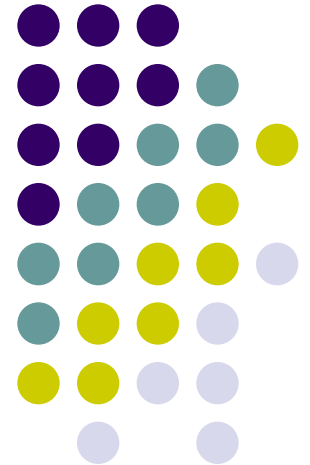




Differentiation

Strategies for Students Who
Have Already Mastered the
Content



Frustrated Students...



- Gifted students often master concepts after only a few repetitions.
- These students become frustrated with the educational process when they are required to complete learning activities focused on repeated practice of skills they have already mastered.



Strategies for the Teacher

What is a teacher to do when Gifted students have mastered a skill, but other students in the class need more practice?

Differentiate:

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

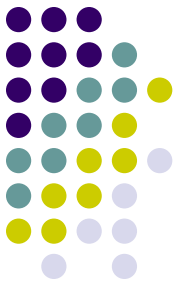


Note to the Teacher...

The strategies discussed in this session, as well as the next session, are good for ALL students who have mastered a given concept/standard and are ready for a task that will require them to develop a deeper understanding of the content.

Each student in the classroom should always have the opportunity to participate in extension tasks once he/she demonstrates mastery of the content.

Where to Begin...



The first step in the differentiation process is to Pre-Assess.

“We cannot teach students if we do not know them well.”

TheodoreSizer



Pre-Assessment is Crucial

- Pre-Assessment data will be the foundation on which a teacher can explain differentiation decisions to students, parents, and administrators.
- Without valid pre-assessment data, differentiation decisions may be perceived as “whimsical” (Roberts & Roberts, 2009, p.190).

Roberts, J.L. & Roberts, R.A. (2009). Writing units that remove the learning ceiling. In Karnes, Frances, A. & Bean, Suzanne, M. (Eds.), *Methods and materials for teaching the gifted* (3-35). Waco, TX.

Pre-Assessment and Compacting



The term “**compacting**” refers to the practice of finding ways for gifted students to spend less time on the prescribed grade-level curriculum so they can move on to more challenging tasks.

Why Compact?

“At most grade levels, gifted students have already learned more than 50 percent of a year’s curriculum at the beginning of the school term,” (Winebrenner & Brulles, p. 88).

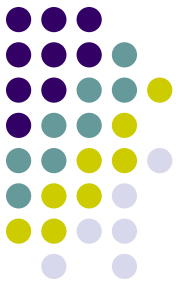
Pre-Assessment and Compacting



Compacting a Day at a Time: Most Difficult First

- All students participate in whole group mini-lesson. During the practice session, most difficult problems are identified and all students are invited to jump ahead to these problems if they believe they are ready.
- Any student who gets 4/5 or 8/10 correct has proven mastery and should be allowed to pursue an extension task for the remainder of class.
- This student may serve as a “checker” for other classmates; however, Winebrenner and Brulles recommend each student only be allowed to serve as “checker” once per week, (p. 91).

Pre-Assessment and Compacting



Compacting One Week at a Time: Pre-tests

- Set aside time on Monday for weekly pre-tests.
- Students are provided with the week's material, along with a brief period of time to look over it.
- The teacher invites anyone who would like to Pre-test out of the week's instructional time to come to a designated spot in the room to take a pre-test.
- 100% mastery should not be required to allow a student to move on to extension tasks.

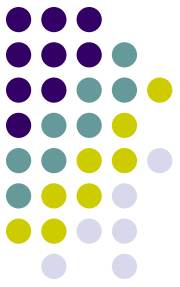
Pre-Assessment and Compacting



Compacting a Unit at a Time: Learning Contracts

- The teacher must create the Learning Contract at the beginning of the unit.
- The Learning Contract should include the standards to be learned in the unit, the conditions for testing out of the unit, and possible extension tasks to be completed in lieu of the unit.
- The teacher should allow the students to look over the material and invite any student who thinks he/she could answer 8/10 or 16/20 questions correctly to come to a designated spot in the room to take the end-of-unit test.

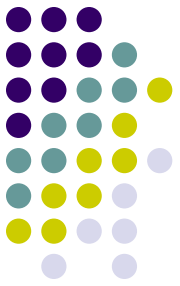
Pre-Assessment and Compacting



Compacting a Unit at a Time: Learning Contracts (continued)

- Students should not be expected to earn a perfect score on the pre-test in order to use the Learning Contract; however, when skills are being taught to the whole class that the student did not demonstrate mastery of, he/she should participate in whole class instructional time.
- Students should take the same end-of-unit test when the other students take it to ensure mastery has been all concepts have been mastered.

What about the Extension Tasks?

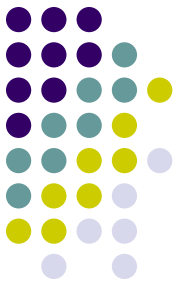


Remember to differentiate CONTENT FIRST!

Find out what students are interested in and see how this can be related to the content.

Involve students in determining process and product.

Student Centered Extension Tasks



Have students write a proposal for what they want to study and how they will demonstrate what they have learned. Students should include a timeline and create a rubric to assess success.

Potential Products:

- Write and produce a Class Newspaper
- Update Class website to include current topics with examples and explanations
- Write and produce videos to teach others what is being studied in class- videos could be posted on class website.

Final Thoughts...



Hopefully, this session has provided you with options for differentiating when material being taught in class has already been mastered.

Start small by differentiating and compacting one day at a time.

Your students will be grateful you have taken the time to provide them with meaningful learning opportunities that challenge them!