Differentiated Instruction in Today’s Classroom:

Promoting Equity in Education

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VISION
At Jackson Public Schools, we prepare scholars to achieve globally, to contribute locally, and to be fulfilled individually.

MISSION
At Jackson Public Schools, we develop scholars through world-class learning experiences to attain an exceptional knowledge base, critical and relevant skill sets, and the necessary dispositions for great success.
Jackson Public School District

CORE VALUES

At Jackson Public Schools, we believe in the importance of:

- EQUITY
- RELATIONSHIPS
- EXCELLENCE
- RELEVANCE
- GROWTH MINDSET
- POSITIVE & RESPECTFUL CULTURE

Excellence for All  JPS Strategic Plan 2019-2024

Jackson Public School District has designed a series of commitments to our scholars and families that will guide our district’s decisions and actions. We invite and encourage your feedback and sincere partnership as we work together to transform lives through excellent education.

Commitment #1: A Strong Start
Commitment #2: Innovative Teaching and Learning
Commitment #3: Talented and Empowered Teams
Commitment #4: Joyful Learning Environments
Commitment #5: Culture of Accountability and Excellence
Session Norms

• Silence your cell phones.
• Check and/or reply to emails during the scheduled breaks.
• Be an active participant.
• Do not hesitate to ask questions.

Session Goals

In this session, we will:

• Define differentiated instruction
• Explain the theoretical basis of differentiated instruction
• Explore the variables of curriculum and learning environment
• Discuss misconceptions related to the widely used educational term
• Share research-based instructional strategies for academically inclusive classrooms
Activity: Comparing Classrooms

Working at your table, sort the attributes into the proper categories for Differentiated Classroom and Traditional Classroom.

**Traditional Classroom**
- Assessment is at the end of the learning to see “who got it”
- A single definition of excellence exists
- Whole-class instruction dominates
- A single text prevails
- A single form of assessment is used

**Differentiated Classroom**
- Assessment is ongoing and diagnostic to understand how to make instruction more responsive to the learner’s needs
- Excellence is defined in large measure by individual growth from a starting point
- Many instructional arrangements are used
- Multiple materials are provided
- Students are assessed in multiple ways
What is Differentiated Instruction?

Differentiated instruction is a teaching philosophy based on the premise that teachers should adapt instruction to student differences. Whether teachers differentiate content, process, products, or the learning environment, the use of ongoing assessment and flexible grouping makes this a successful approach to instruction. Teachers should modify their instruction to meet students’ varying readiness levels, learning preferences, and interests.

- Carol Ann Tomlinson
How Does the Research Support Differentiated Instruction?

Differentiated Instruction is the result of a synthesis of a number of educational theories and practices.

- Brain research indicates that learning occurs when the learner experiences moderate challenge and relaxed alertness-readiness.
- Psychological research reveals that when interest is tapped, learners are more likely to find learning rewarding and become more autonomous as a learner. Instruction is most effective when the learner experiences neither boredom or anxiety and when the learner is neither over- nor under-challenged.

**Key Characteristics of Differentiated Instruction**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Differentiated Instruction is proactive.</td>
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<tr>
<td>It is more qualitative than quantitative.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Differentiated Instruction is rooted in assessment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>It provides multiple approaches to content, process, product and affect/learning environment.</td>
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<td>Differentiated Instruction is student centered.</td>
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<td>It is a blend of whole-class, group, and individual instruction.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Differentiated Instruction is organic.</td>
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Why Differentiate?

Classrooms are filled with students who:

- have different needs
- come from different educational backgrounds
- have different attention spans and interests
- have different language abilities
- have different cultural backgrounds
Who are the Learners in Your Class?

Linguistic
- Love: reading, writing, telling stories, playing word games
- Need: books, tapes, writing tools, paper, diaries, dialogue, discussion, debate stories

Logical-Mathematical
- Love: singing, whistling, humming, tapping feet and hands, listening
- Need: singing, time, trips to concerts, music, playing at home and school, musical instruments

Interpersonal
- Love: reading, organizing, relating, manipulating, mediating
- Need: friends, group games, social gatherings, community events, clubs, mentors/apprenticeships

Spatial
- Love: designing, drawing, visualizing, doodling
- Need: art, sculpture, video, movies, slides, imagination games, mazes, puzzles, illustrated books, trips to art museums

Bodily-Kinesthetic
- Love: dancing, running, jumping, building, touching, gesturing
- Need: role play, drama, movement, dancing, singing, quiet

Multiple Intelligences

Developed by Dr. Howard Gardner

Low: experimenting, questioning, figuring it out, puzzles, calculating

Low: setting goals, meditating, dreaming, being quiet

Low: secret places, time alone, self-paved projects, chores

Low: role play, drama, movement, dancing, singing, quiet
Principles of Differentiation

• An environment that encourages and supports learning
• Quality curriculum
• Assessment that informs teaching and learning
• Instruction that responds to student variance
• Leads students and manages routines

Source: From The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of all Learners (2nd ed., p. 20), by Tomlinson, C.A., 2014

Here’s the Big Idea!

When learning tasks are consistently too hard, students become anxious and frustrated. When tasks are consistently too easy, boredom results. Both boredom and anxiety inhibit a student’s motivation to learn, and eventually impact achievement.
How to Differentiate Instruction

Turn and Talk

Locate a shoulder partner and discuss the following:

- How do you ensure that all learners access the curriculum in their preferred learning style?
- What grouping techniques do you utilize?
- How often do students practice skills in student-led centers?
- How do you leverage students’ strengths?
- What role does technology play in your instructional approach?
- What steps do you take to plan a tiered activity?
Teachers Can Differentiate Through:

- The curriculum the students access and how they access it
  - Strategies include: varied texts, think-pair-share, reading buddies, etc.

- How teachers sequence the learning and the ways in which students learn
  - Strategies include: cubing, think dots, centers, tiered lessons, contracts, etc.

- How students demonstrate what they have learned
  - Strategies include: timelines, product guides, rubrics, etc.

- How the learning is structured
  - Strategies include: classroom management, flexible grouping, etc.

Teachers Can Differentiate According to the Student’s…

**READINESS**
* A student’s proximity to specified learning goals

Strategies:
- Tiered activities
- Tiered products
- Compacting
- Learning contracts
- Alternative tasks/assessments

**INTERESTS**
* Passions, affinities, kinships that motivate learning

Strategies:
- Interest groups
- Interest centers
- Enrichment clusters
- Group investigations
- Choice boards
- Multiple Intelligence options

**LEARNING PROFILE**
* Preferred approaches to learning

Strategies:
- Multi-ability cooperative tasks
- Multiple Intelligence options
- Triarchic options
- 4-MAT

Source: From *The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of all Learners* (2nd ed., p. 20), by Tomlinson, C.A., 2014
Video

Let’s see what Differentiated Instruction means for you and your scholars...

https://youtu.be/vrmgquUplo8

Activity: Differentiation in Action

Locate the scenario of traditional instruction on the table. Working in groups, create a differentiated activity. Be prepared to share.
LOOK-FORS in a Differentiated Classroom

- Learning experiences are based on student readiness, interest, or learning profile.
- Assessment of student needs is ongoing, and tasks are adjusted based on assessment data.
- All students participate in respectful work.
- The teacher is primarily a coordinator of time, space, and activities rather than primarily a provider of group information.
- Students work in a variety of group configurations.
- Flexible grouping is evident.
- Time use is flexible in response to student needs.
- The teacher uses a variety of instructional strategies to help target instruction to student needs.
- Clearly established criteria are used to help support student success.
- Student strengths are emphasized.

Exit Ticket

- On a yellow sticky note, jot down differentiation strategies you have tried.
- On an orange sticky note, share your challenges to differentiating instruction.
- On a green sticky note, write any questions you have about differentiation.
- Place your sticky notes on the anchor chart in the appropriate columns.
References

- [www.ascd.org/differentiatedclassroom](http://www.ascd.org/differentiatedclassroom)
- [https://www.readingrockets.org/article/what-differentiated-instruction](https://www.readingrockets.org/article/what-differentiated-instruction)

Contact Information

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