

A Concept Map* For Differentiating Instruction

(Adapted from *The differentiated classroom: Responding to the needs of all learners* by Carol Ann Tomlinson. Used with permission.)

Differentiation of Instruction

is a teacher's response to learner's needs

guided by general principles of differentiation,

such as

**respectful
tasks**

**ongoing assessment
and adjustment**

flexible grouping

Teachers can differentiate

Content

Process

Product/Assessmen

according to student's

Readiness

Interests

Learning

**Through a range of instruction and management strategies
such as:**

Centers/Stations

**Interest
Inventories**

Tic-Tac-Toe Menus

Anchoring

Ohio Javits Project, I-GET-GTED, Teacher Module

Activities: Choice Boards & Agendas	Learning Contracts	Cubing/Bloom's Verbs
Tiered Lessons	Assessment and Differentiation	Compacting

Definitions & Activities

Content

Content is the knowledge, skills and attitudes students are to learn, which can differ for students based on the pre-assessments. For example, if a group of students already knows how to add single digit numbers, the content they may learn during the math lesson may be adding two digit numbers. They are still working with the same concept of combining groups but at a more complex level.

Activity: Working with the Content Standards

Look at a standard from your Academic Content Standards or use the link to locate a standard on the Ohio Department of Education's Instructional Management System, at:

<http://ims.ode.state.oh.us/ODE/IMS/Lessons/>

Select an area and identify one standard. Review it and determine what core idea or skill the standard targets. This is the focus for student learning, not a particular task. Once this core idea or skill is identified, then different levels of complexity can be designed by the teacher to allow students to learn this content/skill at the best level to extend learning. Once the core idea/skill is identified, share your findings with a colleague and discuss:

- 1. How did you decide that the selected content/skill was the core idea?**
- 2. Could there be alternative content/skills within this standard?**

Reflect on why this identification process is so important prior to preparing learning experiences.

Process

is one of the most pivotal areas of meeting individual need. It is where the instructor must vary activities and strategies to provide appropriate methods for students to explore the concepts. Process is what the students *do* to work with the selected content, and this is where they will spend most of their time in a differentiated experience. It could be analyzing a story for a theme, conducting a science experiment, or working in collaborative groups. **It is *what* students will do to interact with the desired content/skills for the lesson.**

Strategies that differentiate *process* include:

Centers/Stations*

Learning Contracts*

Tiered Assignments*

Cubing*

Bloom's Taxonomy*

Multiple Intelligences

Compacting*

Tic-Tac-Toe Menus*

*Use the Javits Teacher Module to learn more about these strategies with step-by-step directions, planning sheets and other resources.

Product/Assessment

is how students show what they have learned, and this can be varied according to student needs, interests and skills. Alternatives can include an illustration or model, a speech, a computer generated presentation, a written document, a dramatization, or even a paper/pencil test designed to respect individual level of learning. This is a terrific place to provide student choice.

Strategies that help differentiate *product/assessment* include:

Learning Contracts*

Tiered Assignments*

Cubing*

Bloom's Taxonomy*

Multiple Intelligences

Compacting*

Tic-Tac-Toe Menus*

*Use the Javits Teacher Module to learn more about these strategies with step-by-step directions, planning sheets and other resources.

Other resources include:

Engine-Uity at <http://www.engine-uity.com/>

Engine-Uity specializes in differentiated resources, keyed to Bloom's Taxonomy of higher level thinking skills that lead to independent studies. Although they emphasize curriculum for gifted and talented students, the materials - because they are based on principles of good practice - are also in heavy demand in regular classroom and Title I programs. These materials provide Process, Content, Product applications in all core curriculum areas, as well as in the fine arts.

Teach-nology rubric maker at http://www.teach-nology.com/web_tools/rubrics/

TeacherVision at <http://www.teachervision.fen.com/>

Type "Creating Rubrics" into the search to find a five-part series explores how one teacher designs, refines, and implements rubrics in a variety of subject areas.

Readiness

refers to the entry point at which a student comes to a particular content or skill lesson. Some students are *not-yet-ready* to do the selected task at that particular time. It is not that they cannot work with the content but need either additional support or some pre-skills to be successful. Some students are *ready-to-go* for the task selected – it is a good fit for them. Finally, there can be a group that is *ready-to-go-further*. These students already have the knowledge and skills of the task so repeating it becomes a redundant exercise.

A few strategies for identifying these three levels:

Curriculum Compacting*

Teacher observation and anecdotal records

Pre-Test

KNL (Know, Need to Know, Need to Learn) Chart

Brainstorm writing about the topic to be studied

Portfolio of previous work (especially for writing)

Interests

Interests are the topics a student enjoys and has some knowledge of – and can be a powerful motivator for students. As adults, if we are discussing a topic in which we have an interest, it impacts our level of focus and willingness to pursue the topic for longer periods of time. It is the same with students, whether identified gifted or not. If motivation is a concern for students, identifying and providing learning experiences that allow students to work within an interest area can dramatically change the level of motivation.

Strategies to help teachers gauge interest in students:

See *Learning Profile* task in this document

Interest Inventories section of the Javits Teacher Module

In the video “How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms,” Tape #1, Part 2, one teacher surveys her students to determine what they want to learn about within a unit. This is a good classroom method that targets interests within a particular study area.

Learning Preference

Learning profiles refers to how a student would choose to learn if a choice were given. It is not mandatory that every task must address every possible preference, but if teachers are aware of the different learning preferences during learning experience development, all students can have an opportunity to work in their preferred style. Learning profiles can reflect how a student likes to learn such as kinesthetic, auditory, visual or oral. It can also indicate student learning strength areas. These can include those students who learn best when music is involved or those who cannot tolerate distractions. This information can help the teacher select tasks that different students can do to reach the selected content/skill but in different ways.

The Interest Inventory section of the Javits Teacher module contains not only inventories that reveal student interest areas, but there are other inventories that help determine learning preferences, such as Multiple Intelligences and work/study habits. This information can also be obtained through teacher observation and qualitative note taking on student behavior during different activities.

Another option is the **Total Talent Portfolio** available through Creative Learning Press. It is completed through parent/student discussion and reflects student preferences. Click here for an article on the TTP: <http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/sem/semart09.html>
CAPSOL Styles of Learning is a self-scoring learning profile that can be obtained from <http://www.stylesoflearning.com/index.html>

Activity: PMI chart on Learning Profiles through observation

Obtain the ASCD Video “How to Differentiate Instruction In Mixed-Ability Classrooms” and view Tape #1, Part Two (readiness, interests, learning profile – the pioneer, freedom fighters section)

While viewing the second segment, construct a PMI chart (plus, minus and interesting). To create a PMI, take a piece of paper and create three columns. Place a “P” in the left column, “M” in the center column and “I” in the right hand column. As you view the video, write under PLUS any task, action, etc. that you view as a positive for students. Under MINUS, write any areas you see as possible difficulties, considering student and teacher perspectives. Under INTERESTING write any element that was just interesting to you – it doesn’t have to be plus or minus, just something that made you think.