deal with this?
  . As a teacher you must know why their learning is relevant and convey this to your students
  . This is about subtle change. Making a big deal of it will make it seem phony
Relevance

Can be easier if...
A core subject (sometimes)
An examined subject

Can be difficult if...
A foundation subject (sometimes)
A non examined subject
Relevance

How do you do this?

Link to careers

Link to current affairs

Link to exams

Lesson Outcomes - Adding in ‘so that’
e.g. Describe the events of 1933 so that you can answer 7 mark questions

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Relevance

How do you do this?

Lesson Outcomes - Adding in ‘so that’

e.g. Describe the events of 1933 so that you can answer 7 mark questions
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Relevance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Relevance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The 17th century - a century of change or a century of continuity?</td>
<td>This unit lets you decide if some of the most famous moments in British history (the Civil War, Cromwell, the Restoration) really brought about change or not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why was the 18th century so revolutionary?</td>
<td>The modern world began in the 18th century. This unit will let you see how industry, empire and new political ideas revolutionised Britain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should Bristol apologise for its role in the slave trade?</td>
<td>All Bristolians should know the story and impact of the slave trade and how it still affects our city today.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How ‘great’ was Great Britain in the nineteenth century?</td>
<td>In some ways Britain was great in the 19th century, in other ways it was not. This unit will let you evaluate different interpretations and reach your own.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How was universal suffrage achieved in 1928?</td>
<td>The story of how people got the vote is important as it shows you why politics are so important and what it really means to be a citizen.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Justifying content
Relevance

Writing for a purpose

I disagree that the blame rests entirely upon Serbia, and believe that Gerhard Hirschfeld's theory that most of the European powers are in fact to blame, is more accurate, because whilst the Serbians did in fact set off the chain of events that led to war, the tension between the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente would have caused war anyway. This tension would have led to war.
Relevance

How would you make the following lessons relevant?

• History – Black Civil Rights
• Biology – Plant cells
• Maths – Quadratic equations
• Spanish – School equipment
• Music – Composition of the orchestra
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Challenge

• Arguably *meaningful* engagement is built on challenge.
• The key to mixed ability teaching is to effectively challenge all of our students during the course of a lesson/series of lessons
• Why?
• How?
Challenge (why)

• You don’t rise to low expectations.
• If you are not challenged by something over the course of an hour you get...
• If you don’t make mistakes or get things wrong then you lose opportunities for learning
• All students should have something they find hard... they can all then make mistakes and A4L kicks in... personalised differentiation
Challenge (why)

Here is an example of a low challenge task that was being set in PB this year.

What do you think the outcomes of teaching it were? What was the class like? How did the lesson feel?

Complete a storyboard using two pages of your book.

Complete a storyboard Siddhartha’s life up until leaving the palace using a whole page of your book. For each box include a description of what was happening at that point.
I basically showed the students a cartoon of the Buddha’s life story and drew out the key points before setting this task.

How would you make this lesson more challenging but inclusive to all?

(5 minutes)
Challenge (how)

So how do you make sure every student in your class is challenged by your lesson and makes progress...

... what do you do?

• Teach to the top and support the bottom?
• Teach to the bottom and extend the top?
• Teach to the middle and support the bottom and extend the top?
Challenge (how)

• Can’t be about working harder or doing more
• Same goals (outcomes) different ladders
• Modelling and scaffolding (how long do we leave the scaffold there?)
• Vary groupings over time (leadership students)
• Choice of task
• Choice of homework
• Questioning
• A4L
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‘Without God anything is allowable’

Use the boxes to help you create a piece of extended writing. Choose at least 2 prompts from at least 7 boxes.

- My ideas about God...
- People who believe in God...
- No one knows...
- When I think about God...

- Some people say...
- History teaches us...
- Nowadays...
- People say our rules come from...

- Nietzsche would have said...
- Human beings need to...
- Trying to be an individual means...
- If God is dead we can...

- Dostoevsky would say...
- Maybe we still need God because...
- The danger is that...
- The thing that worries a lot of people is...

- An atheist might say...
- By rejecting God...
- You can be sure what good is by...
- The really exciting thing now is...

- A Buddhist might argue...
- The Buddha said...
- A good life for a Buddhist means...
- Because Buddhists don’t believe in a God...

- Christians believe...
- God is...
- Christians say our sense of right and wrong...
- Our conscience...

- What I really think is...
- In the end...
- This makes me think...
- I’m still wondering about...
- We need freedom to...

Choice
Same goal
Challenge
Modelling
Scaffolding
A4L
Motivation – yours and theirs

• You’ve got to want to do it and you’ve got to make them want to do it and make them believe they can
Motivation – yours and theirs

want to make them believe
Motivation – yours

• Why did you become a teacher? Tell the person next to you... be prepared to feedback
• Moral purpose
• Improved teaching
• Improved Learning
• Improved outcomes
• For all... but especially for our vulnerable learners
Motivation – theirs

• Growth mind-sets. Encourage resilience
• Intelligence is not fixed (Dweck) but many students think it is... challenge this
• If they can’t access the work self esteem plummets
• If they are not challenged they get bored and can’t be bothered
• Catch them being good at something
• Praise
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Knowing your class

Data
Marking books
Chat to them
Speaking to other members of staff

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3 things...

...you will do tomorrow as a result of this session