

# Contents

List of Reproducible Pages	X
----------------------------	---

List of Figures	X
-----------------	---

Introduction	1
--------------	---

## PART 1

### Getting Ready

<b>Chapter 1: What Is Differentiation?</b>	5
--	---

Differentiated Instruction: One Size Doesn't Fit All	6
---	---

You May Be Differentiating Already	7
------------------------------------	---

Our Diverse Classrooms	7
------------------------	---

What Do We Differentiate?	10
---------------------------	----

What Is the Teacher's Role?	11
-----------------------------	----

Questions and Answers About Differentiating Instruction	13
--	----

How Differentiated Is Your Classroom?	18
---------------------------------------	----

Resources	18
-----------	----

<b>Chapter 2: Who Are Your Students?</b>	21
--	----

Discovering Your Students	21
---------------------------	----

Finding Out What Students Know	24
--------------------------------	----

The Importance of Knowing Your Students	26
---	----

Resources	26
-----------	----

<b>Chapter 3: What Do You Teach?</b>	53
--------------------------------------	----

Essential Questions	53
---------------------	----

Unit Questions	55
----------------	----

Using Essential and Unit Questions to Differentiate Instruction	56
--	----

Choosing a Unit of Your Own	56
-----------------------------	----

Mapping Your Curriculum	57
-------------------------	----

Resources	62
-----------	----

## PART 2

### Differentiation in Action

<b>Chapter 4: How Do You Teach?</b>	
-------------------------------------	--

<b>Planning for Challenge and Variety</b>	67
---	----

Challenge: Bloom's Levels of Thinking	67
---------------------------------------	----

Variety: Gardner's Eight Ways of Thinking and Learning	70
---	----

How Differentiated Is Your Current Unit?	70
--	----

The Matrix Plan	74
-----------------	----

A Sample Matrix Plan	74
----------------------	----

Differentiating Your Unit Using a Matrix Plan	76
---	----

The Integration Matrix	76
------------------------	----

Many Uses for Your Matrix	84
---------------------------	----

Resources	84
-----------	----

<b>Chapter 5: What Do Students Need?</b>	
--	--

<b>Flexible Instructional Grouping</b>	85
--	----

Personalizing Learning with Flexible Grouping	85
---	----

Flexible Grouping at Exit Points	85
----------------------------------	----

Flexible Grouping Compared with Other Grouping Strategies	86
--	----

Questions and Answers About Flexible Grouping	88
---	----

Tips on Managing Flexible Groups	89
----------------------------------	----

Student Independence and Flexible Groups	90
--	----

Resources	90
-----------	----

<b>Chapter 6: What Do Students Need?</b>	
--	--

<b>Tiered Assignments</b>	91
---------------------------	----

Six Ways to Structure Tiered Assignments	91
--	----

Deciding When and How to Tier an Assignment	95
---	----

Guidelines for Designing Tiered Assignments	95
---	----

How to Organize Groups and Give Directions	96
--	----

Making Tiering Invisible	98
--------------------------	----

Resources	100
-----------	-----

<b>Chapter 7: What Do Students Need?</b>	
<b>Choices</b> .....	101
Pathways Plans .....	101
Project Menus .....	105
Challenge Centers .....	107
Spin-offs .....	109
Resources .....	111
<b>Chapter 8: What About Grading?</b> .....	119
Establishing Quality Criteria for Differentiated Activities .....	119
Grades Are Cumulative .....	120
Don't Grade Everything .....	120
Grades = Rigor .....	120
Totally 10 .....	123
Resources .....	124
<b>Chapter 9: How Do You Manage Differentiation?</b> .....	125
Preparing to Differentiate .....	125
Preparing Your Students and Classroom .....	125
Managing Student Work .....	126
Resources .....	129
<b>Chapter 10: How Do You Differentiate for Special Populations?</b> .....	131
Differentiated Instruction and Special Needs Students .....	131
An Idea from Your Special Education Colleagues .....	133
Other Differentiation Strategies for Special Needs Students .....	133
Differentiated Instruction for Gifted and Talented Students .....	134
Curriculum Compacting .....	137
Individual Planning .....	140
The Importance of Mentors .....	140
Resources .....	141
<b>Final Thoughts:</b>	
<b>Teaching as a Creative Activity</b> .....	145
<b>Appendix A:</b>	
<b>Letter to Families</b> .....	146
<b>Appendix B:</b>	
<b>Differentiating Classroom Discussions</b> .....	147
Using Classroom Questions to Differentiate Learning .....	147
Brainstorming .....	148
Learning Dialogues .....	149
<b>Appendix C:</b>	
<b>Content Catalysts, Processes, and Products (CCPP) Toolkit</b> .....	155
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	157
<b>Index</b> .....	158
<b>About the Author</b> .....	164

## List of Reproducible Pages

Classroom Practices Inventory	19–20
Student Learning Profile	27–28
Interest Inventory	29–31
Projects, Presentations, Performances (Grades 3–5)	32–33
Projects, Presentations, Performances (Grades 6 & up)	34–35
About Multiple Intelligences	36
How We Think and Learn	37
Multiple Intelligences Checklist	38–39
Answer Key for “Multiple Intelligences Checklist”	40–41
Sample Family Letter to Accompany “Multiple Intelligences Checklist”	42
Sample Family Letter to Report Results of “Multiple Intelligences Checklist”	43
Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence	44
Logical/Mathematical Intelligence	45
Visual/Spatial Intelligence	46
Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence	47
Musical Intelligence	48
Interpersonal Intelligence	49
Intrapersonal Intelligence	50
Naturalist Intelligence	51
Essential Questions and Unit Questions	63
Curriculum Map	64–65
Matrix Plan	80–81
Integration Matrix	82–83
Worklog	112
Spin-off	113
Reading Around the Topic	114
Resources Log	115
Project Planner and Checklist	116
Self-Reflection	117
Compacting Form and Project Description	142
Conference Log	143
Mentor and Subject Area Specialist Application	144
Short Shots: Questions to Challenge Thinking	152

Observer's Checklist	153
Self-Reflection: Learning Dialogue	154

## List of Figures

1. Differentiated Instruction Means	17
2. Essential Questions and Unit Questions: Sample	57
3. Curriculum Map: Sample	59
4. Curriculum Map: Sample	60
5. Sample Skills List	61
6. Bloom's Taxonomy	68
7. Challenge Levels	69
8. Curriculum Map: Sample	71
9. Brief Lesson Plans	73
10. Matrix Plan: Sample	75
11. Integration Matrix	78–79
12. Three Kinds of Groups	87
13. Workcards (Solar System)	96
14. Workcards (Cultural/Ethnic Studies)	97
15. Language Arts Pathways: Grammar and Sentence Structure	103
16. Math Pathways: Number Theory	103
17. Workcard (Project 3)	104
18. Matrix Plan Used to Design a Project Menu	106
19. Project Menu: Sample	107
20. Suggested Activities for a Challenge Center on Insects	109
21. Sample: Teacher-Directed Spin-off	110
22. Sample: Spin-off with Required Product	110
23. Grading Based on Rigor	121
24. Area and Volume Check-up	122
25. Totally 10 Projects: Mythology	124
26. A High Achiever vs. A Gifted Learner	136
27. Differentiation “SCAMPER” For Gifted and Talented Students	137
28. Aspects of Challenge for Gifted Students	138
29. Sample: Compacting Form and Project Description	139
30. Questions to Spark Dialogue	150
31. The CCPP Toolkit	156

# Introduction

## The Challenges of Today's Diverse Classrooms

What is your biggest challenge as a teacher? For many, it is attempting to respond to an increasingly broad spectrum of student needs, backgrounds, and learning styles. We know a lot more than our predecessors about why some students learn easily and others struggle. We have useful information about thinking and learning strengths and limitations; about the influence of socioeconomic and family factors on children's school performance and on their access to resources and learning experiences, both within and outside the home; and about the role of gender and cultural background in learning preferences. We know the importance of a student's readiness, learning style, motivation, interests, regard for learning, and confidence. All these factors broaden the range of student needs within a single classroom. But how do we address those needs? And what about the influence of state curriculum standards, graduation requirements, and performance assessments?

Differentiated instruction is a way of thinking about teaching and learning. It is also a collection of strategies that help you better address and manage the variety of learning needs in your classroom. How can you diagnose your students' learning needs accurately and practically? How can you provide learning opportunities that increase the likelihood of student success? The answers to these questions are what differentiating instruction is all about.

Differentiated instruction is not a new trend. It is based on the best practices in education. It puts students at the center of teaching and learning. It lets their learning needs direct your instructional planning.

## The Goals of Differentiated Instruction

Differentiated instruction enhances learning for all students by engaging them in activities that better respond to their particular learning needs, strengths, and preferences. The goals of differentiated instruction are:

- To develop challenging and engaging tasks for each learner.
- To develop instructional activities based on essential topics and concepts, significant processes and skills, and multiple ways to display learning.
- To provide flexible approaches to content, instruction, and products.
- To respond to students' readiness, instructional needs, interests, and learning preferences.
- To provide opportunities for students to work in varied instructional formats.
- To meet curriculum standards and requirements for each learner.
- To establish learner-responsive, teacher-facilitated classrooms.

## About This Book

This book provides a wide variety of strategies for differentiating instruction. As a professional, you'll easily recognize those that make sense to you and the techniques that reflect your style of teaching. A strategy that's easy for one teacher to use may be burdensome for another. At the same time, the way you differentiate instruction for this year's group of students may differ from what works next year. The intent is to introduce many options

Within each of these units, students explore various aspects of the essential question. For example:

*Who were the leaders of this period of American history (for example, during the Civil War)?*

*What characteristics of leadership did each person possess (for example, Lincoln)?*

As they return to the essential question in unit after unit, students discover what leadership entails through various periods of American history. To tie content from one unit to the next, you might ask students, for example, to explore the similarities and differences between Lincoln's leadership during the Civil War and Washington's leadership during the Revolutionary War. If your curriculum is organized around essential questions and if instruction flows from them, students should be able to answer essential questions from what they've learned in each unit.

Present your essential questions to students at the beginning of the year or your course. Allow time for questions and discussion; then post the questions on a bulletin board or classroom wall so you can refer back to them.

## Unit Questions

Once you have developed essential questions, it's time to design unit-level questions. **Unit questions provide specific content and facts about essential questions. They add depth and specificity.**

Here are examples of essential questions followed by their associated unit questions:

### Geography

**Essential Question:** What is geographical change?

**Unit:** Geography and climate of North America

**Unit Questions:**

1. What are the important seasonal and climatic changes in North America?
2. What natural forces have changed the geography of North America?
3. How has land use changed the geography of North America?

4. How have population changes in North America affected its geography?
5. How have people's use of land and water affected geography and climate in North America?

### Life Science

**Essential Questions:**

1. What are living organisms?
2. What are some characteristics of living organisms?
3. How are living organisms classified in science?
4. What are common laws or principles of living organisms?
5. What are common cycles or patterns of living organisms?

**Unit:** Amphibians

**Unit Questions:**

1. What are the characteristics of amphibians?
2. What animals are included in the class *Amphibia*?
3. Which laws or principles of living organisms govern the life cycle of amphibians?
4. Which cycles or patterns of living organisms do amphibians follow?

### Writing Unit Questions

Here are some tips for writing unit questions:

■ To distinguish between essential and unit questions, think BIG/little. Essential questions are the big ideas and concepts that you'll revisit throughout the year/course, even as you study different topics. Unit questions are subsets of essential questions that address specific content and skills.

■ Relate unit questions directly to essential questions to maintain your focus on what's important to teach.

■ Prioritize content by limiting the number of unit questions to five or fewer. Drop or set aside any content that takes you away from your questions.

■ Make the questions as interesting as possible, since, like your essential questions, you'll be sharing them with students.

■ Not every essential question will necessarily be addressed in each unit, nor will every essential question have only one unit question. It all depends on how the content flows in a particular unit.

### *Unit Questions as a Teaching Tool*

As you begin each unit, post the unit questions with their corresponding essential questions. Refer back to both often so students can see the importance of the particular content you're presenting.

At the end of each unit, students should be able to answer each unit question—provided that you've based your curriculum on essential questions and your activities on unit questions. At the end of your course, students should be able to respond in detail to each essential question.

## Using Essential and Unit Questions to Differentiate Instruction

**Formulating essential questions and unit questions gives you a framework in which to differentiate activities.** As you design activities that respond to students' needs, continue to ask yourself: What learning experiences will enable my students to understand and answer my curriculum's essential questions? How can I vary my instruction so that more students can successfully answer my unit questions? Differentiated activities should be as relevant and significant as any other learning activity you ask your students to do. To determine the relevance of activities, examine how well they reflect essential and unit questions.

### Choosing a Unit of Your Own

Use the form on page 63, Essential Questions and Unit Questions, to formulate questions for your course or curriculum, and for a specific unit. Here's the procedure for completing the form, as illustrated by the sample on page 57:

**1. Subject.** Select a subject you'd like to differentiate, such as algebra 1, third-grade reading, or American history. The sample subject is fourth-grade science.

**2. Most important concepts.** Consider: What are the most important concepts in this material that my students should investigate? What is essential for them to know and remember? List these on the form, indicating those concepts that address required curriculum standards. Notice that on the sample two of the important concepts are related to curriculum standards: the interactions and interdependence of living systems and the interactions of people, places, and locations.

**3. Essential questions.** Write up to five essential questions that reflect these important concepts. Ask yourself: What concepts will I return to unit by unit throughout the year or during the course? Phrase your questions in language students will understand. For example: "What are some typical plants and animals that live in each biosphere?" Indicate questions that address curriculum standards: for example, the sample question, "How do plants and animals interact in each biosphere?" relates to the curriculum standard "the interactions and interdependence of living systems."

**4. Unit/theme.** Now choose one unit or theme you'd like to differentiate. Choose one that, from your experience, could be better presented with differentiated activities. A likely candidate is a unit or theme that includes learning goals that some students are close to mastering and some need more work on. If you're a beginning teacher or new to this grade level or course, simply select a unit you'd like to differentiate. This may be one you're particularly interested in or one you see as a special challenge. The sample unit is "Ocean Biosphere."

**5. Unit questions.** Write up to five unit questions that build on, elaborate on, and make more specific the essential questions you've formulated. Remember that unit questions convey specific facts and concepts in "student-friendly" language. For each unit question, identify the related essential question. In our example, the unit question "What are the characteristics of oceans?" relates to the first essential question, "What are the characteristics of a biosphere?"