Ignite the teaching spark: A differentiated framework to fuel the fire for student diversity

- Differentiation from graduate to expert
- A framework for planning & implementing differentiation for diversity
- Teachers’ recommendations for effective learning for diverse student needs
- Affirmations of current practice
- What take-away strategies will you add to your teaching menu?

“Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire”
William Butler Yeats
http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/keywords/fire.html

Differentiation is not:
- based on beliefs about students, teaching and learning (Tomlinson, 2013)
- maximising each student’s growth and individual success by efficiently scaffolding and meeting all students’ needs (Smith, 2009)
- using quality teaching to support students through their zone of proximal development by purposefully differentiating and interrelating assessment, content, processes, products and outcomes (DET, 2008; Maker & Schiever, 2010)
- valuing diversity by providing respectful responses to individual student’s needs using diverse educational opportunities (Kanevsky, 2011)
- proactively planning many sequenced and relevant strategies within teaching and learning processes to support what and how students learn in an efficient manner as possible to achieve successful learning (Tomlinson, 2013)
- generic, teachers’ perspectives are important (Tomlinson, 2013; Kanevsky, 2011; Smith, 2009; Munro, 2002)

Differentiation is:
- Clear goals within a high-quality curriculum
- Using data to monitor and provide feedback to students
- Recognizing when a strategy isn’t working and flexibly amending it to fit the student needs, and
- Creating a challenging but supportive environment.

Tomlinson’s (2013) Four “non-negotiables”
Key ingredients

* Underlying philosophical view
* Value diversity
• Belief that differentiated teaching results in effective learning for all individual student needs

(Smith, 2015).

Flexible Timing & grouping
Student-centred

Choose & organise your strategies according to your readiness, interest, teaching style, expertise.

(Smith, 2015)

Easy/ Scaffolded/ Graduate

Proficient

Complex/ Autonomy/ Expert/Lead

Partner teachers can be the best support for teacher professional learning. By the time you are a proficient teacher you may be using more diagnostic assessment, developing assessment rubrics and teaching students to peer assess each other’s work. This could explore 2 tier lessons, developing learning matrices based on a number of models and taxonomies & promoting student choice and tasks based on student interests. Graphic organisers could be used for students to explore the interrelationships between key content, resources may become more varied, grouping may become more flexible and learning may become more student-centred. (Smith, 2015)

Professional learning from fellow teachers, further study, Conferences, mentors and effective leaders can inspire the Expert teacher to provide more challenge in their differentiated classrooms. Expert teachers may teach students to become more autonomous learners, to self-reflect, to self-assess, and to plan for and self-regulate their own learning. Activities may be more student-directed, more abstract and concept-based and three-tiered planning and assignments may become more common place. Inquiry learning, problem-based learning, increased choice, complex resources, multi-disciplinary contracts, varying support techniques, real-world content and products within high-mobility learning environments may be evident in leading teacher’s classrooms. In empowering student teachers also realize that it becomes easier for the teacher to teach when teaching is shared. (Smith, 2015)
**Key ingredients 2**

- Many strategies to choose from
- Start where you are at and build on strategy usage from easiest to more challenging
- Teachers learn well from other teachers’ practice (Smith, 2015)

**Making differentiation EASIER!**

E: Enrichment through differentiation, Enjoyable, Everyone, Easier;
A: Assessing individual student needs, readiness, strengths and interests;
S: Scaffolding/Support to enable Successful learning;
I: Independence through self-regulation; Interest-based;
E: Extended & Accelerated, Differentiated Ecological Environment;
R: Respectful Responses & Records, Reflection, Resiliency, Re-evaluation, Renewal; (Smith, 2015)

**Choose & organise your strategies into teaching & learning processes.** (Smith, 2015)

**Model of Dynamic Differentiation (MoDD)**

We’ll look briefly at the first four components of the model (Smith, 2009, 2015) which can be used as a process of planning and implementing differentiated practice.

- Assessment, Enrichment, Support, and Self-regulation, all flow and interrelate in different ways depending on the teacher’s expertise, students’ engagement, the educational context, the content being taught, the learning processes, resources used, combining to result in the products or learning outcomes.
- View these first four components as phases in a process, which may be arranged in any order during the implementation of differentiated teaching for student learning. However, assessment must be included in the first part of the process, e.g. even if you implement an enrichment task first, build in the assessment task in combination. (Smith, 2015)
Planning Pyramid for Tiering

Tier 1: What will ALL students learn? "Must know"
- Flexible grouping/collaboration: Enriching vocabulary/content/questions/processes/products/medium order thinking

Tier 2: What will MOST students learn? "Should know"
- Flexible grouping/collaboration: Enriching vocabulary/content/questions/processes/products/medium order thinking

Tier 3: What will SOME students learn? "Could know"
- Autonomy: Challenging vocabulary/content/questions/processes/products/higher order thinking

Heacox (2014) illustrates how to plan tiering in different ways i.e. according to challenge, complexity, resources, processes, products and outcomes.

Key ingredients 3
* Many principles to guide differentiation
* Choose the principles, strategies and models that suit your expertise & individual student needs
* View differentiation as a process
* Tier in different ways (Smith, 2015)

Assessing Learning

- Use variety to identify readiness, strengths, interests e.g. observations, interviews, graphing, checklists, portfolios, testing
- Internal inventories, work samples
- Process/diagnostic assessment
- Curriculum-based monitoring
- Self/peer assessment

Enriching Learning

- Open-ended tasks/learning; enrichment in learning
- Verifying/teaching pacing, vocabulary, questioning, tasks & resources
- Very strategies to motivate critical thinking, learning centres, mind maps, mind maps, graphics
- Multi-dimensional, multi-sensory, multi-model, multi-level

Supporting Learning

- Flexible grouping, including peer/group support & assessment
- Teaching enabling skills
- Modelling/using guided practice with relevant feedback
- Multimedia/graphic/visual styles and other varied resources

Self-regulating Learning

- Empowerment/monitoring
- Awareness: Self-directed learning
- Resourcefulness
- Independent enquiry/practice with more autonomy & complex tasks, individualized contracts
- Project-based, problem-based projects, authentic/service-based projects
"I am building a fire, and everyday I [teach], I add more fuel. At just the right moment, I light the match"
Mia Hamm
http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/keyterms/fire.html

PMI, a set sequence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plus</th>
<th>Minus</th>
<th>Interesting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Link models &amp; strategies and teach students about the components in models and processes to enable their learning and assist self-regulation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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Assessment   | Enrichment
---|---
So what is needed for individual students across the four areas?

Self-regulation | Support
---|---

Tia: Working towards previous stage outcomes
Aiden: Working towards stage outcomes
Yola: Working beyond stage outcomes

Assessment
- **pre/post:** KWHL/PMI
- rubrics

Enrichment
- Use models to guide sequenced questions & tasks

Support
- * Use acronyms, mnemonics, acrostics, abbrev, prompts, cues
- guided learning/practice/ reciprocal teaching
- Class expert

PMI, a set sequence

**When you can't read a word:**

Think about the story.
Look at the pictures.
Sound the real letter.
Put it in a word that this real letter occurs.
I love to read.

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### Example of tiering for student diversity in the regular classroom environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier 1</th>
<th>Tier 2</th>
<th>Tier 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flexible grouping</td>
<td>In-depth study with choice of issues/topics/questions</td>
<td>Minimal instruction with probing questions for independent study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three crucial points/Three important concepts</td>
<td>All aspects of the topic, all concepts, key issues</td>
<td>Graphic organisers Review and evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modelling, guided practice</td>
<td>Independent practice Graphic organisers</td>
<td>Power point presentation with computer generated graphics and tables</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Question</th>
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<th>Tier 2</th>
<th>Tier 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>What aspects of the topic are the students expected to learn?</td>
<td>All aspects</td>
<td>Key aspects</td>
<td>Advanced aspects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How will the students be supported in their learning?</td>
<td>Minimal support</td>
<td>Moderate support</td>
<td>High support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Students with giftedness & Talent

“Gifted and Talented students are entitled to rigorous, relevant and engaging learning opportunities drawn from the Australian Curriculum and aligned with their individual learning needs, strengths, interests and goals” *(Jarvis, 2012, p. 298)*

### Choice Boards

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### Thinking Hats & SOLO

- **Red** (Immediate/instant feelings)
  - Identify your immediate feelings/first thoughts or impressions
- **White** (Facts/details)
  - Identify one fact
- **Yellow** (Positive aspects)
  - Identify one positive aspect
- **Black** (Negative aspects)
  - Record several concerns/negative aspects
- **Green** (Imagination/lateral thinking)
  - What does your imagination suggest?
- **Blue** (Reflection/Organisation)
  - Reflect on the link between the positive and negative aspects

### Self-regulation

- **Pre-structural**
  - Encourage students to plan ahead
- **Uni-structural**
  - Work in pairs
- **Multi-structural**
  - Engage students in multi-level learning
- **Relational**
  - Engage students in collaborative learning

### Extended Abstract

- **MoDD Mind Matrix**
  - Develop students' abilities to create new relationships (products, ideas, solutions)
  - Develop students' abilities to think creatively and critically
  - Develop students' abilities to communicate effectively

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Food for thought!

Research supported facts:

- Differentiated teaching is quality teaching (DET, 2008)
- All students prefer self-pace, self-choice of peers and topics. Gifted students want complexity, authentic tasks, sophisticated knowledge, interconnectedness and product choice, sometimes with like-minded peers (Kanevsky, 2011)
- Most teachers find differentiated instruction difficult to implement (Fordham, 2008), but others differentiate passionately and well (Tomlinson, 2005)
- Differentiation happens within classes, across classes and outside classes. It’s a very dynamic and ecological process. See the Model of Dynamic Differentiation (MoDD) (Smith, 2009, 2015)
- Teachers want & need support to differentiate (Tomlinson & McTighe, 2007)
- Sustained teacher professional learning and collaboration supports effective differentiation (Darling- Hammond & Richardson, 2009)
- Practice can change perspectives (Hoekman, 2014)
- School leadership is needed for successful differentiation (Munro, 2012)
- Need a whole school philosophy, process, support (Maker & Schiever, 2010)

References