

An approach for adding differentiation within classes

The Chur Model



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Four aspects of the Chur Model

The space as a third teacher



If you want to teach in line with the Chur Model, you have to be prepared to rearrange your classroom: the seats are no longer positioned to face the board, pupils no longer have a personal workspace and teaching resources are stored on shelves. There are workspaces for individual work, partner work and group work, each of which is designed differently. It is crucial to have enough space for moving about so that the students can circulate around the classroom well and to have sufficient room for a circle of seats.

Inputs in a circle



The circle of seats is a community-minded space where the group meets at the beginning and at the end of the lesson. Every student has a set place in the circle of seats. In addition, each lesson starts with an input in a circle lasting no longer than 10 to 12 minutes. During this time, the learning tasks are presented and the foundations laid so that the students can work on the content over a longer period of time. The following principle should apply here: as much instruction as necessary and as much construction as possible.

Learning with learning tasks



Teachers “think” and plan their lessons in the form of learning tasks. These align with the input and represent different levels of learning, this enabling differentiation to be added to the lessons. The teacher is aware of the basic requirements and makes them transparent. This sets out obligations that provide guidance and allow for feedback on the learning status. The students choose the learning opportunity that corresponds to their level of learning. The teacher observes and assists with this process.

“Free” choice of learning location and learning partner



Students are encouraged to help shape the way in which they learn. This increasingly makes them the subject in their own learning (Gerald Hüther, 2016, p. 138), which has a positive effect on their motivation. However, this places demands on their self-control. The student is given a real opportunity to participate in their learning by choosing their learning task, their workspace and their learning partner. Students are assisted and supported in this process.

Areas of activity

1 = I am still at the very beginning 2 = A few attempts are visible 3 = I already do this, if not consistently
4 = I do it this way

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1	Rearranging the classroom The classroom becomes a learning landscape with different workspaces. The board no longer holds the dominant place in the classroom, while the circle plays a central role. Students can choose their workspace themselves.				
2	Inputs – Working on learning tasks – Reflection The inputs with the class take place in a circle and are kept short (usually 10 to 12 minutes) so the students have more active learning time and the teacher has more time to provide advice and support with the learning.				
3	Transparent expectations of performance The teacher is familiar with the basic requirements on the topic and makes them transparent to the students.				
4	Pupils choose from the learning opportunities The pupils assess their abilities themselves and choose the learning tasks from the learning opportunities that correspond to their level of performance. The teacher observes and supports the students during this process.				
5	Class leadership Compliance with rules is taken into account. Customs and clear procedures create a pleasant learning environment. The resources are always to be found in the same place.				
6	Learning reflection The teacher conducts regular discussions with the students about their learning (learning reflections with the whole class and individually). The aim is for the students to be challenged time and again to think out loud and justify themselves.				
7	Accepting diversity and difference The individual differences between the learners (learning requirements, prior knowledge, learning strategies, learning potential) form the starting point for learning. Teachers are aware of their students' level of learning.				
8	Students learn from each other and from each other Helper systems are introduced and established. The students are aware of strategies that help them when they are stuck.				
9	Acquire and consolidate learning strategies and learning techniques Skills relating to learning strategies lay the groundwork for self-regulated, life-long learning. Cognitive and metacognitive support and motivation strategies must be practiced and consolidated on a conscious level.				
10	Mindset: I trust my students Students make decisions that affect their learning and increasingly take responsibility.				

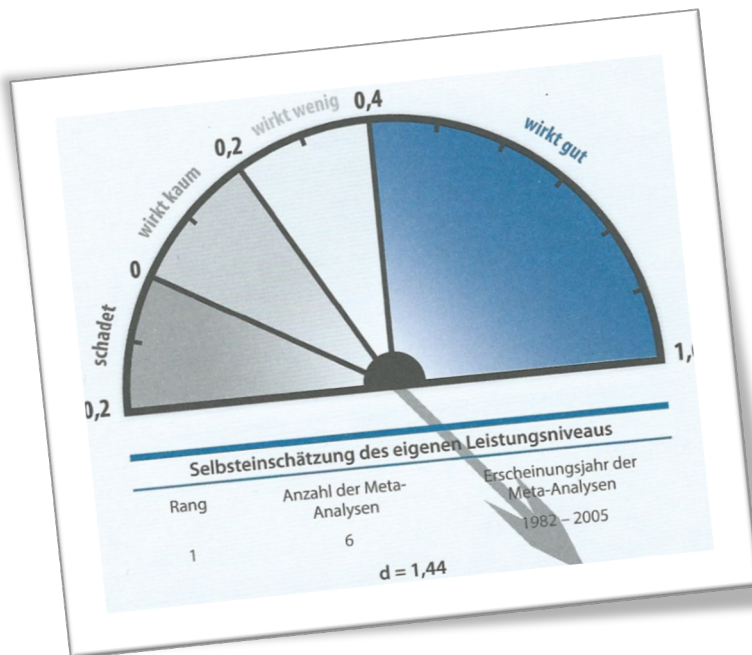
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Impact of the Chur Model

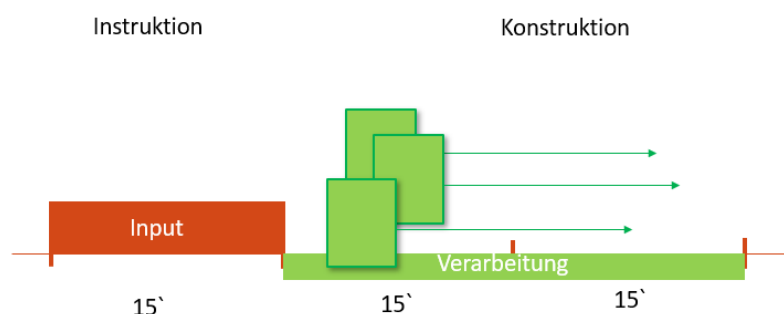
Even though there have not been any scientific studies on the impact of the Chur Model, there is consistent feedback from teachers who teach in line with the model, who most often mention students' intrinsic motivation. Deci/Ryan's self-determination theory provides explanations for this (participation/relationship/experiencing competence). Time and again, students are required to assess their own level of

performance and to choose learning tasks accordingly. The effect is described by John Hattie as being very impactful on learning (ranked 1 of 150 measures examined from Klaus Zierer, 2014, Hattie für gestresste Lehrer, p. 48).

The guiding principle "As much instruction as necessary and as much construction as possible" leads to more active learning time. Adjusting the lessons via internal differentiation makes pupils more motivated to learn and gives them a more positive learning experience. Giving students the freedom to choose where they sit has a positive effect on the behaviour and social life of the school class.



Although the system of the Chur Model in itself creates favourable conditions for a positive impact, it is up to the teacher to take advantage of the opportunities it offers. The criteria for good teaching (Meyer, Helmke) also apply to the Chur Model. Our experience shows that teachers who have the courage to change their classroom also shift into a development mode.



The system makes it easier for the teacher to take on different roles: strong leadership during the inputs, observation while students are choosing their learning tasks, assistance during the work phase and moderation during the phases in which reflection takes place.

In 2019, Karin Lutz-Bommer was able to prove in a Master's thesis on the Chur Model that teachers who work in line with this model have a tangible notion of skills-based approaches and believe that adding differentiation to their teaching is completely feasible.

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