Differentiated Instruction

Differentiated instruction is an organized way of proactively adjusting teaching and learning by teaching students at their individual skill level in order to help them achieve maximum growth as learners. It involves using multiple approaches to content, process, product, and learning environment.

The following flow chart illustrates how teachers can differentiate instruction by content (what students learn), process (how students learn), product (how students demonstrate what they learn), and learning environment (the “climate” of the classroom).

Differentiation of Teacher-Directed Instruction:

is a teacher's response to learners' needs

guided by general principles of differentiation, such as

- Use of Data
- Sequence of Instruction
- Flexible Grouping

Teachers & Reading Coaches
Collaborating in Planning

Materials & Resources

Teachers can differentiate instruction by:

- Content
- Process
- Product
- Learning Environment

according to

- Student Readiness
- Student Interest
- Time & Group Size

(adapted from Tomlinson & Allan, 2000)
**Differentiating Content**
- Presenting information at various levels of difficulty.
- Presenting ideas through both auditory and visual means.
- Using peer tutors.
- Meeting with small groups—re-teaching or extending content.

**Differentiating Process**
- Tiered activities: all learners work with the same important information and skills but proceed with different levels of support, challenge, or complexities.
- Provide interest centers that encourage students to explore subsets of class topics.
- Develop personal agendas.
- Provide manipulatives or other hands-on support.
- Vary length of time a student may take to complete a task.

**Differentiating Product**
- Provide options of how to express information learned.
- Use rubrics that match and extend varied skill levels.
- Allow students to work alone or in small groups for products.
- Encourage students to create their own product assignments.

**Differentiating Learning Environment**
- Provide places to work around the room that are quiet or invite collaboration.
- Provide materials that are culturally sensitive.
- Set clear guidelines for independent work that matches student needs.
- Develop routines that allow students to get help when the teacher is not available.
- Help students understand that some learners need to move around while others sit quietly.

When differentiating instruction, teachers should first determine the students’ readiness based on formative assessments, then determine students’ interests, and use this information to design instruction and monitor student progress (Tomlinson & Allan, 2000).

Steps involved in differentiating a lesson are:

1. Start with the standard.
2. Define key concepts, generalizations, and objectives within the standard.  
   - What should all students know, understand, and be able to do?
3. Think about students’ readiness, pre-requisite skills, etc.
   - What kind of scaffolding will be necessary?
4. Determine which part of the lesson to differentiate.
   - Content, process, or product.
5. Determine what to differentiate.
   - Readiness, interest, time, and group size.
6. Create the lesson and clone the activity along the ladder.
7. Match a version of the task to a student based on student profile and task requirements.
   (Shores & Chester, 2009)
Grade Level group: Kindergarten
Strategy or Activity: Segmenting and Blending – Say It and Move It

Higher Level of Complexity

**Adapt Activity:** Say It and Move It mat: Segmenting CCVC and CVCC words with letter tiles.

**Original Activity:** Say It and Move It mat: Segmenting VC, CVC, and CCVC words using colored chips.

**Adapt Activity:** Say It and Move It adapted mat: Segmenting short a and short I CVC words with colored chips.

**Adapt Activity:** Connect 4 Dog Activity: Segmenting CVC short a words using checkers.
References


### Differentiation Activity

**Grade Level group:** Modeling for *Kindergarten/First Grade*

**Strategy or Activity:** Segmenting and Blending – Say It and Move It

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Level of complexity
Grade Level group: 8\textsuperscript{th} \textit{Grade}

Strategy or Activity: To demonstrate understanding of what ozone is and why it is important.

Level of Complexity

\textbf{Adapt Activity}: Debate the issue of whether there is an ozone problem to which humans contribute.

\textbf{Original Activity}: Write a position paper on the degree to which human activity may or may not negatively impact the ozone cycle.

\textbf{Adapt Activity}: Conduct a survey of peer awareness and understanding about the ozone.

\textbf{Adapt Activity}: Write a public service television or radio announcement for citizens of New Zealand.
Grade Level group: ______ Grade ________
Strategy or Activity: _______________________

Level of Complexity

Adapt Activity:

Adapt Activity:

Original Activity:

Adapt Activity:

Adapt Activity: