

Guides for Planning Differentiated Instruction

(Use portions applicable to your teaching/learning needs)

1. Are you clear on what you want the student to:
 - Know (facts, information)?
 - Understand (principles, generalizations, ideas)?
 - Be able to do as a result of this/these learning experience(s)?
2. In deciding on content, have you thought about and selected:
 - Alternate sources/resources?
 - Varied support systems (reading buddies, tape recordings, digests, direct instruction groups, organizers, extenders)?
 - Varied pacing plans?
3. Have you made plans to pre-assess student readiness so you can make appropriate content and/or activity assignments? Does the pre-assessment give a picture of understanding and skill vs. facts only? Does the pre-assessment focus squarely on items in #1 above?
4. As you assign students to groups or tasks, have you made certain:
 - Student assignments to groups vary from previous recent ones?
 - Students are encouraged to "work up"?
 - Provisions are made (if appropriate) for students who need or prefer to work alone?
 - Group-size matches student need?
5. As you create differentiated activities, have you made certain:
 - All of them call for high-level thinking?
 - All of them appear about equally interesting to your learners?
 - If readiness based, they vary along the continua of the equalizer?
 - If interest based, students have choices to make about how to apply skills and understandings or how to express them?
 - There are opportunities for varied modes of learning to accommodate varied learning profiles?
 - Each activity is squarely focused on one (or a very few) key concepts and/or generalizations?
 - Each activity requires all students to make sense of (own) the key concept(s)/generalization(s)?
 - Student-choice is maximized within teacher-generated parameters needed for focus and growth?
 - Appropriate skills have been integrated into the activity requirements?
 - Expectations for high quality task completion are clearly delineated for students?
 - You have a plan for gathering on-going assessment data from the activity?
 - You have a plan/mechanism for bringing closure and clarity to the tasks?

6. When creating assignments for differentiated products, have you made certain:
- They vary along the continua of the equalizer based on student readiness?
 - They require all students to use the key concepts, generalizations, ideas and skills to solve problems, extend understandings, and/or create meaningful products?
 - They maximize student choice options within parameters necessary to demonstrate essential understandings and skills?
 - They include a core of clearly delineated and appropriately challenging expectations for the content of the product (what understandings and skills it must demonstrate, what sorts of resources must be used, etc), process involved in production (planning), goal-setting, time line use, use of a process log, self-evaluation, drafts/stages, etc), and production requirements for the product (e.g. what will constitute an effective video or speech or proposal or photo essay, etc.)?
 - They provide for additional criteria for success to be added by the student, and by the teacher for individual students?
 - There are plans for formative evaluation and modification of the product?
 - There are plans for summative evaluation by teacher, student, peers and others (e.g., parents, real audience) based on product criteria?
 - You have involved and/or informed parents as appropriate?
7. Have you also thought about:
- Use of instructional strategies such as contracts, centers, interest groups, compacting, etc., which might help you vary learning options?
 - Use of small groups for direct instruction (re-teaching, extension)?
 - Sampling students to assess understanding, group processes, production needs?
 - Meaningful tasks for reinforcement, extension, exploration when students complete require work?