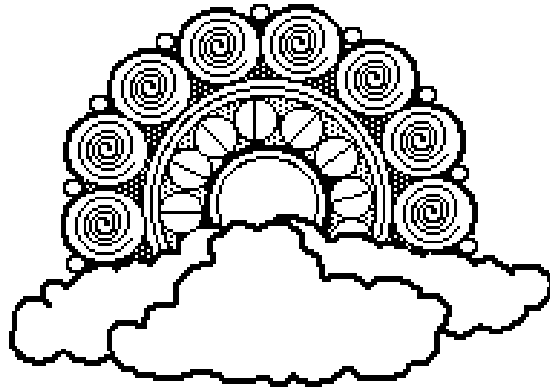


CHICKEN SOUP FOR THE GIFTED?

Differentiation in the Regular Classroom



Ellen D. Fiedler, Ph.D.

Professor Emerita – Master of Arts in Gifted Education

Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago, IL

Wings for Education, Inc., New Buffalo, MI

269.469.6225

email: E-Fiedler@neiu.edu or ellenfiedler@comcast.net

IS DIFFERENTIATION THE ANSWER FOR TEACHING A BROAD RANGE OF STUDENTS IN REGULAR CLASSROOMS?

KEY POINTS:

- Teachers can implement a variety of *differentiation strategies across curricular areas*.
- Teachers can differentiate curriculum and instruction for their students based on *readiness, learning profiles, and interests*.
- *Compacting the curriculum*, "*cubing*", "*tic-tac-toe*", and *tiered assignments* are examples of useful differentiation strategies
- All students need appropriate *level and pacing* of instruction, and differentiation can help with this.
- Some students need greater *depth, breadth, and complexity* in the curriculum than is provided for them.
- Modifications of *content, process, products, and the learning environment* can be used effectively in regular classrooms to differentiate curriculum and instruction for all students, including those who are gifted.
- *Teaching/learning models* that are effective for developing students' gifts and talents (whether they have been identified as "gifted" or not) can be incorporated into classroom curriculum and instruction.
- A variety of *curriculum alternatives* are available that are better suited to the *characteristics* that distinguish gifted students, including from their more typical classmates.
- Methods for effective *assessment* that can be implemented by classroom teachers need to be tailored to individual differences within the student population.
- Teachers often raise *classroom management issues and organizational concerns* and need help in finding *effective solutions* to these challenges.
- Teachers need on-going practice and professional development opportunities to refine their ability to use differentiation effectively in regular classrooms for all students, including those who are gifted.
- There are *pros and cons of solely relying on differentiation* approaches for meeting the diverse needs of all students in regular classrooms, including successfully meeting the educational needs of those who are gifted.

Phones: 773.882.4876 or 269.469.62225 • email: E-Fiedler@neiu.edu or ellenfiedler@comcast.net

**DIFFERENTIATION FOR THE GIFTED IN REGULAR CLASSROOMS:
SOME OF THE PROS AND CONS**

PRO (+)

CON (-)

Avoids the pitfalls of “one-size-fits-all” teaching

Requires more planning time for creating differentiated lessons

Respects diversity/differences in students’ readiness, learning profiles, and interests

Implies that teachers are skilled in assessing readiness, learning profiles, and interests

Creates opportunities for all students to be actively engaged in learning more of the time.

Requires teachers to be very adept in classroom management techniques

Makes teaching and learning more interesting

Makes assessment of student work more challenging for teachers

Is reflective of current thinking about “best practices” in teaching

May need considerable explanation for parents/administrators/school board members to understand

More higher-level thinking strategies are typically used

Is not a substitute for comprehensive complex curriculum for the gifted

Avoids over-emphasis on differences in abilities (i.e., “labeling”)

Requires teachers to be skillful in explaining reasons for differentiation practices to students

Appropriately grouping and re-grouping students helps develop gifts and talents of all students in the classroom

Gifted students may still mask their abilities and not have enough opportunities to be with others who challenge them

GOALS FOR A DIFFERENTIATED CURRICULUM

For ALL Students

- ☞ to make the curriculum “richer” and more meaningful
- ☞ to enhance motivation
- ☞ to remove artificial boundaries that otherwise prevent students from taking their educational experiences as far as they can
- ☞ to develop skills in critical and creative thinking and problem solving

For ANY Students Who Have Mastered the Core Curriculum

- ☞ to meet individual needs / respond to individual differences
- ☞ to extend learning experiences beyond the core curriculum
- ☞ to explore multi-faceted dimensions and nuances of the content

For the Gifted

- ☞ to tailor learning experiences to the characteristics that distinguish gifted students from their more typical age-mates
- ☞ to provide complex and stimulating learning experiences for gifted students who are capable of stretching well beyond the learning abilities of others
- ☞ to provide appropriately-challenging work for gifted students who can master basic skills or acquire information faster than others
- ☞ to make appropriate use of the wealth of knowledge and broader perspectives that gifted students bring to the classroom
- ☞ to explore the content in greater breadth and depth, going wider and deeper in order to accommodate specific interests of gifted students
- ☞ to provide gifted students with meaningful learning experiences and opportunities to grapple with significant ideas and issues
- ☞ to help gifted students use their time productively and maximize their capabilities in relevant ways

ELEMENTS TO DIFFERENTIATE CURRICULUM FOR THE GIFTED

CONTENT

- ☛ More abstract ideas
- ☛ More complex and integrated topics
- ☛ Greater variety of subject matter
- ☛ Key concepts as an organizational framework
- ☛ Studies of creative/productive people
- ☛ Studies of methods used by scholars and professionals in the field.

PROCESS

- ☛ Higher levels of thinking
- ☛ Open-ended thinking
- ☛ Inquiry or discovery learning
- ☛ Expressing evidence of reasoning
- ☛ Opportunities for freedom of choice
- ☛ Group interaction and simulations
- ☛ Varied teaching strategies that maintain interest and accommodate learning styles

PRODUCTS

- ☛ Involve original, detailed work
- ☛ Resemble products developed by professionals in the field
- ☛ Deal with real problems and real audiences
- ☛ Demonstrate transformation and synthesis of information
- ☛ Evaluated by self and any other appropriate audience

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- ☛ Student-centered, *rather than teacher-centered*
- ☛ Stresses independence, *rather than dependence*
- ☛ Open, *rather than closed*
- ☛ Accepting, *rather than judging*
- ☛ Complex, *rather than simple*
- ☛ High mobility, *rather than low mobility*

SOME STRATEGIES FOR DIFFERENTIATION

☛ Tic-Tac-Toe Choice Boards.

- Different boxes provide a variety of choices of products
- Different boxes provide for different learning styles/modalities
- Students select three across, three down, or three diagonally
- Can be used for tiered assignments

☛ Tiered assignments

- Students' level of readiness is determined
- Challenging activities are provided at varying levels of difficulty
- Appropriate assessment is implemented

☛ Cubing

- Different colored “cubes” are created for students based on readiness levels
- Each “face” of the cube has a different activity on it
- Students “roll” their cube and complete the activity that comes up (may be repeated to complete more than one)
- May be tied to Bloom's Taxonomy

☛ Compacting & Contracting

- Pretests to determine mastery
- Eliminate curricular material students have mastered
- Different assignments for students mastering regular material
- Contracts are used for individual & small group work that replaces regular material

☛ Learning Centers

- Meaningful, hands-on experiences are used that are integrated with the curriculum
- Students work in various locations around the classroom
- Accountability for student work is built into the center

☛ Instructional Grouping

- Students are grouped and re-grouped based on common instructional needs
- Lessons are aimed to challenge the members of each group
- Ground rules are set ahead of time for groups to work productively
- Appropriate accountability is built-in for each group

MORE STRATEGIES FOR DIFFERENTIATION

☛ Questioning and Thinking, e.g.

- Teach thinking skills in regular curriculum
- Provide questions that encourage reasoning and logical thinking
- Ask open-ended questions
- Encourage students to ask questions at all levels of Bloom's Taxonomy

☛ Providing Challenge and Choices, e.g.

- Allow students to work in location other than class
- Contracts or management plans for independent study
- Work from alternative grade textbook in class
- More advanced curriculum unit
- Group by ability across classrooms
- Send to alternative grade for specific area instruction
- Seek student's opinion in allocating time for subjects

☛ Reading and Written Assignments, e.g.

- Assign advanced level reading
- Assign reports
- Assign extended-time projects
- Assign book reports
- Creative or expository writing: topic selected by teacher
- Creative or expository writing: topic selected by student

☛ Curriculum Modifications, e.g.

- Students' interests are considered in relationship to content to be taught
- Student choice is built into the curriculum
- Alternatives for demonstrating mastery are provided, including "testing out"

☛ Enrichment Centers, e.g.

- Time for self-selected interests
- Students work in various locations around classroom
- Additional related topics are explored

☛ Seatwork, e.g.

- Use basic skills worksheets
- Use enrichment worksheets
- Use self-instructional kits
- Use puzzles or word searches

Categories based on research conducted by Archambault, et al.

COMPACTING THE CURRICULUM: THE "BASICS"

"Curriculum compacting" is

- ☞ a systematic procedure for modifying or streamlining the regular curriculum.
- ☞ designed to eliminate repetition of previously mastered material.
- ☞ aimed at upgrading the challenge level of the regular curriculum.
- ☞ a way to provide time for appropriate enrichment and/or acceleration activities.

Curriculum compacting includes the following steps:

- 1) Defining the goals and outcomes of a particular unit or segment of instruction,
- 2) Determining and documenting which students have already mastered most or all of a specified set of learning outcomes or are capable of mastering them in less time than their peers, and
- 3) Providing replacement activities for material already mastered through the use of instructional options that enable a more challenging and productive use of the student's time.

"Curriculum compacting might best be thought of as *organized common sense*, because it simply recommends the natural pattern that teachers ordinarily follow when individualizing instruction, or teaching in the days before textbooks were invented. Compacting might also be thought of as the mirror image of remedial procedures that have always been used in diagnostic/prescriptive models of teaching." (Colangelo & Davis, 1997, pp. 145-146)

COMPACTING THE CURRICULUM

DO.....

- ☞ Provide any and all of your students open access to procedures you've established for curriculum compacting.
- ☞ Use appropriate assessment strategies to have students demonstrate their mastery of required skills and acquisition of knowledge; then, allow them to work at their instructional level.
- ☞ Maximize the use of student choices in determining what, when, where, and how they will learn, based on “negotiables” and “non-negotiables.”
- ☞ Involve students in making decisions about appropriate learning alternatives, once they've demonstrated that they've mastered the required material.
- ☞ Offer ways for students to learn whatever they need to be successful, including prerequisite skills and skills for self-directed learning.
- ☞ Provide assistance for students in gaining access to resources that they need.
- ☞ Create opportunities for students to share the results of their alternative learning experiences with others.
- ☞ Make sure students aren't isolated (no "lepers").
- ☞ Tell students about your procedures ahead of time, including level of competence to qualify for compacting
- ☞ Inform parents.

DON'T.....

- ☞ Lock any students out of opportunities based on preconceived ideas of what they can or cannot do.
- ☞ Penalize students by requiring them to do “double duty” (i.e., complete all the “regular” assignments as well as those that are more challenging).
- ☞ Call undue attention to who is doing what assignments and when.
- ☞ Expect students to be automatically self-directed, self-motivated, and skilled at working independently.
- ☞ Deprive students of opportunities to learn through real struggle.
- ☞ Penalize students for doing more difficult assignments by unfair grading practices.
- ☞ "Teach kids things they already know." (*Advice to teachers from a highly-gifted child*)
- ☞ Be afraid to try compacting and refine it as you go along.
- ☞ Penalize kids for your lack of refinement.

MANAGING DIFFERENTIATION

• Some Specific Strategies for Success •

“If the mere thought of having individuals or small groups of students engaging in a variety of different objectives at various locations throughout the classroom causes your head to spin, you may want to read this section several times.” (Meador, 2005, p. 18). This advice is pertinent to this section in your handout, as well as to any other source of information on classroom/time management for Differentiated Instruction (D.I.).

The following is a synopsis of some potentially useful strategies for success in D.I. – especially drawing upon the work of Carol Ann Tomlinson, Diane Heacox, and Bertie Kingore. *(In order to make this information as accessible as possible, specific references to each of these sources will not be included here, although the specific books from which most of these ideas have been gleaned are listed on the last page.)*

As you read through these lists, you might want to highlight the strategies that **you** want to implement. *(You don’t need to use all of these—just the ones that you think will be the most useful for you!)*

START SMALL

- Try one new idea or strategy at a time. *(Once you feel reasonably confident in using it, try another.)*
- Select one curricular area or one unit to differentiate—not your whole curriculum.
- Try a differentiated task for only a small block of time in the beginning *(e.g., 10-15 minutes)*.
- Begin by teaching all of your students to do an “anchor activity” *(meaningful work done individually and silently – e.g., journal writing, free reading, seatwork in math, etc.)*.
- Consider modeling and rehearsing the routines with your students that you want to establish for small group work, using learning centers, etc.

START WITH WHAT IS

- Acknowledge what you already do. *(Do you pretest? Do you individualize any part of your curriculum? Do you sometimes allow students to skip ahead or stay with a topic longer? Have you already made a commitment to know your students and to make learning relevant to them?)*
- Focus on challenge and variety to determine how differentiated your current units are. *(Acknowledge [and celebrate!] what you already have and consider what might be missing.)*
- Get ideas for tiered assignments from your teacher’s editions, your current curriculum, and your colleagues.
- Sort your existing activities. *(Which should all students do? Which are only appropriate for some? Which could be eliminated altogether?)*
- Assign existing activities with the principles of differentiation in mind. *(Ask, “Which students would benefit most from this?” Don’t assume that everyone in your class should do everything.)*

SMALL SIGNIFICANT STARTERS

- Take notes each day about your students. *(Be conscious of what works and what doesn’t work for which learners.)*
- Assess students before you begin to teach a skill or topic.
- Look at all work students do *(discussions, journal entries, centers, products, quizzes, group tasks, homework)* as indicators of student need.
- Try creating one differentiated lesson per unit, one unit/subject area at a time.
- Differentiate one product per semester.
- Find multiple resources for a couple of key parts of your curriculum *(e.g., use several texts, supplementary books at various readability levels from basic to quite advanced, videos, audiotapes, internet resources, etc.)*
- Establish class criteria for success with products. *(Then, work with students to add personal criteria to their lists and/or add one or two criteria for each student based on what you know of that student’s strengths and needs.)*

- Give students more choices about how to work, how to express learning, or which homework assignments to do. *(Generally, structured choices work best.)*
- Develop and use a two-day learning contract the first marking period, a four-day learning contract the second marking period, and a week-long learning contract the third marking period.
- Commit yourself to growing in your comfort level with D.I. *(Try something new, reflect on what you learned from the experience, and apply those insights to the next new step.)*

PREPARING YOURSELF

- Envision how an activity will look. *(Take time before the day begins to ask yourself how you want a differentiated activity to begin, what you want it to look like as it progresses, and how it should end.)*
- Step back and reflect. *(As you work your way into differentiated instruction, think your way into it as well. When you try something new, take time to reflect before you take the next step.)*

PREPARING YOUR STUDENTS

- Talk with students about the fact that we all learn differently. Help them understand that assignments don't have to be the same to be fair. *(One size does NOT fit all!)*
- Provide clearly developed directions, criteria, and expectations before the task begins. *(Give directions both verbally and in writing. Consider posting the directions, etc.)*
- Set up behavior guidelines, post them, discuss them, and be consistent about enforcing them.
- Discuss expected behavior for collaborative work: stay on task, participate, listen carefully, share ideas, and support each other's contributions.
- Ask students for their ideas about how to make differentiation work best in your classroom. Generate a list of ideas *(including yours)* and post them.
- Use signals that inform students when to begin and end tasks. *(Collaborate with students regarding what signals to use for what.)*

INITIATE NOISE CONTROL

- Provide guidelines for sound levels during work time. *(Give students metaphors such as, "Use eight-inch voices. No one farther away should be able to hear your voice.")*
- Concretely establish the desired range of volume. As a class, discuss a "productive buzz" of sound versus the "roar of chaos." *(Role play the different levels of sound on a continuum from "preferred" to "out of control.")*
- Elicit students' ideas for noise control. *(Students may have more ownership in noise control efforts when they participate in establishing the parameters.)*
- Develop a signal for quiet. *(Examples: Raise hands and hold in place, ring a chime or bell, clap or snap patterns that students join in, use a remote control to activate a CD of music established as the signal piece.)*
- Talk softly as much as possible. *(Tends to make students listen more carefully.)*
- Use colored dots or cards. *(Green = group is working at a productive level; yellow = students in group need to lower noise level; red = exceeds appropriate noise level & needs to be changed immediately. Note: Use a majority of green to reinforce understanding as groups demonstrate the desired volume.)*
- Tell students "You can use anything you hear from another group." *(Tends to result in students drawing closer together and talking rather quietly so that others don't "steal" their ideas.)*
- Experiment with the use of quiet background music during group work. *(Have the students assess whether it's helpful or not, as well as suggesting what music to use, if any.)*

ESTABLISH PROCEDURES

- Establish routines for distributing student folders, getting & returning supplies, turning in completed work, etc. *(Select specific students to deliver and pick up necessary materials. Rotate the responsibilities.)*
- Set up patterns for movement around the room. *(Discuss procedures and, as appropriate, practice them before they are used.)*

- Establish routines so students know what to do when/if they finish a task early.
- Establish a signal so students know how to indicate they need help. *(Make cut-outs of hands that are green on one side and red on the other, and then laminate them. Students place the green side up when they are available to give a hand to someone else; the red side communicates that they need assistance.)*
- Set clear guidelines about your availability during group time. *(Teachers have used various signals to indicate when they are not available: a red card on a lanyard, a ponytail “scrunchy” around one of their wrists, a “do not disturb” sign, wearing a tiara, etc.)*
- Work with students on being good listeners. *(Help them learn to focus on you when you talk, ask them to “replay” what you said in their heads, and ask someone to summarize essential directions aloud.)*
- Ask students to go through a four-step **RICE** process if they are stuck about what to do next. *(1. Try hard to **R**ecall what the teacher said; 2. **I**magine logically what the directions would have been for the task, 3. **C**heck with a classmate, 4. Consult an “**E**xpert of the day—someone who has been selected by the teacher for that day for having the independence or skills necessary to provide guidance.)*
- In rare instances when the **RICE** process doesn’t work, have students move to a pre-approved anchor activity until they can get your help. *(They should be able to tell you what they’d tried first.)*
- Consider “Home Base” seats where students begin and end class every day.
- Establish start-up & wrap-up procedures. *(Give students about a two-minute signal that their work time is about to end – e.g., flashing the lights or walking to each group and telling them.)*

THINK THINGS THROUGH FIRST

- When may my students work together?
- How many may work together?
- Which places in the room are most appropriate for small-group interaction?
- What are students to do if they need supplies or materials?
- How will I provide directions?
- What level of noise is appropriate for each activity?
- What movement will be necessary around the classroom?
- What is the best arrangement for the classroom?
- How and when can students get my assistance?
- How will I use my time?
- When and where can I best meet with each group?
- How do I want to sort group materials? Do I want to use plastic bags or bins or ?
- What group assignments and workcards do I want to have ready to go?
- How am I going to arrange work folders?
- What are students to do with work in progress?
- What are students to do with completed work?
- What are students to do when they finish an activity early?
- What clean up and reorganization responsibilities are required?
- How can I best keep families informed about what I’m doing with differentiation? *(e.g., newsletters, notes, emails, your own webpage, etc.)*

MANAGING GROUPS

- Readiness-based groups. *(Use pre-assessments to determine students’ readiness levels and form groups based on similar readiness in skills and content knowledge.)*
- Skill groups. *(Use continuing assessment during instruction to determine which students would benefit from re-teaching, additional practice, or acceleration of skill levels.)*
- Interest-based groups. *(Conduct interviews, use interest inventories, or surveys. Then, use the information to form interest groups.)*
- Project-centered or problem-based groups. *(When the objective is a mixed-readiness group experience or a cooperative learning task, you can assign students randomly to the group.)*

- Self-selected groups. *(Students chose with whom they want to work. Control group size by specifying how many students may work in a group. Note: Students may also choose to work individually.)*
- Group and regroup students based on the purpose of each lesson.

MANAGING STUDENT WORK

- At the beginning of group time, post names on the board, an overhead transparency, or flip chart to let students know which group they're in.
- Or, organize name cards into work groups on a pocket chart.
- Or, before students arrive, list the names of each group's members on a "table tent" *(large sheet of paper folded three times so that it stands up)*. Or, designate each work area by a color or number on a table tent; list student names by group and note each group's designated color or number.
- Use student work folders. *(Keep them in the classroom to store all work in progress: partially completed tasks, independent study work, and anchor options. Also include a record-keeping sheet to document work completed and date of completion.)*
- Establish carefully organized and coded places where students should place completed work *(e.g., stacking trays, boxes, or folders)*.
- Staple open pocket folders to your bulletin board to hold reference materials, directions, or worksheets. Color code or number them to correlate each item with a task. *(For example, red task materials are in the red folder or "task #1" materials are in "folder #1")*.
- Provide storage room for larger, bulkier projects in progress. Use a back counter, a table, or plastic crates.
- Carry a clipboard around the class with you much of the time. *(Make brief notes about nifty things you see students do, "Aha's!", points of confusion, or working conditions that need to be tightened.)*
- Don't feel compelled to grade everything. Grading means more to students if it's infrequent. *(There's a time for students to figure things out and a time for seeing if they did, but the two shouldn't always be the same. Use peer checkers or "experts of the day" when an accuracy check is necessary.)*
- Teach students to work for quality. *(Announce to students how the group's work will be shared with others. Emphasis that craftsmanship and a sense of pride in work are what matter, and help them know why. Let students analyze the difference in work that is hastily finished versus work that shows persistence, revision, and creativity.)*

MANAGING DIRECTIONS

- Use workcards to provide step-by-step directions for individual, partner, or group tasks. *(As needed, include a checklist of quality criteria on the workcard.)*
- Set up workstations to organize material and resources. *(Use a nearby bulletin board to post directions and work samples, as appropriate. Or, create a work area by using a tri-fold poster board with mounted pockets to hold direction and paper resources or supplies.)*
- Provide procedure checklists for each task. *(Students can use them to check off steps or components as each is completed.)*
- Give directions both orally & visually. *(Can audiotape directions to place at workstations, as well as providing written directions on workcards, a flip chart, the board, or an overhead transparency.)*

KEEPING TRACK OF WORK

You keep track:

- Through observations and informal chats with students at work.
- Through checklists on clipboards or comments on notecards or self-stick notes that are later placed in student files.
- Through scheduled conferences with students.
- By posting "office hours" that say when you are available to talk with students about their work.
- By reviewing student self-evaluations using checklists of quality criteria.
- By skimming through students' work and worklogs found in their folders.

Students keep track:

- Through worklogs on which they record their progress on an activity that spans several class periods.
- Through procedure checklists that ask them to check off each component of a project or activity as it is complete.
- Through checklists of quality criteria that guide their work and encourage self-evaluation.
- Through peer reviews with partners from their work group.
- Through timelines and checkpoints with due dates to help them keep on track with longer-term activities.

MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES FOR PRODUCTIVITY AND QUALITY

- Consider creating small groups. (*Groups of two or three may exhibit more on-task behavior and less conflicts than larger groups.*)
- Communicate specific directions, expectations, and positive work behaviors.
- Provide clearly developed criteria and expectations before the task begins (*e.g., checklists and rubrics*).
- Use contracts in which students negotiate objectives, positive work behaviors & end products.
- Designate an audience for the students' work.
- Maintain focus on students' ownership and accountability. (*Don't do for them what they can do for themselves.*)
- Elicit students' ideas for productivity (*i.e., ask them what they need in order to be as productive as possible*).
- Provide a choice of products or tasks whenever feasible, suggesting two or more options for products instead of requiring all groups to do the same thing. (*Choice is a powerful motivator. Ask, "What do you choose as your best way to demonstrate how much you have learned?"*)
- Provide behavior choices (*e.g., working alone and doing some projects by yourself rather than working with your group*).
- Designate individual responsibilities within the group depending on the task and the group (*e.g., recorder, materials gatherer, discussion director, summarizer, etc.*).
- Tape record groups (*e.g., quietly place a tape recorder in the middle of an off-task group and announce, "I am recording your group today."*).
- Announce, "Any group can choose to work together on this particular task as long as you are productive. If not productive, I determine who may or may not remain in the group."
- Involve groups in self-assessment as a group consensus task.
- Write quick notes to yourself of problems to address when you finish your direct teaching with any current group. (*A note signifies the need for a follow-up later in a private discussion with the student(s) instead of a public confrontation that breeds power struggles.*)
- Implement "Student-selected Time Out", diffusing a problem by separating an irritated student from the group. (*The student can work alone or calm down for a few minutes and return to the group whenever ready.*)
- Create a product bulletin board for keeping track of students' work or progress.
- To pique student's self-awareness, write notes while moving among various groups. (*If students ask what you are writing, you can say, "Things I need to remember about your work."*)
- Accent teacher proximity. (*Move near groups who need a reminder or refocus.*)
- Provide an assessment tool to each group before the task begins so they know the expectations. Involve groups in self-assessment when the task is finished.

LEARNING TASK OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS

- Elicit student's proposals for replacement tasks (*helps respond to individual differences, enabling teachers and students to negotiate learning experiences which are appealing to the student and applicable to the desired learning outcomes*).
- Complete assignments from compacted curriculum or daily instruction.
- Pursue contracted independent work (*individual or small group projects*).
- Participate in flexible groups (*e.g., literature circles, peer-editing and peer-review teams, problem-based learning groups, creative problem-solving through performance tasks*).

- Use computers (e.g., word processing tasks, research-based searches, software programs to practice or extend their learning of concepts and skills, presentation programs such as PowerPoint or Keynote).
- Participate in centers (teacher-prepared or student-developed areas of the classroom where integrated learning tasks are organized, including tiered activities).
- Complete task cards (independent learning tasks with self-contained directions so students can work without additional instruction).
- Conduct research and independent study using learning contracts. (Parameters of the task are developed by students based on their interests and organizational plans. Self-assessment rubrics for processes and products promote quality.)
- Pursue project-centered learning.
- Work with buddies or mentors.

As Heacox (2002) says, “Making your classroom organized and flexible enough to provide sufficient structure for individual work yet be ‘small-group friendly’ is important. This does not mean that your room has to be the neatest classroom in your school, just one that supports the organization and movement of materials and students within its walls. Establishing clear procedures and practices in your classroom will provide your students a greater opportunity to work independently and lessen your need to monitor student behavior and ‘direct traffic.’ Together, both will put you clearly on the road to success in a differentiated classroom.” (p. 128)

References

- Heacox, D. (2002). *Differentiating instruction in the regular classroom: How to reach and teach all learners, Grades 3-12*. Minneapolis, MN. Free Spirit Publishing Co.
- Kingore, B. (2004). *Differentiation: Simplified, realistic, and effective*. Austin, TX: Professional Associates Publishing.
- Meador, K. (2005). *Tiered activities for learning centers*. Beaver Creek, OH: Pieces of Learning.
- Tomlinson, C. A. (1999). *The differentiated classroom: Responding to the needs of all learners*. Alexandria, VA: The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD).

SOME SELECTED RESOURCES FOR DIFFERENTIATION

- Adams, C. M. & Pierce, R. L. (2006). *Differentiating instruction: A practical guide to tiered lessons in the elementary grades*. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press, Inc.
- Baum, S. M., Reis, S. M., Maxfield, L. R. (1998). *Nurturing the gifts and talents of primary grade students*. Mansfield Center, CT: Creative Learning Press, Inc.
- Beecher, M. (1995). *Developing the gifts and talents of all students in the regular classroom*. Mansfield Center, CT: Creative Learning Press, Inc.
- Bellanca, J. & Fogarty, R. (1991). *Blueprints for thinking in the cooperative classroom*. Palatine, IL: Skylight Publishing, Inc.
- Bender, W. N. (2007). *Differentiating instruction for students with learning disabilities*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Boland, D. D. (2006). *Ready, willing, and able: Teaching English to gifted, talented, and exceptionally conscientious adolescents*. Portsmouth, NH: Heineman.
- Coil, C. (2001). *Activities and assessments for the differentiated classroom*. Beavercreek, OH: Pieces of Learning, Inc.
- Coil, C. (2004). *Standards-based activities and assessments for the differentiated classroom*. Beavercreek, OH: Pieces of Learning, Inc.
- Coil, C. (2000). *Teaching tools for the 21st century*. Beavercreek, OH: Pieces of Learning, Inc.
- Coil, C. & Merritt, D. (2001). *Solving the assessment puzzle: Piece by piece*. Beavercreek, OH: Pieces of Learning, Inc.
- Forsten, C., Grant, J. & Hollas, B. (2002). *Differentiated instruction: Different strategies for different learners*. Peterborough, NH: Crystal Springs Books.
- Gregory, G. H. & Chapman, C. (2007). *Differentiated instructional strategies: One size doesn't fit all*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Gregory, G. H. & Kuzmich, L. (2004). *Data driven differentiation in the standards-based classroom*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Gross, M. U. M., Macleod, B., Drummond, D., & Merrick, C. (2003). *Gifted students in primary schools: Differentiating the curriculum*. Sydney, Australia: GERRIC (Gifted Education Research, Resource and Information Centre).
- Gross, M. U. M., Sleaf, B., & Pretorius, M. (1999). *Gifted students in secondary schools: Differentiating the curriculum*. Sydney, Australia: GERRIC (Gifted Education Research, Resource and Information Centre).
- Harrison, C. (2003). *Giftedness in early childhood*. Sydney, Australia: GERRIC (Gifted Education Research, Resource and Information Centre).
- Heacox, D. (2002). *Differentiating instruction in the regular classroom: How to reach and teach all learners, Grades 3-12*. Minneapolis, MN. Free Spirit Publishing Co.

- Karnes, F. A. & Stephens, K. R. (2000). *The ultimate guide for student product development & evaluation*. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.
- Kingore, B. (2004). *Differentiation: Simplified, realistic, and effective*. Austin, TX: Professional Associates Publishing.
- Lim, L. 1997). *How to assess student work*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc.
- Meador, K. (2005). *Tiered activities for learning centers*. Beavercreek, OH: Pieces of Learning.
- Melin, J. (2001). *Passport to learn: Projects to challenge high-potential learners*. Chicago: Zephyr Press.
- Parks, S. & Black, H. (1992). *Organizing thinking: Graphic organizers (Book I)*. Pacific Grove, CA: Critical Thinking Press and Software.
- Parks, S. & Black, H. (1990). *Organizing thinking: Graphic organizers (Book II)*. Pacific Grove, CA: Critical Thinking Press and Software.
- Roberts, J. L. & Inman, T. F. (2006). *Strategies for differentiating instruction*. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press, Inc.
- Silver, D. (2005). *Drumming to the beat of different marchers: Finding the rhythm for differentiated learning*. Nashville, TN: Incentive Publications, Inc.
- Smutny, J.F., Walker, S. Y., & Meckstroth, E. A. (1997). *Acceleration for gifted learners, K-5*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press
- Smutny, J.F., Walker, S. Y., & Meckstroth, E. A. (1997). *Teaching young gifted children in the regular classroom*. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing Co.
- Starko, A. (1986) . *It's about time*. Mansfield Center, CT: Creative Learning Press.
- Thousand, J. S., Villa, R. A., & Neivitt, A. I. (2007). *Differentiating instruction: Collaborative planning and teaching for universally designed learning*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Tomlinson, C. A. (1999). *The differentiated classroom: Responding to the needs of all learners*. Alexandria, VA: The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD).
- Tomlinson, C. A. (2001). *How to differentiate instruction in mixed-ability classrooms (2nd edition)*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Tomlinson, C. A. & McTighe, J. (2006). *Integrating & differentiating instruction: Understanding by design*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Winebrenner, S. (2001). *Teaching gifted kids in the regular classroom (revised and expanded)*. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing Co.
- Zike, D. (2001). *Big book of books and activities*. San Antonio, TX: Dinah-Might Adventures, LP.
- Zike, D. (2001). *Dinah Zike's big book of projects*. San Antonio, TX: Dinah-Might Adventures, LP.

Some Useful Websites for/about Differentiation

(All of the following website addresses were current and active as of March 2008.)

Dr. Carol Tomlinson's site: <http://www.caroltomlinson.com/>

“Differentiating Instruction” from the National Center on Assessing the Curriculum:
http://www.cast.org/publications/ncac/ncac_diffinstruc.html

A “Hot-list of Websites” on Differentiating Instruction:
http://www.frsd.k12.nj.us/rfmslibrarylab/di/differentiated_instruction.htm

Tools for Schools – Differentiated Instruction Checklist & Resources:
<http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/ciai/sate/resourcesdiffinstr.pdf>

Enhance Learning with Technology – Differentiated Instruction:
<http://members.shaw.ca/priscillatheroux/differentiating.html>

Effective Strategies for Differentiation:
<http://www.learnerslink.com/curriculum.htm>

Tiered Curriculum:
http://ideanet.doe.state.in.us/exceptional/gt/tiered_curriculum/welcome.html

West Bloomfield Schools – Differentiated Instruction:
<http://web.westbloomfield.k12.mi.us/ealy/lafer/>

Internet for Classrooms – Links for Differentiation:
<http://www.internet4classrooms.com/di.htm>

Education World's “Strategy of the Week” – Differentiation:
http://www.education-world.com/a_curr/strategy/strategy042.shtml

Differentiated Instruction Templates:
<http://www.dcmoboces.com/dcmoiss/staffdev/oinit/dile/didocs.htm>

Missouri Innovations in Education – Differentiating Instruction:
<http://www.cise.missouri.edu/publications/innovations/inno0103.pdf>

Note: *If you would like to receive this document as an attachment via email so that you will have “clickable links”, email your request for “Websites for Differentiation” to Dr. Ellen Fiedler at: ellenfiedler@comcast.net*