

The Bridge

APRIL 2015

Spotlight on Success



Differentiating Instruction: Meeting Students Where They Are

No two students enter a classroom with identical abilities, experiences, and needs. Learning style, language proficiency, background knowledge, readiness to learn, and other factors can vary widely within a single class group.

Regardless of their individual differences, however, students are expected to master the same concepts, principles, and skills. Helping all students succeed in their learning is an enormous challenge that requires innovative thinking.

How Does Differentiated Instruction Work

Teacher's DO	Teacher's DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide several learning options, or different paths to learning, which help students take in information and make sense of concepts and skills. Provide appropriate levels of challenge for all students, including those who struggle, those who are advanced and those in the middle. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a separate lesson plan for each student in a classroom. “Water down” curriculum for some students. Determine students’ mastery of a skill based on students’ mastery of a previous unrelated skill.

Mrs. Coleman, Learning Coach at Berclair Elementary, is dedicated to the coaching work and works diligently to improve the practice of each of her mentees.

Mrs. Coleman has followed the Cycle of Improvement to support each of her mentees from the beginning of the school year. She stated that, “Although being a teacher and a coach takes a lot of time and sacrifice, it can be very rewarding. Through coaching, I have gained a sense of satisfaction watching the novice teachers grow and develop over time. In return, reflection has become an integral part of my own professional growth.” Mrs. Coleman we appreciate all that you do each day to improve the practice of your mentees. Way to go Mrs. Coleman!!

Differentiation Strategies for Content~Process~Product

Content

- Use reading materials at varying readability levels.
- Use vocabulary lists at readiness levels of students.
- Presenting ideas through both auditory and visual means.
- Use reading buddies.
- Meeting with small groups to re-teach an idea or skill for struggling learners, or to extend the thinking or skills of advanced learners.

Process

- Use tiered activities through which all learners work with the same important understandings and skills, but proceed with different levels of support, challenge, or complexity.
- Provide interest centers that encourage students to explore the skill through text or task that interest them.
- Offer manipulatives or other hands-on supports for students who need them.
- Vary the length of time a student may take to complete a task in order to provide additional support for a struggling learner or to encourage an advanced learner to pursue a topic in greater depth.

Product

- Give students options of how to express required learning.
- Use rubrics that match and extend students' varied skills levels.
- Provide product assignments at varying degrees of difficulty to match student readiness.
- Encouraging students to create their own product assignments as long as the assignments contain required elements.

TEM CONNECTIONS

TEM 4.0 Connections

- Teach 2: Multiple perspectives/approaches to solve problems or interpret text/content
- Teach 3 : Teacher challenges all students
- Teach 4 : Strategies enable students to meet lesson objectives with appropriate scaffolding and differentiation