

Instructional Strategies for Differentiation

Anchor Activities: On-going assignments for which students are accountable, tied to the curriculum and which students work on when they finish other assignments, allowing the teacher to manage other instructional groups in the classroom

Assessment and Diagnosis: Collecting and using student data to plan responsive instruction

Audit Cards: An assessment tool which asks students to document on a card their work at a station or center for the teacher to review

Doctor Is In: Asking students to sign up for an "appointment" with the teacher when she is engaged with other students or groups

Exit Cards (AKA "Tickets to Leave"): Way to assess students' readiness, interest, and learning profiles. Responding on an index card to a few questions to determine level of students' learning or understanding and turning them in as they leave the class

Flexible Grouping: Placing students in instructional groups for a specific skill, unit of study, or other learning opportunity based on readiness, interest, or learning profile to create temporary groups for an hour, a day, a week, or a month

Interest Surveys: Formal or informal assessments of students' interests in a particular area of study or in general

Learning Centers: Places in the classroom where the teacher has gathered resources and materials and has created assignments to teach, reinforce, or extend students' skills

Learning Contracts and Personal Agendas: Written agreements between teachers and students which outline instructions, goals, tasks, and evaluation criteria. Excellent for managing other tasks such as learning centers and stations, curriculum compacting, anchor activities, independent projects, and tiered activities

Math Stations: Places in the classroom where students work simultaneously on different tasks related to a single topic, concept, skill

Mini-Lessons: Direct instruction of short duration on a topic or skill usually done in a small or large group, required or voluntary, based on student readiness, interest, or learning profile

Most Difficult First: Doing the most difficult items first as a means of demonstrating mastery or understanding and then selecting alternative activities afterward

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Multiple Texts: Gaining understanding through the use of multiple texts at different levels of difficulty and complexity

Portfolios: A compilation of students' work, representing progress over time

Reading and Study Buddies: Creating pairs of students who can assist one another in reading an assignment or studying/reviewing subject matter

Student Expert Desks: Management strategy allowing teacher to work with individuals or small groups without interruption by designating “student experts” to help peers

Student or Adult Mentors: Resource teachers, media specialists, parent volunteers, older students, or community members who can guide students' growth in a particular area of interest or talent

Task Cards: Management tool used to make individual or small group assignments. Directions for student activities recorded on cards students can proceed on their own as they complete the assignment. Recorded directions for small group or individual assignments used to promote student engagement in a multitask classroom.

Three Before Me: Asking students to check with three other students before coming to the teacher for help, particularly when she is working with individuals or small groups