

Differentiating for the Young Child

Teaching Strategies Across
the Content Areas, PreK-3

SECOND EDITION

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Foreword by GEORGE S. MORRISON



Thank you

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CORWIN

Please enjoy this complimentary excerpt from
Differentiating for the Young Child.

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Taking Stock: An Inventory for Differentiation in the Primary Classroom

The Primary Classroom and Differentiation

Aspects of the primary classroom that support differentiation

Examples:

Child-centered instruction

Sensitivity to learning styles

Teaching strategies in primary education that adapt well to differentiation

Examples:

Hands-on learning

Small-group instruction

Arts applications

Student Learning Needs

Student level of mastery

Examples:

Students below or above grade level

Students at different levels in different subjects

Learning challenges and needs in evidence

Examples:

Reading difficulties in some students

Gifted students unchallenged

Cultures, languages, interests, life experiences and circumstances

Examples:

Bilingual students

Several highly creative or artistic students

The Teacher's Knowledge and Experience

Teaching methods used most

Examples:

Whole-class instruction followed by small-group activity

Questioning techniques to support inductive thinking, followed by independent seat work

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Current ways of responding to different academic and skill levels

Examples:

Reading groups and reading “buddies”

Math groups that progress at different levels of mastery

Creative processes in literacy and social studies

Knowledge and experience in differentiated instruction

Examples:

Inservices that focused on strategies

Workshops in developing learning centers

Some success in helping children who need reinforcement

Essential Concepts, Knowledge, and Skills

Required curriculum content and learning goals adaptable to differentiation

Examples:

Big ideas and concepts in a topic that allow for more flexible responses

Broadly stated curriculum standards that are not prescriptive

Arts activities adaptable to different learning needs of young children

Examples:

Theatrical games to explore history

Visual arts as catalysts for writing or math assignments

A Learning Environment for Young Students

The classroom itself and how it responds to the different learning needs of students

Examples:

Atmosphere warm and open; music to begin and end school day

Space colorful and many displays for engaging children

Nature center, reading corner, math games, and projects area

Resources to Explore

Resources applicable to different learning styles, intelligences, levels of mastery

Examples:

Books and magazines

Nature displays with real nests, grasses, etc.

Computer programs

Arts materials

Priorities and Preparation

Greatest needs in the classroom

Examples:

Gifted

Bilingual

High variation in reading readiness

Greatest demands right now

Examples:

Learning benchmarks, particularly in literacy

Preparing kids for testing in the district

Problems to tackle through differentiation

Examples:

Help struggling kids in reading

Find new ways to get students more engaged in science

Find more challenging assignments for gifted kids

New strategies to try

Examples:

Compacting for bright kids

Tiered instruction in math class

The following sections examine these items more closely in order to address the questions and practical concerns many teachers have about differentiation.

THE PRIMARY CLASSROOM AND DIFFERENTIATION

Most primary teachers are differentiating already, though they may not be fully aware of it. In a first-grade classroom, for example, we would likely find students working at different levels of ability, moving around in a space with flexible seating arrangements. Colorful displays and materials that appeal to the hands-on, sensory responses of young children are often richly in evidence. From their earliest years, young children learn by exploring their environment; they finger, touch, taste, and shape whatever they can get their hands on (Morrison, 1997). This doesn't change significantly in the primary school grades. Most primary classrooms combine