



Examples of Differentiated Instruction in the Classroom

Differentiated instruction often happens through flexible grouping based on data from pre-assessments. As the teacher plans for differentiating content, process, and product, groups are organized and restructured frequently to meet the varied learning needs of students. The group sizes range from pairs to whole class. Some groups are designed for the purpose of investigating a topic of common interest, while others are based on a need for a group to learn new skills.

Tiered lessons are designed to differentiate the process and/or product by varying the complexity of the response.

Example: Two versions of a favorite folk tale are read. One group identifies the story elements while another group compares and contrasts story elements from each version.

Orbital studies are designed to differentiate content according to student interests. Small groups or individuals work together on self-selected topics derived from the curriculum.

Example: As the class studies human body systems, some students show an interest in the artificial heart as related to the circulatory system. The teacher guides the small group in the research process and assists as students relate new learning to the curricular unit.

Learning centers are designed to differentiate both content and process to accommodate varying student readiness levels.

Example: Some students are given additional practice and time for reinforcement in the skills of writing. Others work in a learning center applying essential skills and strategies to create style in their narrative writing.

Compacting is an instructional strategy used with students who demonstrate mastery of all or part of the content prior to the unit of study. Review and introductory activities are reduced so that time saved may be spent on enriched or accelerated study.

Example: A pre-test is given on adding and subtracting fractions. The unit is then compacted for those students who show mastery of these skills so that they are engaged in new learning.

<http://www.wilmette39.org/DI39/>



Differentiation in Wilmette Public Schools

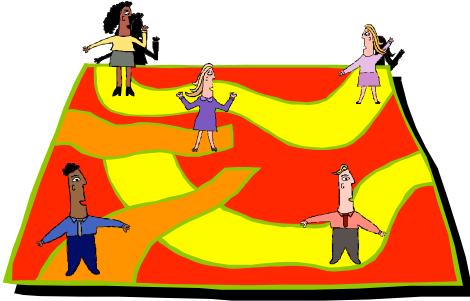
District 39 educators believe that differentiated instruction is effective in meeting the variety of needs of children in all classes. The information in this document explains what differentiated instruction is, who is responsible for it, why it is used, how it improves the learning experiences of students, and what it may look like in the classroom.

Differentiated instruction is not a curriculum or a program. It is a process that enables teachers to improve student learning by matching students' learning characteristics to the District 39 curriculum. This process requires teachers to anticipate and acknowledge the differences in students' readiness, interests, and learning style. Teachers can then effectively engage students in meaningful and challenging work. Classroom teachers can challenge all students to think, work, and produce at a high level.



Hallmarks of Differentiated Instruction

- valued differences
- informative assessment
- respectful work
- responsive instruction
- intellectual growth
- ongoing student/teacher collaboration
- individual success
- instructional flexibility



Curriculum goals are the foundation from which instructional decisions are made.

Content, Process, Product

In differentiating instruction, teachers address student learning differences by modifying content, process, and product.

Content is what students learn and the materials they will use to acquire knowledge. When teachers differentiate the District 39 curriculum, they may vary depth and breadth of learning and/or the complexity of the ideas. It may also involve student choice of topics related to the content.

The process describes how children make sense of the content. When teachers differentiate process, they design learning experiences that involve thinking from basic to complex understanding.

The product is the application and/or demonstration of what the student has learned. When teachers differentiate product, they present students with options of how to express required learning.

Who Makes Differentiation Work?

Classroom teachers . . .

- analyze the current curriculum content in order to set appropriate expectations for students.
- plan and develop appropriate instructional methods, materials, and groupings.
- assess ongoing progress and set further learning goals for students.
- communicate about differentiation practices with parents, teachers, and administrators.
- teach/co-teach students in flexible groups.
- plan/co-plan engaging tasks and products with students.
- collaborate for instruction with differentiation support teachers, colleagues, as well as other specialists.

Differentiation Support Teachers . . .

- collaborate with classroom teachers to plan, develop, and provide materials and resources.
- teach and co-teach students who demonstrate on pre-assessments a mastery of curricular objectives.
- model differentiation strategies for classroom teachers.
- meet regularly with other differentiation support teachers to maintain the consistency of support in District 39.
- identify gifted and talented learners, initially in the second semester of grade 3

- coordinate with principals to promote differentiation.
- communicate with administrators, staff, parents, and community members.
- provide additional support to the classroom teacher for gifted and talented students. Support for these students changes through the grades:

- Grades K-2: consultation with the DST for all students during collaborations and at the request of the classroom teacher
- Grades 3 and 4: co-planning and co-teaching in all subjects as needed
- Grade 5: consultation in all subjects; co-planning and co-teaching in reading; additionally, enrichment offered in math
- Grades 6, 7, and 8: co-planning in all subjects; co-teaching in language arts; additionally, students may qualify for accelerated math placement

Administrators . . .

- keep up-to-date on issues and trends in differentiation.
- provide teachers opportunities to learn about differentiation through staff development and other means.
- encourage and support teacher collaboration.
- obtain resources to assist teachers in planning quality lessons.
- facilitate communication among the staff, parents, and the community.

"Differentiated instruction isn't a strategy. It's a way of thinking about all you do when you teach and all that the kids do when they learn."

Carol Tomlinson