

12 Instructional Differentiation Strategies Survey from the Irving Independent School District

Based on a survey found at <http://www.irvingisd.net/gtsurvey2/survey.asp>

Level One—Least Challenging to Implement

- 1. Flexible Grouping:** grouping in response to student needs including interest, age, readiness, i.e. whole class instruction, mixed-readiness (heterogeneous) small groups, similar-readiness (homogeneous) small groups, individual work. Responds to students' diversity by recognizing that no single group placement matches all of a students needs; varied approaches necessary for differentiation.
- 2. Open-Ended Tasks:** flexible learning activities determined by the teacher that encourage multiple responses; more than one way to approach the task, more than one correct response is possible with multiple formats to scaffold diverse responses from students. Require high-level thinking and provide a rubric before the activity is presented to discuss what a success looks like.
- 3. Students as Producers:** teacher determines the content areas as well as which concepts and skills to integrate, but does not determine the format of the response; after learning experience are introduced through teacher-directed instruction, students work independently or in small teams to produce original ideas, new relationships, or products related to the topic studied, inviting them to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate as they work. Differentiation for creativity or difficulty encourages diverse and in-depth responses.
- 4. Thinking and Inquiry:** use of questioning techniques that structure and focus students' high-level thinking; learning experiences that encourage students to think and process at high levels. Use these questioning strategies to structure and focus students' high-level thinking: classification, comparative reasons, inquiry, inference, synthesis, evaluative reasoning.

Level Two—More Challenging to Implement

- 5. Learning Centers or Stations:** physical area of the classroom that are organized with various materials and learning experiences for specific instructional purposes; the focus of centers is on practice, mastery, or extension of concepts and skill and are both social and learning based. Centers stand independent of one another; stations are connected.
- 6. Student-Developed Centers:** centers that encourage students to create products based on their interest-based research and study. Centers accent in-depth content and interpretation rather than flashy production and provide an authentic audience.
- 7. Product Options:** classroom learning tasks that encourage variety in the types of products assigned, appropriate to use with project-centered groups, guided research study, independent research study, Interest groups, problem-based learning
- 8. Research and Independent Study:** research based on student interest, readiness, and learning profile; product determined by student as an authentic extension of the research; consider students' current readiness for independence and move them toward greater independence a little at a time.

Level Three—Most Challenging to Implement

- 9. Pre-assessment:** identifies students' current levels of learning for the next stage of learning; allows the teacher to compact the curriculum and provide tiered instruction that matches the readiness level of students and saves time and allows students to be motivated and engaged in their own learning.

10. Student Self-Assessment: students routinely analyze their achievement and works-in-progress to monitor their changes as learners and set goals for continue achievements; achievement is a collaborative task in which each stakeholder provides feedback. By teaching students how to reflect on their work, we are teaching them how to set goals. Strategies include ongoing investigative conversations and questioning, captions and reflective statements, metacognitive questions, summaries, inventories, interviews, and open-ended devices.

11. Curriculum Compacting: instructional pacing strategy designed to eliminate further instruction in mastered curriculum and streamline content to a pace commensurate with students' readiness Compacting starts with student readiness and moves toward student interest. Allows for enrichment, extension activities, and independent projects more meaningful to the student

12. Tiered Instruction: teacher varies the complexity of an activity into several layers of difficulty and then matches each appropriate version to students' levels of readiness, interest, or learning profile. Content, process, &/or product may be tiered.