

Changing a Chameleon Activity to a Differentiated Activity (page 1 of 3)

Original Chameleon Activity

- Dice game (pages 87 to 88)

Activity Goal

- To allow the student to practise responding to questions or prompts about a topic

Activity Materials

- Dice in a variety of colours
- Index cards

Why this is a chameleon activity

The index cards can feature different questions or prompts on the topic. It's easy to vary the language demands for a pair or group of students.

How to make this activity differentiated

Since the Dice Game can allow for variation in language demands (which is evident in the original chameleon activity), you could argue that it already has a “differentiation by language complexity” element. But the initial structure for the game does not take into account the content readiness of the students for the topic. I'm going to show you three distinct task options within the structure of the dice game that would be used to account for students' different background knowledge bases.

Topic: Healthy Food Habits

Prior context: At the start of the learning block, students were asked to take a short 10-question quiz on healthy foods (available on the internet). Students were divided into 3 groups, based on their (non-marked) scores on the quiz: students answering 3 or fewer questions correctly are Group A; students answering 4 to 7 questions correctly are Group B; and students answering 8 to 10 questions correctly are Group C.

Today's lesson is going to help students work with the food vocabulary as a way to prepare them to create food diaries, which they will keep over the next week to track their food intake. The Dice Game activity structure is going to be used to help the students activate food vocabulary and, where needed, add some new terms.

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Materials

- A variety of coloured dice, with one colour assigned to each group (Note: Within each group, there can be multiple pairs or trios for completing the actual task.)
- Index cards on which to write the prompt
- For Group A, a set of 12-16 pictures representing healthy and less healthy foods (in equal numbers), with the terms written on the back. You'll need as many sets of pictures as there are pairings/trios within Group A. It may also be helpful to have 2 more index cards per pair/trio in Group A, with "Pile 1" written on one card, and "Pile 2" written on the other.

	Group A	Group B	Group C
What students will need	Something to write with and a place to record the unknown terms	Something to write with and a place to record their list	Something to write with and a place to record their list
To write on index card	Roll the die. If you roll an odd number, find a picture in the pile that is a "good for you food" and put it in Pile 1. If you roll an even number, find a picture in the pile that is a "bad for you food" and put that picture in Pile 2. Write any term in your notebook if you don't know it, and draw a picture of the food next to it to remember what it means.	dairy products fruits vegetables meats/other alternatives grains treats Roll the die. Using a complete sentence, identify a food that goes in that category. If your partner(s) help you come up with a word for the category, be sure to write it in your notebook (and draw it), so you can refer to it later.	Roll the die. The number you roll represents how many foods you need to share with your partner(s), in a complete sentence. If your partner(s) help you come up with a word, be sure to write it in your notebook (and draw it), so you can refer to it later. Don't repeat foods!

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Why this is now a differentiated activity: Students are given task options based on their familiarity with the topic, which is linked to their knowledge of food vocabulary. All students are actively engaged with the act of recalling and sharing food vocabulary (which is our goal), but the way in which they are doing it is aligned with their existing knowledge base.

Remember, students can always change task options if it is discovered that the task is not the best fit; this is not uncommon for students whose prior knowledge bases are near the “cut-off” for a particular group. Paths for students should never be rigid.