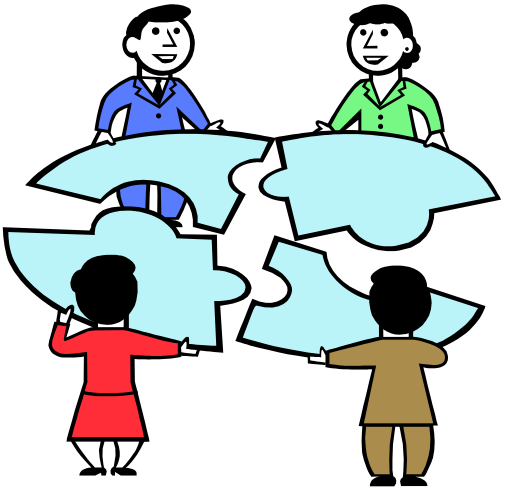
DIFFERENTIATION OF INSTRUCTION--



CONTINUOUS PROGRESS FOR ALL!

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"The fact that students **differ** may be inconvenient,
but it is inescapable.
Adapting to that diversity is the inevitable price
of
productivity, high standards, and fairness to kids."
--Theodore Sizer

School is the only place in life where we arbitrarily divide people according to date of birth. Age is an indicator of age, only! It does not indicate maturity, physical prowess, readiness for any task, verbal skill, reasoning skill, memory, experience, or any other indicator of readiness for learning. We must find out where students are, what their needs are, and deliver the curriculum where they are.

--Jan Lanham

High Stakes Accountability Requires that:

- No child is left behind.
- Skill mastery and skill gaps are diagnosed and addressed.
- All students progress.

Kentucky's Gifted Regulation Requires that:

- Schools provide articulated services for students K-12 in the areas of: General Intellectual Ability, Specific Academic Aptitude, Leadership, Creativity, and Visual/Performing Arts.
- Students are formally identified in grades 4-12; and selected for the Talent Pool in grades K-3.
- Schools serve students through multiple service delivery options.
- Schools group students for instruction.
- Schools develop and implement the Gifted Student Services Plan to establish continuous progress goals, to establish accountability, and to enhance communication towards meeting student needs.
- Schools report progress toward the GSSP goals a minimum of 2 times per year.

What is differentiation?

Curriculum differentiation is making differences in the level and pace of instruction to meet the needs of students. It is the result of acknowledging that our students come to us with a wide array of skills, needs, interests, abilities, and experiences, and instructional time can best be used by meeting the students where they are.

The key to differentiation is Continuous Progress.

Continuous Progress requires:

a. Pretesting/preassessment to determine level of readiness and instructional needs of student.

b. Identification of goals and objectives of lesson/activity/course in which student is to be involved and assurance that those goals are appropriate to the student.

c. Development of instructional strategies which will allow the student to achieve those goals in the most efficient and meaningful way.

d. Assessment of student progress to determine next set of goals and objectives and appropriate instructional strategies.

Differentiation requires articulated high level goals and objectives for the learner and instructional practices matched to those goals and objectives.

How do I begin?

1. Assess personal philosophy--

How do I feel about individual needs of students?
How important is the textbook as curriculum?
How willing am I to tailor instructional delivery to student needs?

2. Clearly articulate goals and objectives of units, chapters, and individual lessons--

Are they appropriate to the needs/abilities of the student?
How do I match student needs, levels of mastery, and interests to goals and objectives?

3. Develop instructional strategies--

How are processes and products matched to students' needs for continuous progress?
What is already being done that can be adjusted to meet student needs?
What new or different strategies need to be employed?

What is already being done?

Questioning--

high level questions built around combination of advanced information with complex thinking. Students should be required to defend/explain answers. Practice with higher level thinking must include metacognition, substantiation of response, critical thinking skills, etc. Use of questioning as a sole means of differentiation is not sufficient, but it is integral to matching instruction to student needs and to including gifted students throughout the school day.

Writing--

Writing tasks—already individualized; adjustments in the task goals and task assessment make differentiation relatively easy.

<u>TO BE DIFFERENTIATED: Must reflect student needs</u>

A. Must be structured so that students must use synthesis, analysis, or evaluation in written responses; assessment of the writing reflects that differentiation

B. Must build in the combination of complex content with complex thinking.

C. Must be built around *identified elements* (content and/or literary) which must be present in order to be successful; and must require more complexity of some students [tiered assignments]

Reading

Reading tasks--

A. Must provide opportunities to make connections--

to curriculum (historical periods, genres, biographical figures, political or military leaders, etc.) or between works (comparison of works by same author, in same genre, same topic but different genre, same historical period, same theme, etc.) or among devices used (allegory, symbolism, language usage, etc.)

B. Must provide opportunities for discussion and feedback. Readers must have a sounding board for their reading. Many read literature that is 'advanced' for their age peers, yet miss the full meaning or misinterpret without opportunity for discussion and clarification. Gifted readers are at genuine risk of building erroneous generalizations without feedback. The opportunity for high level thinking and development of insight comes with feedback.

C. Must provide opportunity for vocabulary development.

Gifted readers often read silently beyond their oral reading capacity.

They build a body of vocabulary that is in their sight vocabulary, but they must have opportunity to hear and say those words if they are to make them part of their comprehension vocabulary. Without feedback, they are often handicapped.

D. Must provide opportunity to progress as a reader.

Reading experiences must include discussion, questioning, analysis at high levels in order to ensure progress.

What can be done?

Curriculum compacting--

1. Define the goals and outcomes of a given unit or segment of instruction.

2. Identify students who have mastered the objectives or outcomes of a unit that is about to be taught.

What is mastery?

Research indicates that textbooks in grades 2-5 introduce only 40 to 65 percent new content during the school year. By eighth grade, the amount of new content has dropped to 30 percent. For students with quick mastery, this translates into encountering new material only 1 and 1/2 days per week. Compacting helps eliminate redundancy for these students.

3. Use "bought" time to replace the standard curriculum. Decisions regarding replacement activities and content are guided by time, space, and resource persons and materials. The ultimate criteria must be, however, to what degree does the activity/content provide <u>continuous progress</u> and academic challenge.

Compacting is an important way to reach underachieving students.
When they see that they can economize on regularly assigned material and "earn time" to pursue other projects, they often demonstrates abilities which were

untapped.
Independent Study

1. Student and teacher identify problems or topics which would enrich or extend the basic curriculum unit. Identify available resources.
2. Identify method(s) of investigation and type(s) of student product(s) to be developed.
3. Identify strategies for assessment of the product which will reflect appropriate goals.
4. Establish time lines.
5. Provide appropriate guidance and feedback.

Independent study builds on student interest, taps into high motivation, and provides opportunity for student choice through products, strategies of presentation, and approach to topic/problem.

Independent study provides important experience for students to develop planning and research skills at advanced levels.

Independent study encourages independence, while allowing students to work with complex and abstract ideas with guidance.

3 KEYS TO SUCCESS--

a. Specified components--What are you going to do and how are you going to do it?
b. Monitored progress--When, where, in what progression will it be done?
c. Authentic evaluation--How well/successfully was it done?

Successful independent study requires some type of contracting.

Tiered Assignments

--teacher provides simultaneous activities at various levels to meet different student needs. All students cover comparable material, but the process and product are varied.

1. Determine goals and outcomes of lesson/segment of content.
2. Design multi-level activities into assignment that allow students to succeed and progress wherever they are in the content.

By building in various levels of activities within a heterogeneous classroom, students have opportunity to explore ideas at levels that build on prior knowledge and prompt continuous progress.

Flexible Skills Grouping--

match students to work tasks based on readiness.
Movement among groups is common,
based on readiness and growth in the skill area.
Differentiation can occur by moving the grouping students into advanced skills in context long before the total group would be able to do so.

Mentorships/Apprenticeships--

student works with resource teacher, media specialist, community member, or other individual with the required expertise to develop and carry out all or part of a project or task.
By matching the mentor with the child's talent/interest area the student can work on expert level problems and tasks.

**Be sure mentorship is built around continuous progress. Goals and responsibilities should be very clear and progress carefully

monitored.

Acceleration--

is essential for some students in order to ensure continuous progress.

Subject Level Acceleration:

moving student or group of student through content at a rapid pace within a class moving at a slower pace

OR

moving student(s) physically where the appropriate level and pace of instruction is occurring**

OR

use of independent study for more rapid course completion

**for those students served by subject level acceleration, the pace of instruction in the higher level course/grade may still need to be increased. They often do not require the same review and repetitions, even with new material.

Grade Acceleration

For some students, the curriculum offerings in their age appropriate grade are far below what is needed for continuous progress. Their intellectual needs can best be met by one or more grade advancements. There is a body of research regarding best practices with acceleration, yielding a number of key indicators of the need for acceleration and secrets to success:

1. The student must want it.

2. Skill foundations must be considered.

3. Student potential and/or performance must be significantly above grade level.

4. Student must demonstrate appropriate social/emotional maturity.

5. Attitudes and approaches of receiving teacher must be considered.

6. The move is most effective when made in natural transitions in the school pattern.

Clear objectives are the key to differentiation.

Task Differentiation--

For example: *Students will demonstrate understanding of the elements of geography* *by reading the text and completing a matching worksheet*.

_____

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_____

Students will demonstrate comprehension of *Sarah Bishop* *by completing a captioned plot timeline*.

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Unit or Topic Differentiation—

For example:

Standard: Students will demonstrate mastery of multiplication facts (0-12).

Skills and Concepts in Unit
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Differentiation of Standard and/or Objectives:
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_____

Commonly Asked Questions Regarding Differentiation:

1. What is differentiation?

2. When do I differentiate?

3. Must I differentiate everything?

4. How do I Manage all of the issues associated with differentiation?

equality management fitting in attitudes

Quick Guide to Differentiation Fundamentals

ALWAYS:

1. Clearly define instructional objectives—What is it that I want the students to know or be able to do?
2. PREASSESS—Diagnose mastery and need relative to the objectives
3. Respond to the results of Preassessment

THEN:

A. "Tweak What You Already Do" by differentiating:
   - ✓ Questioning
   - ✓ Writing
   - ✓ Reading

B. Use Flexible Grouping to Facilitate Delivery

C. *Incorporate Additional Differentiation Strategies:*
   - ✓ Compacting
   - ✓ Independent Study
   - ✓ Tiered Assignments
   - ✓ Mentorships
   - ✓ Acceleration—Subject and/or Grade
   - ✓ Distance Learning

REMEMBER—The goal is continuous progress for ALL!