One size doesn't fit all, right?

Differentiated practices of assessment in higher education.

Prof. dr. **Katrien** Struyven
School for Educational Studies - SES
U-RISE UHasselt Research on Innovative and Society-engaged Education

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One size doesn't fit all, right?

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One size for all?

- The **diversity of students** in the classroom today is more complex than ever (Ehlers & Montgomery, 1999);
- It's a fact (actually always has been) and it exists in **every classroom**, also in an HE context
- Research shows that a **student-centered classroom** better accommodates deep approaches to learning and can create more flexible solutions for learning

Differentiated instruction

addresses individual learning needs and maximizes students' learning opportunities (Latz & Adams, 2011)

Differentiated instruction is **useful in each classroom** = *"dealing positively and systematically with differences (i.e. **interest, readiness and learning profiles**) between students in order to produce maximal learning for every student"*

(Tomlinson, 2014; Vanderhoeven, 2004)

Interest	**Readiness**	**Profile**
Why learn?	**What** is learned?	**How** of learning?

3 differences that matter

Relevance, real world, 'wanting' to learn	Prior knowledge/ competence , easy/ difficult, …	Preferences, pace, context, materials,…

DI works with differences in interests

Relevance, imaginative, empathy

Example 1A
You see here an assignment that you have to tackle. Go ahead…

MUST to WILL
Responding to interests
Learning is inspiring

Example 1B
You see here an assignment that you have to tackle. Imagine the round object to be a soccer ball or a disco ball with mirrors. Which one would you choose?

Other examples...
Topic A on one side of the class, Topic B on the other side. Work with topics or media that appeal to everyone at the time (e.g., tiktok, influencers on YouTube, popular Netflix series, etc.).
Look for examples at home, kitchen, garden, leisure time … think about experiences, show pictures, videos, examples, …

Oh, interesting… Ok, this can be relevant!

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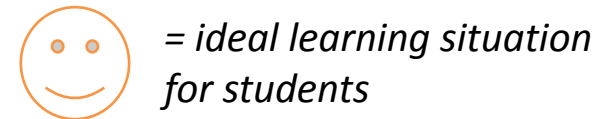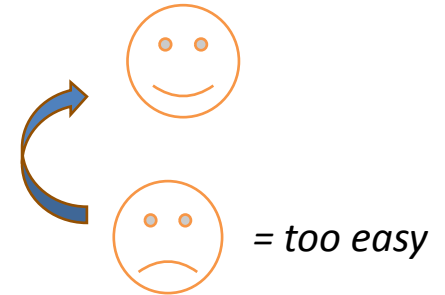# DI works with differences in readiness

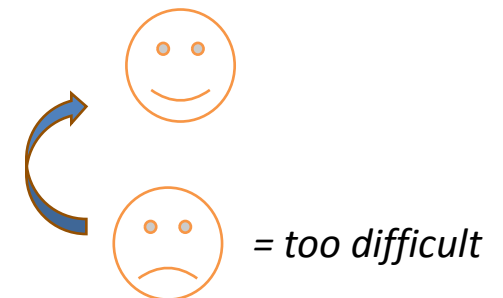Through DI > in 2 or 3 homo-geneous groups or by composing hetero-geneous groups

Homo-geneous? Yes, provided your attention is with students who are struggling.

Homogeneous? Dynamic! Determine this by topic, preferably in class. Provide help by student-coach, step-by-step plan, correction keys, ...

Objective teacher is working on...

= too easy

= ideal learning situation for students

Experiencing challenge & support

BORED to EFFORT
Responding to **readiness**
Learning requires effort (+1)

= too difficult

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DI works with differences in profiles

- I don't want to work in group, I'd rather work individually.
- Sir, there is too much noise here.
- I'm not ready yet!
- Will you help us if we can't do it?
- Oh great that we get to work in this way.
- May we choose with whom we work?
- Do we have to this assignment?
- What happens if I don't?
- ...

Choices, variety and flexibility

Taking these questions into account makes a learning environment richer, where choices are possible and flexibility is offered.
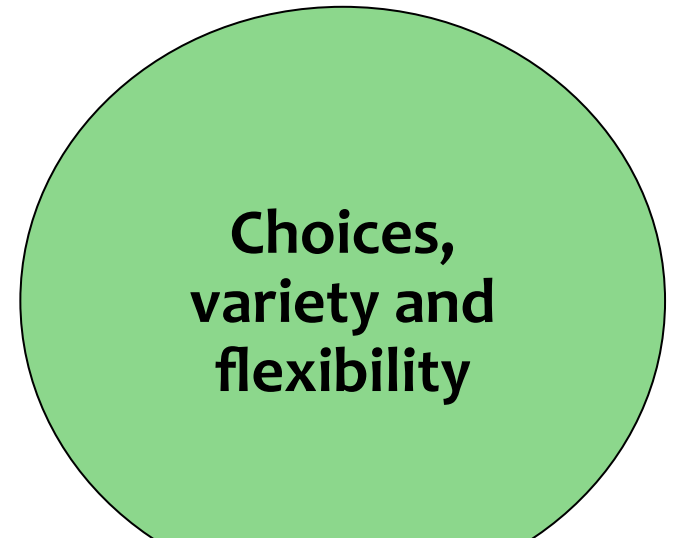
FOLLOWING to ENGAGING
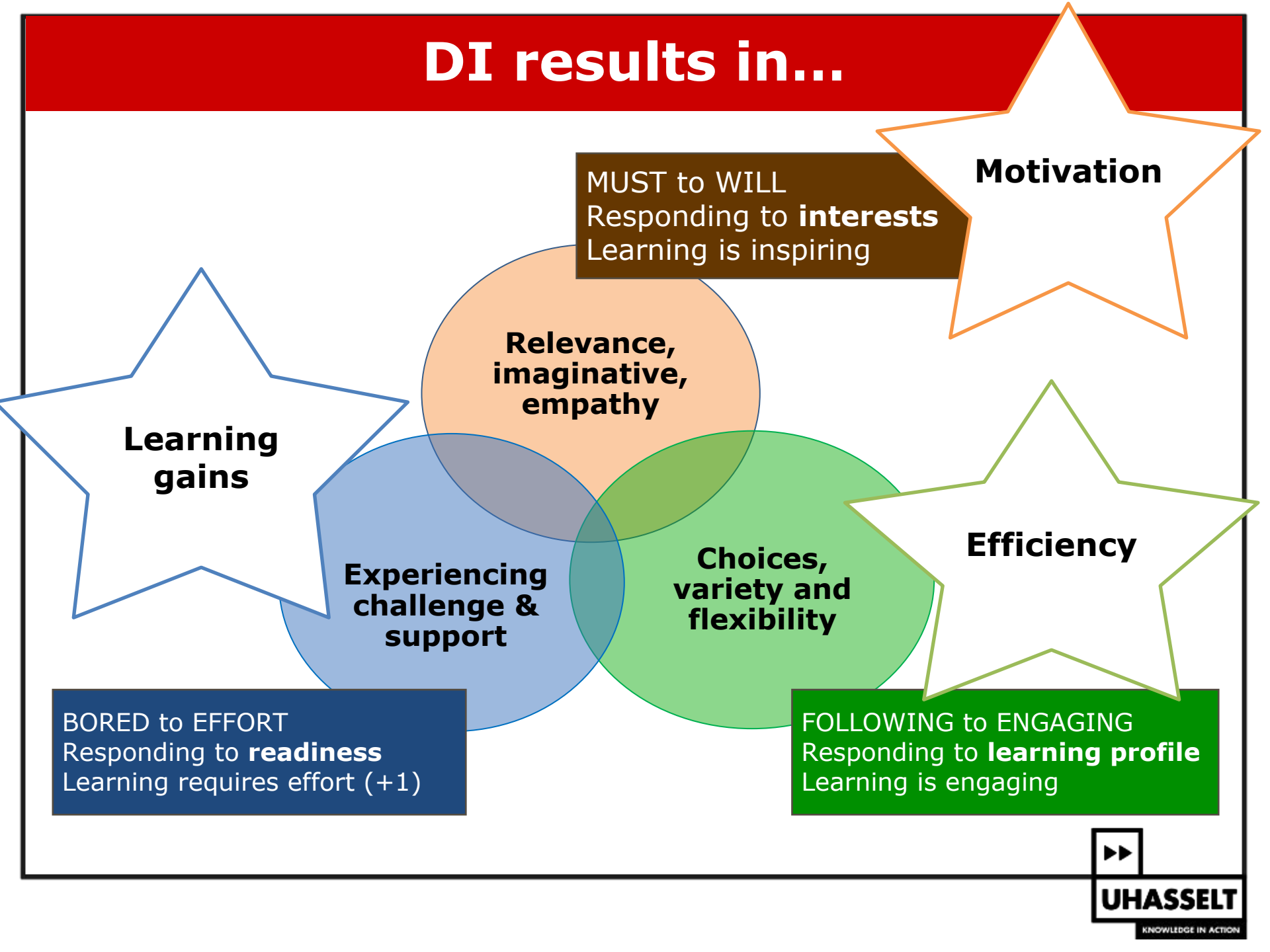Responding to **learning profile**
Learning is engaging

Benefits of differentiated instruction

DI results in...

Motivation

MUST to WILL
Responding to **interests**
Learning is inspiring

Relevance, imaginative, empathy

Learning gains

Efficiency

Experiencing challenge & support

Choices, variety and flexibility

BORED to EFFORT
Responding to **readiness**
Learning requires effort (+1)

FOLLOWING to ENGAGING
Responding to **learning profile**
Learning is engaging

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Consequences for assessment
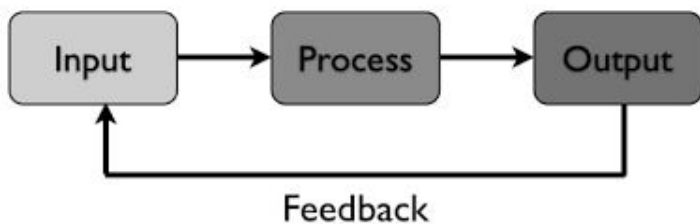
Keyvariable in DI is...

Output = Input

= Feedback for teacher & students

✓ <u>Lessons</u> get better, more adapted towards interests, readiness & profiles

✓ <u>Learning</u> gets better, every students learns and feedback fuels the process in a successful DI environment.

Coubergs et al., 2017;
Gheyssens et al. 2020;
Struyven et al. 2019.

Input → Process → Output

Feedback

Is DI possible in assessment?

Possible assessment formats

| Formative assessment	Summative assessment, evaluatie format =DI	Summative assessment, traditional formats
Feedback give/receive	Portfolio	Choices between oral/written exam
Peer feedback	Choices in content	Bonus questions
Quiz, pose questions, …	Open, creative assignment	Auxiliaries
1-minute paper	Choices in products	Tiered evaluation (M,M,M)
Entry/exit cards	Individual (open) assignments	Reasonable adaptations
…	…	…

Two principles crucial:
1. **Equal opportunity**
2. **Transparency**, including in reporting

Best ways to move forward

►►

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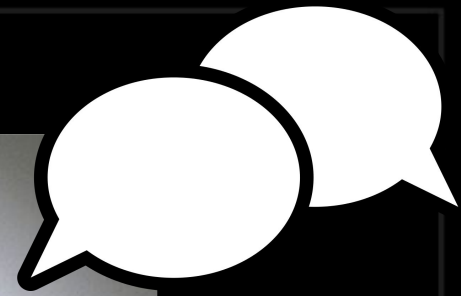
Thanks to ...

- Esther Gheyssens
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- Debbie De Neve
- Catherine Coubergs
- Nadine Engels
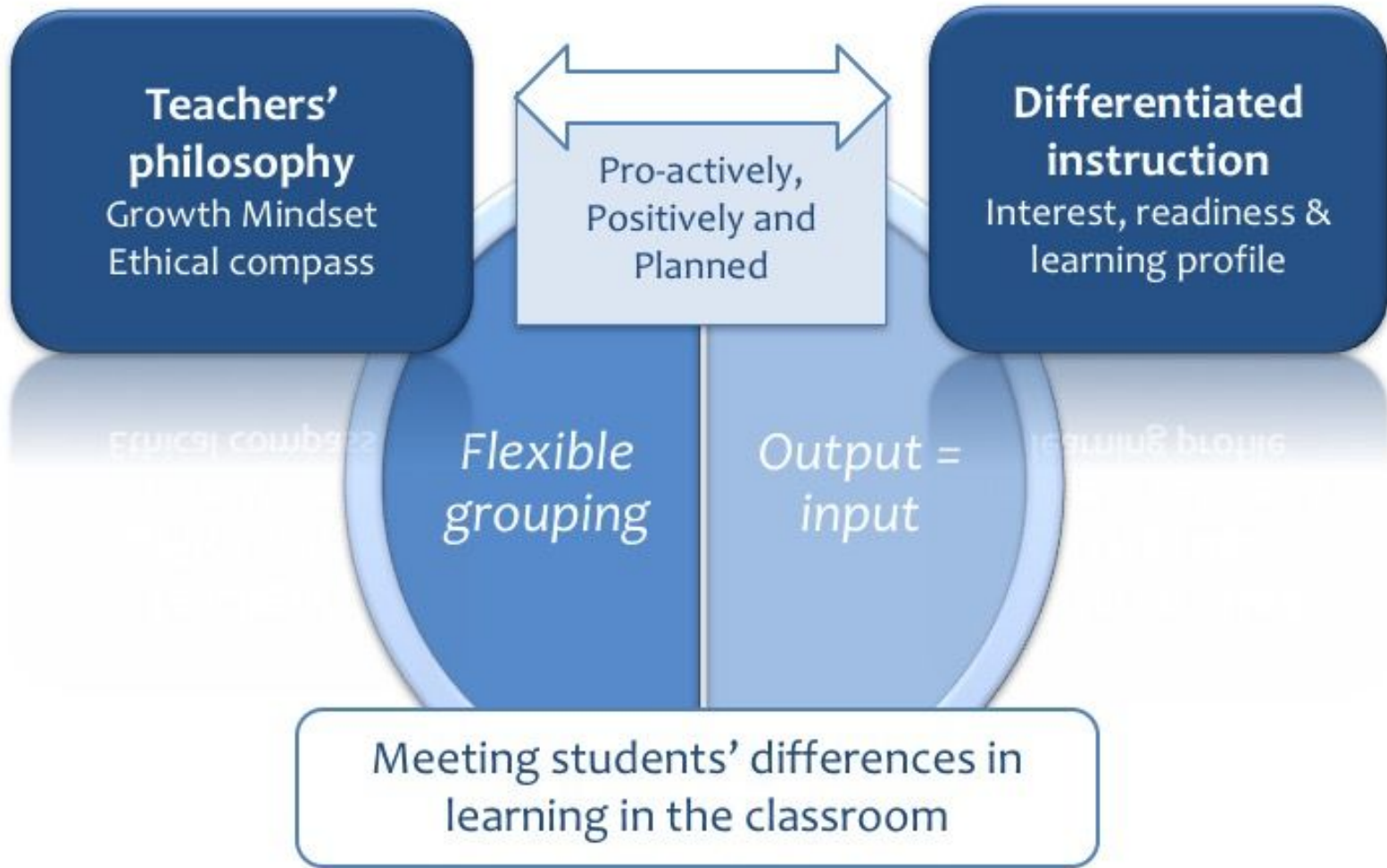- Jannie De Ruyter
- Marine Hering
- Julia Griful Freixenet
- …

Extra slides if needed...

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Different profiles of teachers

1. DI-teachers

2. Formal teachers

3. Fixed mindset teachers

SECONDARY EDUCATION

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Concerns about DI

- Material does not exist
  - E.g. Handbooks, curricula, ... not aligned with BKD
- Extra work
  - E.g. 3 lesson preparations/assignments/approaches instead of 1
- Practically not feasible within 50'
  - E.g. Before instruction given, etc. still 20' to work differentiated
- Size of classes
  - E.g. I can't know everyone, 'it's Christmas for names and Easter for more info, then trouble no more'
- Students feel this is unfair
  - E.g. I can't favor/disadvantage certain students by deleting parts, can I?
- Classroom management too complex and chaotic
  - E.g. group work produces too much noise, too much fuss, ...
- Infrastructure not present
  - E.g. there are no PCs in the classroom (for everyone) or tablets, ...

Source: Masterthesis of Marine Hering, supervised by Struyven, K. (2015).

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