


ILLINOIS COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Differentiating Instruction in your Classroom

Dr. Johnell Bentz
Clinical Associate Professor
Special Education
University of Illinois

<https://sites.google.com/site/ibentzdifferentiationnotes/home>

ILLINOIS education.illinois.edu



One View of Differentiation



Seven misconceptions of differentiation:

Differentiated Instruction is not a new idea.

Think of the one room school house.

Differentiated Instruction is not the same as individualized instruction.

It is impossible to individualize everything for each student.

Differentiated Instruction is not a new version of tracking.

Differentiated Instruction classrooms are purposely heterogeneous.

Differentiated Instruction is not just group work for students.

Large group instruction also has it's place.

Differentiated Instruction is not just letting students do what is comfortable to them, but rather teachers must balance their attention to students' current interests and comfortable learning modalities with an introduction to new interests and practice with unfamiliar learning modalities.

Differentiated Instruction is not just varying your own teaching style.

Differentiated Instruction instruction means that teachers also recognize that students need more than one way to experience, practice, or produce.

Differentiated Instruction is proactive rather than reactive.

What differentiation is NOT!

- Extra homework
- Choices when required work is completed
- Making bird feeders while others do worksheets
- Playing math games while others use the math textbook
- Having students solve problems - “difficult first”

What is Differentiation of Instruction?

- Modify content, process, or product of instruction to enhance growth and success for all students
- Paradigm shift in role of the teacher

Modify Content

Assess a student's understanding of curriculum prior to its introduction, eliminate content that the student already knows, and provide the student with alternative content to enrich or to accelerate. (Curriculum Compacting)

Provide opportunities for students to make choices

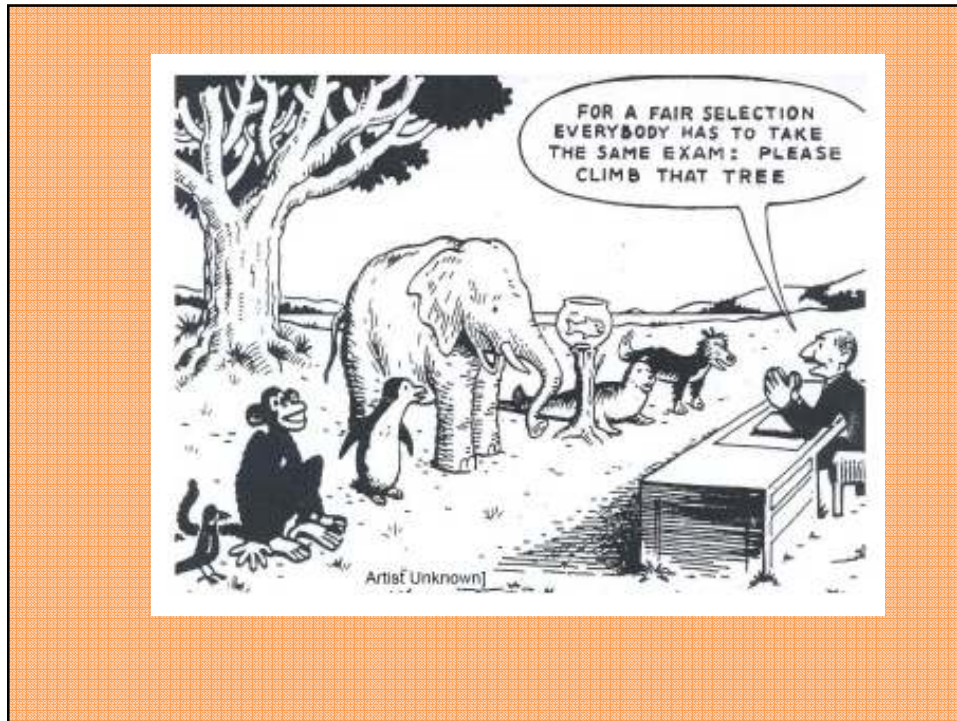
Modify Process

- **Choose problem solving approaches which allow for various ways to come to the same or different solutions.**
- **Allow choices to accommodate learning styles (working with partners, small groups, individually).**

Modify Product Expectations

- Provide opportunities for children to demonstrate their knowledge of a subject matter in their own way.
- Evaluate **subjectively** according to students' abilities

**What is fair...
...isn't always equal.**



How can I assign grades to students if they are not all doing the same work?

- Differentiated instruction and standardized tests –
- **'NOT an oxymoron!**
- The only way students will do well on tests is if they learn the material.
- **DI maximizes what students learn.**
- DI and standardized testing are mutually beneficial.

Assessment and Grading????

- Teachers who are focused on students' growth and mastery usually allow work and assessments to be redone.
- In a differentiated classroom, teachers often allow students to redo assessments for full credit.
- Homework is practice, and not graded!
- (Wormeli, R. 2006. *Fair isn't always equal. Assessing and grading in a differentiated classroom.*, p. 115 - 116)

Differentiation and Grading Issues

"The primary purpose of grading is to give students and their parents feedback about their learning progress and the quality of their work. It should help them to understand where they are on the learning continuum, rather than in comparison to other students...

"Be sure students and parents understand that differentiated tasks are but one consideration in your grading. Final grades reflect not just differentiated activities but also daily work, tests, performance assessments, and assignments required of all students...

Don't grade everything. Teach students to assess their own work and to provide and receive peer evaluation, using your criteria for quality work...

Fairness becomes an issue when the only difference between an A project and a B project is the amount of work. One way to be sure grades on student-selected projects reflect differences in rigor rather than differences in amount of work is to offer a choice of assignments correlated with their challenge level in Bloom's taxonomy. If students choose to complete an A-level project, they should, in fact, be engaged in more rigorous, challenging work than you deem necessary for a B-level or C-project.

For example:

*To earn a grade of A, the student selects a project at the analysis, evaluation, and/or synthesis level of challenge.

*To earn a grade of B, the student selects a project at the application and/or analysis level.

*To earn a grade of C, the student selects a project from the knowledge, comprehension, and/or application level."

Totally 10

If you are concerned that students who take on more complex and challenging projects need more time to complete their activities than do students doing more basic tasks, Totally 10 might work for you.

Tasks from which students may choose are given a score of 2, 4, 6, or 10. Students must select one project or several that add up to a score of 10.

Use the following criteria for tiering projects, assigning scores and calculating a final grade.

Score 2

*Projects at knowledge, comprehension, and/or application level

*Accounts for 20 percent of final grade

Score 4

*Projects at application and/or analysis level

*Accounts for 40 percent of grade

Score 6

*Projects at analysis, evaluation, and/or synthesis level

*Accounts for 60 percent of final grade

Score 10

*Projects at analysis, evaluation, and/or synthesis level

*Exhibits greater complexity, depth, or abstractness than do Score 6 projects

*A WOW project that reflect rigor rather than simply more work

*Accounts for 100 percent of final grade

Student can select any combination of projects worth a total of 10 points.

**Management/Entrepreneurship Totally 10
Chapter 2: What Skills Do Entrepreneurs Need?**

Directions: Select and complete activities that equal a total of 10 points.

2 Read Chapter 2 in the textbook, pages 26-47 (skip pages 32-41), answer the "Review your Knowledge" questions 11-20 page 49 AND highlight examples of the ten rules for effective business letters on the "Sample" letter.

4 Rewrite one of the "Needs help" sample business letters or memos following the ten rules for effective business letters OR use the "Rate it" business letter to find examples of how the letter follows or doesn't follow the ten rules for effective business letters. List and give examples from the "Rate it" letter for each rule.

4 With a partner, select two different role plays to demonstrate good speaking skills following the guidelines on pages 29-30.

6 Compose a letter to a business about either a great product you've purchased or great service you've received recently at their business. Your letter must follow the ten rules for effective business letters.

6 Compare the three methods of problem solving. Use the 6-step problem solving method for the situation on page 23, #6. Then in groups of three, use brainstorming to generate ways to improve Humboldt High School. Next, with your group, use consensus to arrive at the three best ideas.

8 In groups of 3, try each of the three problem solving methods to solve the same problem. After you're finished, each group member needs to write a paragraph summarizing this activity. Your summary should also include a defense of which method you think worked best for solving the problem and why.

10 Read the Case Study, "Doughnuts as Wedding Cakes" on page 22. Complete the following:
Answer question 1, page 22.
Brainstorm other new products/service ideas for Kistepy Kreme. Turn in your list.
Write a memo or orally present your best new idea.
The letter should follow the ten rules for effective business letters.
The oral presentation should follow the speaking skills guidelines in the chapter.

Scoring:
2 point activities= maximum of 10 chapter points
4 point activities= maximum of 20 chapter points
6 point activities= maximum of 30 chapter points
8 point activities= maximum of 40 chapter points
10 point activities=maximum of 50 chapter points
10 points= 50 chapter points

- Oral defense will be required of some assignments to receive credit.
- Use the unit assignment sheet to keep track of what activities you've completed and your current grade.

Grading and Reporting Achievement

"...the primary goal of grading and reporting is to communicate to important audiences, such as students and parents, high-quality feedback to support the learning process and encourage learner success..."

The meaning of a grade is compromised when it reports a student's achievement relative to others in the class... We strongly discourage grading on a curve and advocate a criterion-referenced approach. We should be working toward a J curve—a system in which all students have the possibility of earning high grades based on achievement judged against clearly defined standards.

Not everything should be graded. Formative assessments should rarely be factored into a final grade. Formative assessments provide opportunities for students to practice, take mental risks, learn from mistakes, and revise their work. They enable teachers to analyze student performance to date and provide targeted feedback for improvement. This is not a time for heavy evaluation.

Grades should be derived largely from the results of summative assessments carefully designed to allow students to demonstrate accumulated proficiency related to identified content goals.

Competitive grading creates serious problems for advanced learners just as it does for strugglers. Such students learn early that effort is not a precursor to success."

Layered Curriculum™

<http://www.help4teachers.com/>

Layered Curriculum™ is a teaching model that divides the learning process into three layers based on the complexity of the student's thought process.

Layered Curriculum™ asks students at each layer to:

C Layer: Gather information

B Layer: Apply or manipulate that information

A Layer: Critically evaluate an issue

C Layer: Write a variety of ways students might learn your C-Layer objectives. Offer students two or three choices how they can learn your objectives.

B-Layer: Write down your B-Layer ideas. Offer two or three ways students can apply their new knowledge or demonstrate it or show some mastery of it. Interdisciplinary assignments work great in this layer. Example: Watch the game Sunday (Superbowl, Mariners, etc.). Write the next day's sports column. Include at least three graphs and two statistical analyses.

A-Layer: Discover your A-Layer issues. Brainstorm with colleagues to find some current events for A-layer work. It is important to get ideas from colleagues or other people outside your field or discipline. A-layer questions are real-world issues that may have no objectively right or wrong answer as they involve value judgments. They are issues that people are voting on or debating. They are issues about which you can find research to support more than one view. Examples: Are pesticides on crops bad for us? Who is the better actor? When is it genocide and when is it a civil war?

How does differentiation fit into the RtI framework?

- Differentiated instruction and Response to Intervention share a central goal: to modify instruction until it meets the needs of all learners

Sites: <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/oct10/vol68/num02/Differentiated-Instruction-and-RTI@-A-Natural-Fit.aspx> <http://www.rti4success.org/>

How DI and RTI Fit Together

We can make teachers' lives more straight-forward by viewing DI and RTI as two aspects of a whole. At no point in any RTI tier should instruction be provided in a strictly one-size-fits-all format. Differentiation should occur naturally within each tier.

October 2010 | Volume 68 | Number 2 Interventions That Work - Differentiated Instruction and RTI: A Natural Fit
Susan Demirsky Allan and Yvonne L. Goddard

Tier 1

Tier 1 of RTI commonly consists of regular classroom instruction provided to all students. *Within-classroom* differentiation, such as flexible grouping and individualized supports, should be a routine part of such instruction.

Some of the time, the teacher may be delivering whole-class instruction. Other times, students will be working toward a common learning goal in flexibly grouped teams or individually.

The teams may be composed of learners with similar readiness levels (as determined by a combination of ability and achievement levels), interests, or learning styles.

If students are grouped by readiness level, some groups may have more structure in their work or more time to complete their assignment; others may have more complex problems to address. If the students are grouped by learning style, some student groups may be writing, some acting out concepts, some designing a computer presentation, and some working on an oral presentation.

In other words, a classroom implementing differentiated instruction and Response to Intervention will first and foremost look like a differentiated classroom. The major component that makes it not just a differentiated classroom but also an RTI classroom is that, in addition to typical classroom assessment (both formative and summative), the teacher keeps detailed records to monitor the progress of students who are struggling and who may need more intensive Tier 2 support.

This intense monitoring and documentation facilitates differentiation as well, because it enables teachers to keep a continuous finger on the pulse of students' progress and thus design differentiated lessons more accurately.

October 2010 | Volume 68 | Number 2 Interventions That Work - Differentiated Instruction and RTI: A Natural Fit
Susan Demirsky Allan and Yvonne L. Goddard

Tier 2

Students who do not make adequate progress in Tier 1 may be placed in Tier 2, which means that they receive interventions designed to address their areas of difficulty. These interventions may include *structural differentiation*—providing resources beyond the immediate classroom, such as reading specialists, cluster groups, gifted education services, and so on.

Again, the major difference between structural differentiation and services provided in Tier 2 is that Tier 2 requires more extensive documentation and, perhaps, more frequent assessment than would differentiation.

October 2010 | Volume 68 | Number 2 Interventions That Work Differentiated Instruction and RTI: A Natural Fit
Susan Demirsky Allan and Yvonne L. Goddard

Tier 3

Tier 3 is a more specialized level of service that goes beyond what we usually regard as differentiation—for example, students' schedules may include significant amounts of time receiving intensive instruction in special education or gifted classes or alternative schools.

But the philosophy remains the same: regarding each student as an individual, asking what each student needs to be successful, and then using whatever services or structures are needed to support that success.

October 2010 | Volume 68 | Number 2 Interventions That Work Differentiated Instruction and RTI: A Natural Fit
Susan Demirsky Allan and Yvonne L. Goddard

Examples of Differentiation and RTI Converging in Classrooms

- **Within-Classroom Differentiation—Tier 1 Instruction in Elementary Math**
- In a 4th grade math classroom, the teacher models how to add fractions with like denominators and provides opportunities for students to practice using individual whiteboards and manipulatives. Then he breaks students into interest groups with the themes of race cars, animals, food, and building blocks. One group of advanced students works on more complex math problems.
- The teacher and students collect various assessment data throughout the lesson. For example, as the students practice individually and work in groups, the teacher takes notes about which students are struggling and which are completing the work quickly and accurately. After group work is complete, students pull out individual math folders, take a quick, 10-question quiz, and graph the number of problems they answered correctly.

October 2010 | Volume 68 | Number 2 Interventions That Work Differentiated Instruction and RTI: A Natural Fit
Susan Demirsky Allan and Yvonne L. Goddard

- **Structural Differentiation—Tier 2 Interventions in 10th Grade World History**
- In a high school, 10th graders take world history in heterogeneous classes in which teachers provide flexible grouping and differentiated learning tasks. Teachers give biweekly quizzes on vocabulary and comprehension; students chart their scores to observe their progress.
- For students who either fail to master the material or are unchallenged by the level of difficulty, the school's four 10th grade world history classes provide structural differentiation through cluster grouping. For some assignments, struggling students (including some with IEPs) are grouped across classes to receive extra help from a special education teacher; advanced students who need more challenge are also grouped across classes for enrichment projects. For students who need still more intensive help, the special education teacher consults with a reading specialist who provides additional individual instruction and support with readings and assignments.

October 2010 | Volume 68 | Number 2 Interventions That Work Differentiated Instruction and RTI: A Natural Fit
Susan Demirsky Allan and Yvonne L. Goddard

- **Highly Specialized Differentiation—Tier 3 Interventions in Middle School Language Arts**
- A middle school has some students whose reading skills are significantly delayed and who have not made adequate progress with Tier 1 instruction or Tier 2 interventions. Some of these students receive intensive, remedial language arts instruction in a self-contained special education classroom for one or two class periods each day. A few students attend an alternative school that uses instructional methodologies that nurture their particular learning styles.
- Even at this level of intervention (Tier 3), teachers differentiate instruction. For example, in the self-contained language arts class, they may give students choices of how to process content (such as listening to audiotapes or reading with the teacher) or provide opportunities to create a variety of products.

October 2010 | Volume 68 | Number 2 Interventions That Work Differentiated Instruction and RTI: A Natural Fit
Susan Demirsky Allan and Yvonne L. Goddard

Role of the Teacher

“The educator’s role being to present children with challenges that are appropriately confounding, and to provide them with the opportunity to wrestle with these challenges in active, meaningful ways.”

(Feinburg & Mindess, 1994, p. 89)

Thank You!

Johnell Bentz

jbentz@illinois.edu

<https://sites.google.com/site/jbentzdifferentiationnotes/home>