

Comparing Traditional and Differentiated Classrooms



Traditional Classroom

Student differences are masked or acted upon on when they present problems.

Assessment is most common at the end of learning to see "who got it".

A relatively narrow sense of intelligence prevails.

A single definition of excellence exists.

Student interest is infrequently tapped.

Relatively few learning profile options are taken into account.

Whole-class instruction dominates.

Coverage of texts and curriculum guides drives instruction.

Mastery of facts and skills out of context are the focus of learning.

Single option assignments are the norm.

Time is relatively inflexible.

A single text prevails.

Single interpretation of ideas and events may be sought.

The teacher directs student behavior.

The teacher solves problems.

The teacher provides whole-class standards for grading.

A single form of assessment is often used.

Differentiated Classroom

Student differences are studied as a basis for planning.

Assessment is ongoing and diagnostic to understand how to make instruction more responsive to learner need.

Focus on multiple forms of intelligences is evident.

Excellence is defined in large measure by individual growth from a starting point.

Students are frequently guided in making interest-based learning choices.

Many learning profile options are provided for.

Many instructional arrangements are used.

Student readiness, interest and learning profile shape instruction.

Use of essential skills to make sense of and understand key concepts and principles is the focus of learning.

Multi-option assignments are frequently used.

Time is used flexibly in accordance with student need.

Multiple materials are provided.

Multiple perspectives on ideas and events are routinely sought.

The teacher facilitates students' skills at becoming more self-reliant learners.

Students help other students and the teacher solve problems.

Students work with the teacher to establish both whole-class and individual learning goals.

Students are assessed in multiple ways.