

The Field Files

From The Office of Field Services

Volume 2, Issue 4

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How Well do you Differentiate Instruction?

(OSTP 4 and 5)

Do you feel uncertain of what your supervisor means when he or she asks you how you are going to differentiate your lesson? See the green differentiation strategy boxes (pg 1 and 2).

Are you struggling to explain the differentiating you are doing? See visual 1 (pg 2) and read "How can you create evidence of differentiation?".

Are you ready to try some new techniques to further differentiate? See the links for differentiation (pg 2) and visual 2 (pg 3)

Explaining Differentiation When Kids Say "That's not Fair!"

- Consider differentiating by allowing for choice and different learning styles as opposed to different lengths of assignments.
- Allow for a ladder of tasks where students can begin at a level 1 skill and work toward a higher level skill. Allow for opportunities for students to continue completing level 1 tasks if that is where they are and to move up when they are ready.
- Take students to the gym and ask them to run from one side of the gym to the other as fast as they can. Next ask them to do the same thing (run as fast as they can) but all start and end at the same places and at the same time. Have an age appropriate discussion about differentiation from there.

P - K - 12 Differentiation Strategies (OSTP 4 and 5)

- Allow the use of manipulatives during assignments and assessments (i.e. counting poker chips, number lines taped to desks).
- Place boxes or empty baby wipe containers on desks/tables to place stray shapes that students cut out (*during art or any craft activity/keep pieces from getting lost).
- Tape student checklists on desks (improve organization/behavior self-management). Checklists can be goal oriented specific to academics or behavior (i.e. I will earn a B or higher on my next quiz).
- Students who struggle with fine motor skills may benefit from typing an assignment rather than writing by hand.
- Allow scheduled breaks (i.e. set a timer for 5 minutes and let students stand up and stretch or bounce a small bouncy ball/squeeze a stress ball).
- Place beanbags or carpet squares for students to relax during silent reading time (I call mine the Squish Zone).
- Depending on ability level and if student is on an IEP, read assessments and assignments aloud to the student (the on-one-on read aloud can improve student comprehension and directions may be more concise).
- Create assessments with the use of visuals (i.e. having students complete charts or Venn diagrams may be more helpful and can increase understanding rather than multiple choice or extended response).
- Plan certain lessons that involve group work and stations/learning centers.
- When using ability grouping, pair high performing students with low-performing (sometimes peer instruction and explanations help those who are struggling with content rather than teacher-led instruction).

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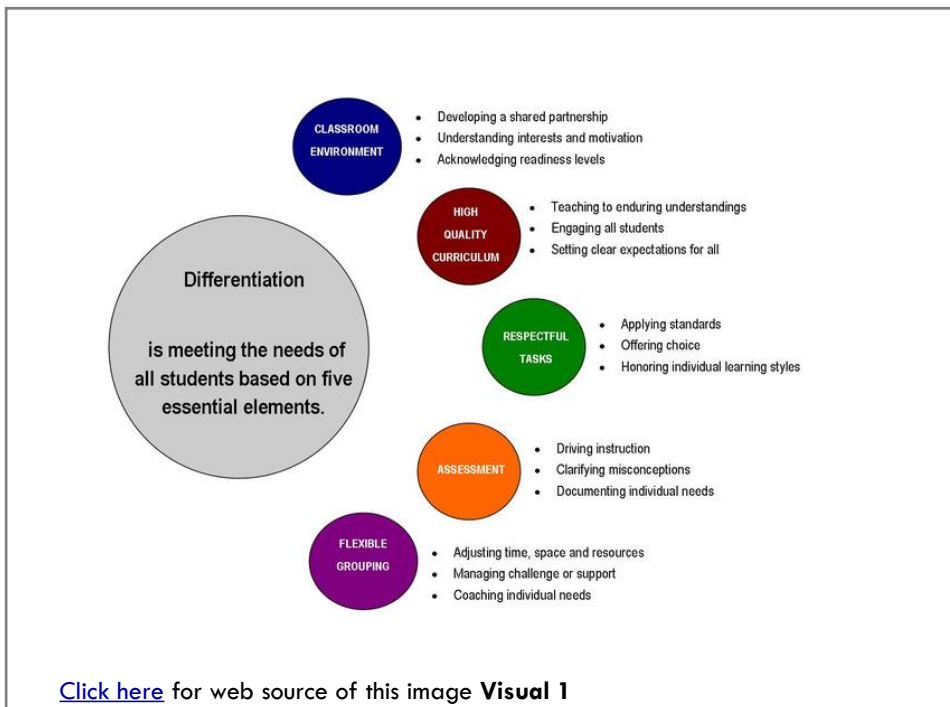
Differentiation Strategies Continued

(OSTP 4 and 5)

- Rather than paper-pencil assessments, encourage dialogue and assess students based on open discussion (applicable to any ELA courses, history, civics etc.)
- Provide students with outlines (or assign students to complete outlines) of the chapter/upcoming content in order to organize information
- Post visuals around the classroom (flow-charts, t-charts) even after the lesson so students can see it on a regular basis (great for the science and math courses)
- Create authentic lessons to keep students engaged (i.e. have students create their own talk radio show on a related class topic/standard or assigning a video project)
- Depending on ability level and if student is on an IEP, read assessments and assignments aloud to the student (the one-on-one read aloud can improve student comprehension and directions may be more concise)

How Can you Create Evidence of Differentiation?

(OSTP 3, 4 and 5)



Credit to mpostava wikispaces.com

If the ultimate goal of teaching and learning is in fact student achievement, teachers have to meet students where they are in order to help them achieve and grow. In a classroom of 30 students to 1 teacher, that is a monumental task.

Remember that differentiation does not have to be elaborate and should be built into every lesson that you teach by considering the 5 Essential Elements categorized in the above image. Here are some strategies to employ differentiation and increase your ability to write about and discuss evidence of differentiation in your lessons.

One important side note: You are not expected to address all five of these essential elements in all lessons, but you should vary the way that you differentiate.

1. Classroom Environment:

- Have students complete an interest inventory.
- Use this data to increase relevance to students by personalizing instruction
- Use data from the previous year, the previous unit, the previous day to acknowledge readiness levels

2. High Quality Curriculum:

- Use assessment data from pre-assessment, formative during lesson, and post-assessment to measure student knowledge and direct plans and instruction.
- Use engagement strategies in all lessons
- Post, read, and have students repeat learning target for every lesson; provide scaffolding like sentence stems, visuals, or guided notes

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Helpful Differentiation Links

[Differentiation background, research, and strategies](#)

[23 myths of differentiated instruction](#)

[Meeting Students Where They Are](#)

[ASCD Differentiated Instruction Video](#)

[Carol Tomlinson Differentiation Resources](#)

[Reaching Adolescent Learners](#)

[Differentiating for Highly Able Students](#)

[Understanding Assessment to Differentiate](#)

[Differentiation Strategies](#)

[Diversity Case Study](#)

3. Respectful Tasks:

- Allow your lessons to focus on the standard you are teaching not mastery of everything connected to that concept.
- Allow for choice in writing whenever possible. If the students are working on characterization, allow them to show their evidence by choosing a character instead of assigning a required character for an essay or project.
- Always account for auditory, visual, and kinesthetic in every lesson

4. Assessment:

- Collect formative assessment on learning target and have evidence to show that students have some degree of mastery of a skill before moving on.
- Use the data from pre-assessment, formative throughout lesson, and post-assessment to guide instruction. Have evidence of this.

5. Flexible Grouping:

- Whenever possible, use alternative teaching (see model below) and station teaching (see issue 3) to provide scaffolding and enrichment.
- Ask good questions to discover what students need
- Scaffold to meet lowest and reach highest by working through Bloom's Taxonomy.

Differentiation

is a teacher's response to all learners' needs.

Teachers can differentiate through

Content

Process

Product

Environment

Paying attention to students'

Interest

Learning Profile

Readiness

Affect

Guided by general principles of differentiation

Good Curriculum

Respectful Work

Positive Community

Flexible Management Strategies

Ongoing assessment

Through a range of strategies such as

Multiple intelligences...Jigsaw...4MAT...Graphic Organizers...RAFTS
Compacting...Tiered assignments...Leveled texts...Complex Instruction...Learning contracts

Created by Carol Tomlinson

Use **Visual 2** (to the left) to build differentiation strategies to meet a range of learners' needs. If you regularly differentiate process, consider making modifications through environment or product. This resource can especially help when assessment data shows that current differentiation strategies are not advancing student achievement.

Important Dates

Open Lab for edTPA work

Wednesday 10/22 5 - 8pm

Split Experience Dates

Practicum 1 and ST 1 end 10/17
Practicum 2 and ST 2 begin 10/20

edTPA Due

Friday 11/7/14

Career Day

Friday 11/7/14 FT 303 at 12:00

Spring 2015 Practicum and Student Teaching Pre-req Packets Due

Friday 11/14/14

University Closed

Veterans Day
Tuesday 11/11



Alternative Teaching

One teacher works with a large group while the other works with a smaller group. Purposes for small group include:

- Remediation or re-teaching
 - Additional practice on a recently taught skill or concept
 - Extension or enrichment
 - Pre-teaching, such as introducing key concepts or vocabulary
 - Making up for absences related to illness of school activities
 - Assessment of student progress
- *Important*** Large Group should not be learning new material during this time.

Small Group

T2

Large Group

T1