A graphic of a clipboard with a silver clip at the top, holding a white sheet of paper. The text is centered on the paper.

# **Differentiation 101**

## **Grades K-12**

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**Figure 1.1:**

**THE ELEMENTS OF DIFFERENTIATION**

***Differentiated instruction involves:***

***Differentiated instruction is intended to:***

***Differentiated instruction is not intended to:***

**Student differences**

Analyze students' readiness to determine instructional decisions.

Label students.

**Instructional groupings**

Flexibly grouping and regrouping students according to instructional objectives and in response to students' needs.

Primarily deliver Instruction in a whole-class group.

**Materials and texts**

Present multiple levels and kinds of learning materials.

Predominately use a single, grade-level text.

**Learning assignments**

Differentiate learning experiences to present respectful ways to learn. The contrast is in the depth and complexity of tasks.

Generally, assign the same learning task for all students to complete. The contrast is the degree of difficulty experienced by different students in response to the task.

**Students' interests**

Incorporate students' interests to increase their motivation to learn and to maximize individual potential.

Assess interests less often because the curriculum is predetermined.

**Assessment and evaluation**

Implement multifaceted, continual assessment to guide instructional decisions and focus students' learning goals. Evaluate and determine grades when required.

Predominately complete evaluations to produce grades in a grade book or scores on tests.

**Excellence**

Reflect students' personal best and the degree of individual growth from each learner's achievement level at the entry point of instruction.

Designate the students with the highest grades and achievements.

**Standards**

Integrate standards into the curriculum.

Teach standards as separate learning components.

**Teachers' roles**

Enable teachers to facilitate and coach students' learning. Customize instruction to seek ways for all students to succeed in learning.

Primarily provide direct instruction through delivering the curriculum only as designed by the texts.

**Students' roles**

Enable students to actively participate in learning, producing, and assessing own learning.

Require students to dutifully complete learning tasks designed for inclusion in the grade-level curriculum, regardless of individual readiness, learning profile, interests, or dispositions for learning.

**Figure 4.2:**  
**HIGH ACHIEVER, GIFTED LEARNER, CREATIVE THINKER**

<b>A High Achiever...</b>	<b>A Gifted Learner...</b>	<b>A Creative Thinker...</b>
Remembers the answers.	Poses unforeseen questions.	Sees exceptions.
Is interested.	Is curious.	Wonders.
Is attentive.	Is selectively mentally engaged	Daydreams; may seem off task.
Generates advanced ideas.	Generates complex, abstract ideas.	Overflows with ideas, many of which will never be developed.
Works hard to achieve.	Knows without working hard.	Plays with ideas and concepts
Answers the questions in detail.	Ponders with depth and multiple perspectives.	Injects new possibilities.
Performs at the top of the group.	Is beyond the group.	Is in own group.
Responds with interest and opinions.	Exhibits feelings and opinions from multiple perspectives.	Shares bizarre, sometimes conflicting opinions.
Learns with ease.	Already knows.	Questions: What if...
Needs 6 to 8 repetitions to master.	Needs 1 to 3 repetitions to master.	Questions the need for mastery.
Comprehends at a high level.	Comprehends in-depth, complex ideas.	Abstracts beyond original ideas.
Enjoys the company of age peers.	Prefers the company of intellectual peers.	Prefers the company of creative peers but often works alone.
Understands complex, abstract humor.	Creates complex, abstract humor.	Relishes wild, off-the-wall humor.
Grasps the meaning.	Infers and connects concepts.	Makes mental leaps: Aha!
Completes assignments on time.	Initiates projects and extensions of assignments.	Initiates more projects than will ever be completed.
Is receptive.	Is intense.	Is independent and unconventional.
Is accurate and complete.	Is original and continually developing.	Is original, ever changing, and misunderstood.
Enjoys school often.	Enjoys self-directed learning.	Enjoys creating.
Absorbs information.	Manipulates information.	Improvises.
Is a technician with expertise in a field.	Is an expert, abstracts beyond the field.	Is an inventor and idea generator.
Memorizes well.	Guesses and infers well.	Creates and brainstorms well.
Is highly alert and observant.	Anticipates and relates observations.	Is intuitive.
Is pleased with own learning.	Is self-critical.	Is never finished with possibilities.
Gets A's.	May not be motivated by grades.	May not be motivated by grades.
Is able.	Is intellectual.	Is idiosyncratic.

**Figure 3.2:**  
**DIFFERENTIATION STRATEGIES**  
**MATCHED TO**  
**INSTRUCTIONAL NEEDS**

PACE		LEVEL			
ACCELERATED RATE OF INSTRUCTION	MINIMUM REPETITION	ADVANCED CONTENT	HIGH DEGREE OF COMPLEXITY AND ABSTRACTION	IN-DEPTH STUDY	
<i>While any strategy may be applicable to advanced and gifted learners, the strategies checked are those most likely to enhance each specific instructional need.</i>					
					Curriculum compacting
					Flexible grouping by similar-readiness levels
					Flexible grouping by interests
					Learning centers or stations (student-developed)
					Learning centers or stations (teacher-developed)
					Open-ended tasks
					Preassessment
					Product options
					Research and independent study
					Students as producers
					Students' self-assessments
					Thinking and inquiry
					Tiered instruction

## To Support Differentiation, Leaders Should:

1. Know more than the teacher about the techniques and strategies.
2. Establish clear definitions.
3. Provide an environment supportive of risk and change.
4. Model differentiation for teachers and parents.
5. Provide materials and realistic time.
6. Provide guidance in beginning sensibly and progressing steadily.
7. Communicate strategies and expectations with parents.
8. Begin with those ready to start.
9. Promote continual development.

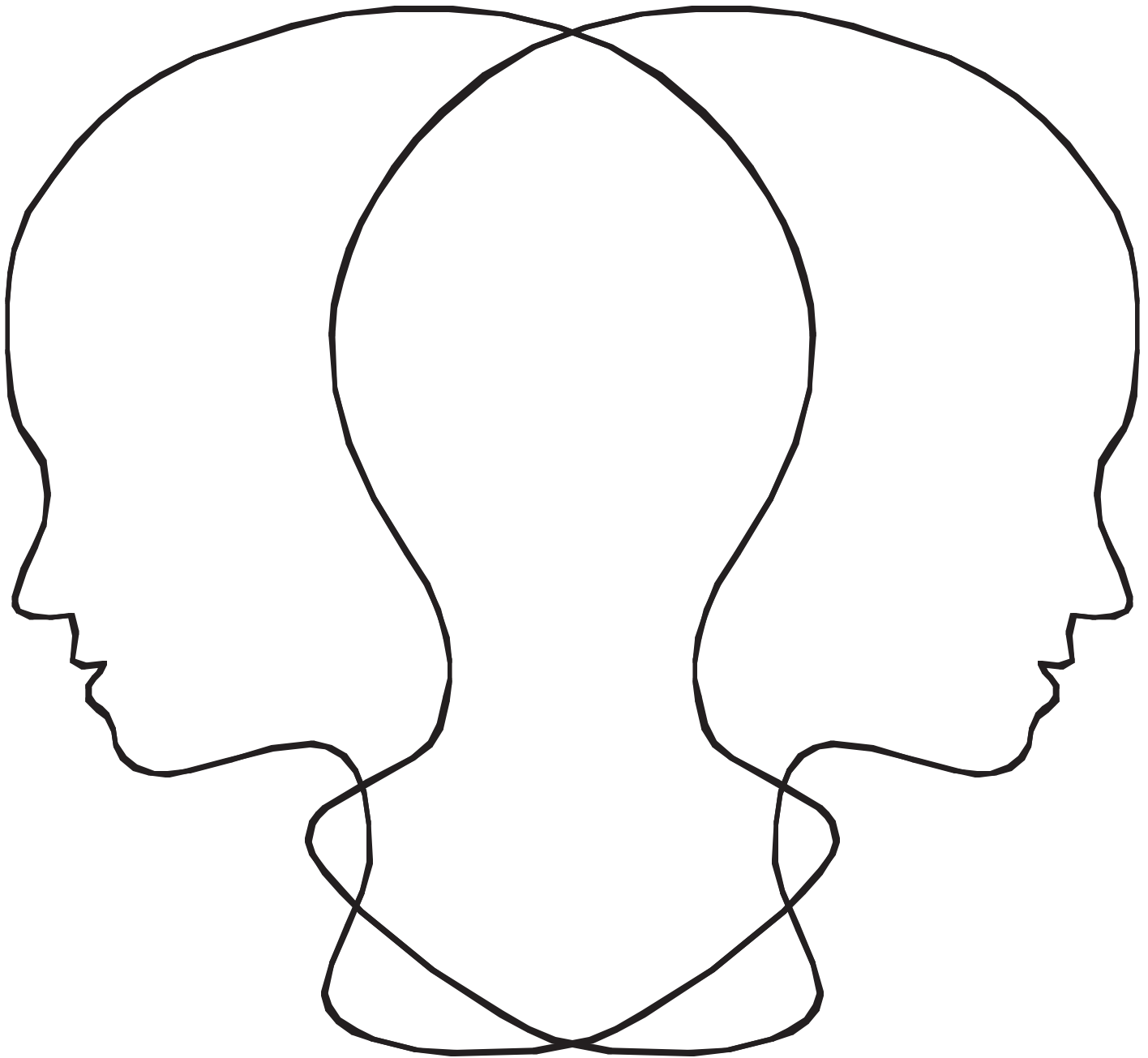
**Differentiation is a  
life-long teaching process.**

# INSTRUCTIONAL NEEDS

**Gifted Potential**

**Regular Learner**

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## 20 TIPS FOR NURTURING GIFTED CHILDREN

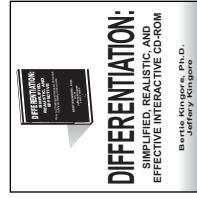
Bertie Kingore, 2007

1. Appreciate gifted learners as children.
  2. Be an encourager.
  3. Emphasize that what is learned is more important than any grade.
  4. Elicit their perceptions.
  5. Be an active listener.
  6. Follow their interests and leads in learning situations rather than pressure them with your agenda.
  7. Recognize how the instructional needs of a gifted child differ from others.
  8. Appreciate the differences among high achievers, gifted learners, and creative thinkers.
  9. Understand the developmental crises for gifted students.
  10. Provide intellectual peers as well as age peers.
  11. Talk up to them. Advanced vocabularies lead to higher comprehension and achievement.
  12. Enjoy music, plays, museums, art, and historical places together and discuss the experience.
  13. Model life-long learning habits.
  14. Help children get a library card and go to the library together.
  15. Consider giving books and learning games as presents.
  16. Encourage authentic reading, writing, and math experiences.
  17. Maintain a sense of humor!
- At School...
18. Support school efforts to provide services for advanced and gifted children.
  19. Supply continual home perspectives and feedback on your child's well-being, responses to learning, and interests.
  20. Be an advocate more than an advisory.

## RESOURCES



**Differentiation: Simplified, Realistic, and Effective**



**Differentiation Interactive CD-ROM**



**Just What I Need!  
Learning Experiences  
to Use on Multiple  
Days in Multiple Ways**



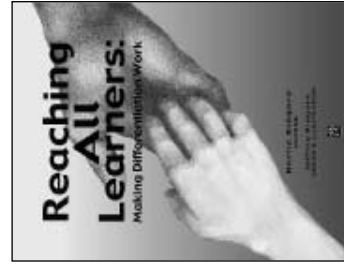
**Assessment: Time-Saving Procedures for Busy Teachers, 4th ed.**



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**Integrating Thinking:  
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**Reaching All Learners:  
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