

Strategies for Differentiation

- **Scheduled Small Group Time:** Teacher groups similar needs students. Teacher pre-teaches future lessons, reviews content, re-teaches key standards, or provides enrichment to students who have exceeded content area expectations.
- **Turn and Talk Partners:** Teacher lets students “turn and talk” to another student about the reading and/or their comprehension.
- **Stop and Jot:** Students stop reading and jot down simple notes to help them remember the reading they’re doing.
- **Open-Ended Assignments (Menu):** Teacher provides “menu” style assignment sheet and students can pick and choose the assignments they wish to complete about a certain topic. Different levels of complexity are provided on the menu.
- **Interest Study:** In a unit, teacher lets students choose something of interest to research that is related to the unit. This creates student excitement and engagement.
- **Different Levels of Questions:** Teacher prepares a list of questions at different levels of thinking and asks specific questions to specific students. This holds all students accountable for higher levels of thinking.
- **Novel Groups:** Teacher separates students into small groups and has them discuss a novel. The teacher provides a timeline of when the book should be read, certain assignments to go along with their book, and a final project. Students hold each other accountable and relate the book to current age appropriate things.
- **Contracts:** Teachers use this with spelling words. Students receive spelling words and are then given a chart of different assignments that they can do, including a word search, story writing, crossword puzzle, and a word study. Students choose four assignments so they feel that have some control of their learning.
- **Marker Boards:** Students use a dry erase board or their desk and a dry erase marker to play games such as spelling bees or science showdowns, and teacher is able to informally assess students’ knowledge.
- **Think-Pair-Share:** Students carefully think about and talk about what they’ve learned with a partner.
- **Hands Down:** Who, what, where, when, why are on each finger of a drawing of the child’s hand to frame information. This is used so students can focus on basic elements of a lesson.
- **Graffiti Facts:** Students write down everything they know about a certain topic on a large poster board. They also write key questions to be explored on the poster board.
- **Teach To’s:** Students teach another group of students what key points from a specific lesson they have learned.
- **Cubing:** On each side of a cube teacher writes; describe it, compare it, associate it, analyze it, apply it, argue for or against it. Teacher rolls the cube and discusses each side for 5 or 10 minutes.
- **Models and manipulatives:** for skills such as fractions, shapes, counting, time, etc.
- **Stations:** for inquiry-based, independent learning activities.
- **Flexible grouping:** to group and regroup students based on factors including content, ability, and assessment results.

- **Choice and task cards:** Work assignments are written on cards and placed in hanging pockets or envelopes. Each student selects a card and completes that work. The teacher targets work toward student needs, yet allows student choice. Task cards are another form of choice cards. Challenging, independent activities in each content area are written on cards as opportunities for independent and small-group work.
- **Concept mapping:** This is used for exploring knowledge and gathering and sharing information. The strategy stresses the importance of prior knowledge in being able to learn about new concepts.
- **Tape-recorded materials:** These can be used as enrichment in learning/interest centers, as additional support for students (reading as they listen), or as an alternate way for students to gather information.
- **Varied journal responses:** Students are given opportunities to respond in ways that are a close match to their readiness level and the complexity of the thinking involved. Students will be more highly motivated to respond and persist in the thinking and writing required. Topics can be designed in advance and the teacher can hand them out or once again, students can be given the opportunity to select that response of their choice.
- **Individualized spelling lists:** Teachers can modify the lists, or they can modify how the spelling is assessed. Words can be taken from current reading material.
- **Anchoring activities:** This may be a list of activities that a student can do to at any time when they have completed assignments, or it can be assigned for a short period at the beginning of each class as students organize themselves and prepare for work. These activities may relate to specific needs or enrichment opportunities, including problems to solve or journals to write. These activities may provide the teacher with time to give specific help and small group instruction to students requiring additional help. Students can work at different paces but always have productive work they can do.
- **Guided reading:** The teacher guides small groups of students in reading carefully chosen, instructional level texts in order to build independence, fluency, and comprehension strategies. The teacher regularly observes and assesses students' changing needs and adjusts groups accordingly.
- **Morpheme Structures-Compound Construction:** Students will learn the production of compound words. Students are to pick a letter and state a compound word that begins with that letter. If they can, have them write the word on the card that goes with the beginning letter. If they can't, have them look up a compound word in the dictionary and write the word on the card. Writing the word on the whiteboard or sheet protector allows students to practice spelling the word.
- **Fluency, Connected Text- Reading Twosome:** Students will gain speed and accuracy using their own text. Give both students a copy of the text. Have student's read/reread text with a partner.
- **Word Maps:** Allow students to develop definitions, synonyms, antonyms, and pictures for vocabulary words. Introduce the word map and word. Put word in the central box, which teaches students how to use map. Have students put words/phrases in the other boxes by answering the following questions: "What is it?" "What is it like?" "What are some examples?" Have students use synonyms, antonyms, and a picture to illustrate the new word.

- **Listen, Read, Discuss:** Helps students build prior knowledge, comprehend orally presented material, and involves struggling readers in classroom discussions.
- **First Lines:** Pre-reading comprehension strategy in which students read the beginning sentences from a book and then make predictions about that book. It helps students focus on what the book will be about. After students read the complete text they will discuss and possibly change their initial predictions.
- **Reader's Theatre:** Helps promote fluency, comprehension, and interest in reading.
- **Reading Actively Through Text Annotation:** Students are more likely to retain information with their reading by writing comments in the margin of the text. Using copies of the text, students have a discussion with the writer by writing brief comments in the margins of the text. Students may write notes regarding their opinions about points raised by the writer, questions prompted by the reading, or new vocabulary words.
- **Mental Imagery:** Improving Text Recall allows students to read and visualize pictures to increase reading comprehension.
- **Reading Comprehension: Previewing the Chapter.** Students preview the contents of a chapter before they read it to increase their comprehension. They create mental images of its contents, activate prior knowledge, and predict what they are about to read.
- **Retell and Summarize:** Having students retell the text in their own words allows them to decipher between main ideas and supporting details.
- **Cause and Effect Thinking Map:** Allow students to see that actions in a story are related. On the right side, have students write down the event of the story and on the left side, have students write down the reasons for the event.
- **Story Pyramid for Better Reading Comprehension:** requires students to read deep into the text for additional information. Have students create a pyramid on a piece of paper. On the inside of the pyramid, have them draw three squares on the bottom, two squares in the middle, leaving one square on the top. Have students find the topic using one word and write it in the top square, two words describe topic in the middle two squares, describe the setting using three words in the bottom squares. Then, students create a topic sentence and a summary using details from the pyramid and the story.
- **Learning Styles inventory:** By doing this short inventory, you can easily get to know what kind of learner your students are and how you can be a better teacher by meeting their educational needs.
- **Bloom's Questioning:** By using the Bloom question stems, you can differentiate your instruction during your whole group lesson. This strategy is helpful because it gives your higher level students questions that make them think on a higher level, while your lower level student can observe and listen to the higher level questions. Your lower level students can still participate in the lesson, but you might need to start at the lower level of Bloom's and work up to a higher level in order to help them grasp a deep understanding of the skill.
- **Comparisons and Venn Diagrams:** It is important to start out with a class discussion in a whole group setting to review the topic of discussion. Then, break apart into small groups and have each group compare something different. Comparing ideas or stories helps connect real world elements into the student's learning.
- **Graphic Organizer:** These are great tools for differentiation because they are both visual and a shortened form of facts about the story or lesson. As a teacher, you can have the

students include different information on their graphic organizer and then share with the group.

- **Writer's Workshop:** Students use the writing process to create a writing piece. Form groups to work with those students that struggle with the pre-writing and drafting stage. Then the revising and editing phase is done as group work. Then finally read and revise each paper.
- **Audio stories and Visualization:** Using books and stories on audio is a helpful strategy for all students, especially students that struggle with fluency. Start the story by going over vocabulary and listening to the story aloud (on audio). As the students are listening, focus on visualizing the story and draw pictures or sketches of what they see happening.
- **Vocabulary with Pictures:** When working with new vocabulary words, give students a visual representation of the word. This visual or picture helps the student (especially if they are ELL) connect that word and definition to a real world object or scene.
- **Visual/spatial learners**
 - Draw a picture
 - Create a mural or display
 - Illustrate an event
 - Make a diagram
 - Create a cartoon
 - Design a graphic
- **Intrapersonal**
 - Think about and plan
 - Write in a journal
 - Review or visualize a way to do something
 - Make a connection with past information or experiences
- **Musical/rhythmic learner**
 - Sing it
 - Create a beat
 - Rap it
 - Make a cheer
 - Create a jingle
 - Hum it
 - Connect to music
- **Kinesthetic learners**
 - Role play
 - Walkabout
 - Dance
 - Skits/charades/mimes
 - Construction
 - Sports
 - Activity centers
 - Body language

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