

Quality Differentiation for Gifted Learners



"There is nothing as inherently unequal as the equal treatment of unequals."

Thomas Jefferson

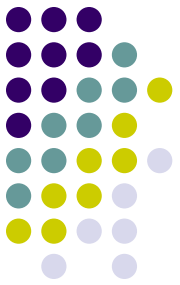
Differentiation... Why?



Differentiation for Gifted Students is important to maximize learning.

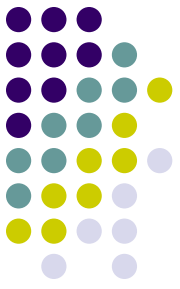
- Curriculum spiraling in education promotes the repetition of concepts previously learned based on the theory that students need multiple repetitions in order to master a concept
- Gifted students do not need as many repetitions to learn a skill/concept compared to non-gifted peers.

Differentiation and Pre-Tests?



- Gifted students' subject matter knowledge should be pre-assessed regularly.
- Results of the pre-test/pre-assessment should inform differentiation strategies.
- Teachers can offer pre-tests to all students so that all students have the opportunity to extend their thinking.

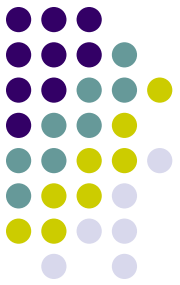
Pre-Assessment Strategy



Most Difficult First

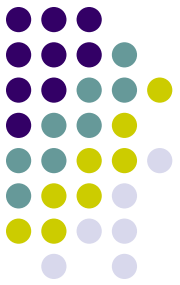
- Teacher teaches a mini-lesson on a concept to the whole class.
- After the lesson, students have time to practice the new skill.
- During this time, the teacher indicates which problems are the most complex/difficult and invites any student who feels comfortable to jump to these problems first.
- Any student who gets 4-5 of these problems correct in about 15 minutes and whose work is clear and accurate is allowed to move on to another task.
- Never require 100% mastery because we do not want students to feel pressure to be perfect all the time.

Five Elements of Differentiation



1. Content
2. Process
3. Product
4. Learning Environment
5. Assessment

Winebrenner, S. & Brulles, D. (2008). The cluster grouping handbook. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing Inc.



Differentiation: Content

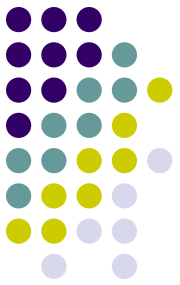
- Content differentiation determines how process, product, learning environment, and assessment should be differentiated (Kaplan, S. 2009).
- Differentiated learning experiences should be related to standards other students are learning (Winebrenner & Brulles, 2008).
- When Gifted master a concept before the class, their work should go deeper into related concepts-work should be qualitatively different instead of more of the same (Berger, S.).

Berger, S. (1991). Differentiating curriculum for gifted students. Reston, VA: Council for Exceptional Children.

Kaplan, S. (2009). Layering differentiated curricula for the gifted and talented. In Karnes, Frances, A. & Bean, Suzanne, M. (Eds.), *Methods and materials for teaching the gifted* (3-35). Waco, TX.

Winebrenner, S. & Brulles, D. (2008). The cluster grouping handbook. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing Inc.

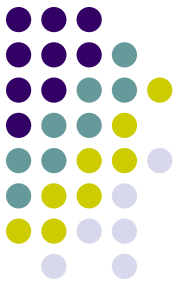
Differentiation: Process



- Process differentiation requires the modification of the methods students use to make sense of new concepts and skills (Winebrenner & Brulles, 2008).
- Modification of the process comes as a byproduct of content modification- once content is more complex, process skills will need to be elevated in order to allow for higher order thinking (Kaplan, 2009).
- Example, instead of having students “list” certain criteria, have students “judge with criteria”. This modification will require students to use higher order thinking skills as compared to lower level skills.

Kaplan, S. (2009). Layering differentiated curricula for the gifted and talented. In Karnes, Frances, A. & Bean, Suzanne, M. (Eds.), *Methods and materials for teaching the gifted* (3-35). Waco, TX.

Winebrenner, S. & Brulles, D. (2008). *The cluster grouping handbook*. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing Inc.



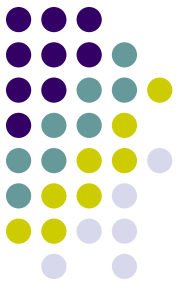
Differentiation: Product

- Product differentiation allows and encourages students to go beyond traditional written work to create artifacts, exhibitions, performances, etc to demonstrate knowledge of the material.
- Grandiose projects have been viewed as evidence of attention being directed at Gifted students and Gifted education; teachers, however, should not feel pressure to require/expect grand projects (Kaplan, 2009).
- Again, content differentiation should determine the product.
- Example, instead of having students state a mathematical equation, have students justify each part of the equation and its significance to the whole equation.

Kaplan, S. (2009). Layering differentiated curricula for the gifted and talented. In Karnes, Frances, A. & Bean, Suzanne, M. (Eds.), *Methods and materials for teaching the gifted* (3-35). Waco, TX.

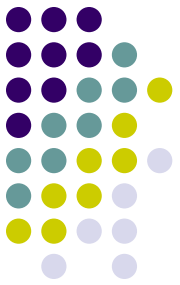
Winebrenner, S. & Brulles, D. (2008). *The cluster grouping handbook*. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing Inc.

Differentiation: Learning Environment



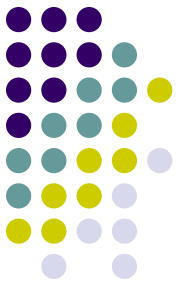
- Differentiation of the learning environment could involve flexible time limits, opportunities to work outside the classroom with mentors, opportunities to work with peers, etc (Winebrenner & Brulles, 2008).
- Modifying the learning environment is a natural way to allow students to take on the role of practitioners in the field.

Differentiation: Assessment



- Assessment differentiation may occur as a result of initial pre-test. If students have already mastered the concepts, assessment grades should reflect their mastery and the students should be allowed to move on to other differentiated tasks.
- Students should have a voice in assessing their differentiated work. One option is to allow students to create rubrics or other tools to assess the quality of their work.

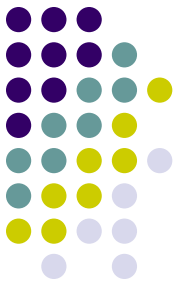
Differentiation and Extra Credit?



Should Extra Credit be used when students finish work early?

The simple answer is...
NO!

Thoughts on Extra Credit



- Gifted students who finish their work early should have all the credit they need. Therefore, why do they need “extra”???
- The extension opportunities described through the modification of Content, Process, Product, Learning Environment, and Assessment will become the “regular” work for gifted students once they master their grade-level standards.

Quality Differentiation



Modifying the Content, Process, Product, Learning Environment, and Assessment might sound overwhelming at first. Quality differentiation takes time and requires lots of practice.

Start small with Pre-Assessments and Content Modifications. Then build as you and your students become more comfortable with differentiation. Remember that the goal is to challenge Gifted students so that they are learning and growing every day!