



Differentiation Strategy Explained: Compacting

ODE Javits Project: I-GET-GTEd



Differentiation Strategy: Compacting

Compacting is a method of:

- identifying the content or skill for a particular unit
- documenting what the gifted/advanced student already knows and how prior knowledge was determined
- providing alternative tasks that extend learning and eliminate the repetition of mastered content or skills by students.



Differentiation Strategy: Curriculum Compacting

Rationale of Curriculum Compacting:

- Current textbooks show signs of being “dumbed down” or of poor quality
- Gifted students often experience repetition of content
- The needs of most high ability students are not met within the classroom
- Pace of instruction and practice time can be modified
- Compacting enables differentiated instruction and provides educational accountability for students



Differentiation Strategy: Curriculum Compacting

Goals of Curriculum Compacting:

- To create a challenging learning environment in the regular classroom
- To identify objectives and guarantee proficiency in basic curriculum
- To honor previous learning
- To find time for alternative learning activities based on advanced content and individual student interest.



Differentiation Strategy: Curriculum Compacting

Two kinds of curriculum compacting:

1. Basic Skill
2. Content

Key Concepts:

- Modification of regular curriculum through assessment of student strengths
- Elimination and acceleration of skills activities in strength areas following assessment
- Systematic planning of enrichment or acceleration activities to replace skills students have already mastered or can master at a faster pace



Curriculum Compacting: 8 Steps

1. Identify learning objectives.
2. Find or develop pre-test format.
3. Pre-test students.
4. Identify students for compacting option based on pre-test results.
5. Eliminate practice and instructional time.
6. Streamline instruction or assignments.
7. Offer enrichment or acceleration options.
8. Keep records of process and instructional options offered to compacted students.

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Curriculum Compacting: How-to

1. Identify Learning Objectives.

To start curriculum compacting the educator must identify the key ideas within a topic or unit of study. These can be identified within your standards - not the actual task but rather what big ideas a student must know, understand and be able to do.

The content or skill for the topic are identified within the first column of the compactor.



Curriculum Compacting: How-to

2. Find or develop pre-test format.
3. Pre-test students – either all students or by student choice.
4. Use pre-test results to identify students for compacting *as well as* for grades for compacted students.

An assessment tool to document student mastery must be selected and used. The next slide lists possible assessment tools. Assessments serve as justification for compacting, when the student works on alternative tasks during traditional instruction and practice.

The assessment tool used and the level of mastery demonstrated by a student is documented in the middle column of the compactor.



Curriculum Compacting:

Observable student behaviors that show a need for compacting

- Finishes task quickly
- Appears bored during instructional time
- Consistently daydreams
- Creates own puzzles, games or diversions
- Brings outside reading materials to class
- Has consistently high performance in one or more academic areas
- Expresses interest in pursuing alternate or advanced topics
- Test scores consistently excellent despite average or below-average class work
- Asks questions indicating advanced familiarity with material
- Is sought after by other students for assistance
- Uses vocabulary and verbal expression advanced for grade level

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Curriculum Compacting: Quick Check

Are there students in the class who:

- are in the top reading group or reading at an advanced level?
- finish tasks quickly on a regular basis?
- in your opinion, would benefit from more challenging work?



Curriculum Compacting: Pre-Assessment Ideas

- KNW (Know, Need to know, Want to know)
- Observations
- Journal prompt "write all you know about..."
- Most difficult first
- Ask parents, former teachers about student strengths
- Lists, inventories and surveys
- Pre-tests from texts, teacher created
- Products

What are some other ways to assess?



Curriculum Compacting: How-to

5. Eliminate practice and instructional time.
6. Streamline instruction or assignments.
7. Offer enrichment or acceleration options.
8. Keep records of process and instructional options offered to compacted students.

The third column is used to document what a particular student will do instead of revisiting content or skills already mastered. Documentation must be clear and specific about what the student will be doing, researching, and working on during instructional time.



Curriculum Compacting: How-to

Alternative activities could include:

- teacher selected activities
- student selected activities from options
- a combination of the above
- Tic-Tac-Toe Menu of activities
- working with the same content or skill at a more complex level (higher grade level indicators on the same skill)
- specific independent exploration of an interest area in the library or on the internet



Curriculum Compacting: Record Keeping

One compactor is completed for each compacted student and kept in a binder.

These records support and justify the curricular adjustments made and explain why one or two students are doing alternative tasks.

These documents also help parents better understand how their child is doing in the classroom and what accommodations are being made for their abilities.

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Curriculum Compacting

Activity: Try it!

For this activity you will use the curriculum compactor and an assigned student to identify:

- Areas of knowledge in your student,
- Ways you can document these areas of knowledge,
- Learning experiences and explorations this student might have instead of the traditional lesson on material already mastered.



Curriculum Compacting

Activity: Try it!

1. Select two different students from the handout or two students that you teach and create a compactor for them.
2. Use the student descriptions/what you know about students to identify what might be a mastery area, how you will document this mastery, and what might be alternative learning that could be substituted, based on the child's interests and strengths.



Curriculum Compacting

Activity: Try it!

3. Introduce your Compactor to a colleague for feedback.
 - Does the Compactor have tasks students can do?
 - Are there enough materials to engage students with the content?
 - Are the activities appealing to students?



Curriculum Compacting

Activity: Try it!

4. Reflect on your colleague's comments and make any adjustments to the compactor.
5. Introduce the compactor to students carefully. Establish ground rules.
6. Observe students and document student behavior, their level of engagement with the activities and any further ideas for improvement. Ask students for feedback.



Curriculum Compacting

Activity: Try it!

- Reflection on how this Compactor worked during the trial period.
- What could be improved for the future?
- How can you help students gain independence and self-regulation in these activities?



Curriculum Compacting

Discussion

- What areas in your teaching can benefit from the use of compacting?
- How can using compacting assist you in reaching the needs of all learners in your classroom?
- Discuss how you might use information about student readiness, interests and learning preferences to determine which students need compacting and write the compactor.
- Discuss specific ways you might use the compactor in your classroom.



Curriculum Compacting

- Consider inviting your coordinator of gifted services, principal, curriculum coordinator or other administrator to observe your students using Compacting.
- Your observer can use the observation form found under Module Specific Planning Documents in the Facilitator Module.



Curriculum Compacting Resources

- Reis, S, Burns, D. & Renzulli, J. (1992). *Curriculum compacting: The complete guide to modifying the regular classroom for high ability students*. Creative Learning Press: Mansfield Center: CT.
- Renzulli, J. S. & Smith, L. H. (1978). *The compactor*. Mansfield Center, CT: Creative Learning Press.
- Tomlinson, C. (2001). *How to differentiate instruction in a mixed-ability classroom*. ASCD: Alexandria, VA.



More Curriculum Compacting Resources

- Winebrenner, S. (2009). *Teaching gifted kids in the regular classroom*. Free Spirit Publishing: Minneapolis: MN
- <http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/>
- <http://www.bertiekingore.com/web-curr.htm>

I-GET-GTEd
Teacher Module
Center Planning Sheet

Content Area _____ Grade _____

Interest or Learning Center (circle one)

Focus for this center:

Materials required:

Directions for students:

How will student learning be assessed?

On the back make notes about “ground rules” from slides 4 and 5 of the presentation.