



Helping Teachers Find the Beat of Their Different Marchers

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Differentiated Instruction – Step One

Objectives: To help teachers focus on important differences among learners in the classroom

To give teachers a starting point from which to begin differentiated instruction

Time: 60 minutes (+ ongoing)

Materials: 5" x 8" note cards

Process:

Distribute stacks of 5" x 8" index cards. Ask teachers to do the following:

Start a 5" x 8" note card for each student in your room. Put a student's name at the top. On the card list the information such as:

Reading level-

English language proficiency level-

Level of adult supervision and involvement at home-

Strength areas-

Weak areas-

Preferred learning style-

Personal interests-

Least favorite things-

Fears-

Add or delete items as you see fit for your needs. Fill in as much of the information as you can. Begin working to find out about the areas with which you are not familiar. Update and add to the information as you learn more about the student."

Ask that individuals periodically review the information and use it to plan differentiated instruction, assignments, and assessments.

--from *Because You Teach: A Dynamic Musical Resource for Innovative Staff Development* by Kathy Hunt-Ullock, Monte Selby, Debbie Silver, and Rick Wormeli, 2006. Incentive Publications: Nashville, TN.

Recognizing Differences

- Objectives:** To introduce the concept of differentiation
To begin a discussion on the importance of using differences in students to their advantage
- Time:** 15 minutes
- Materials:** At least one lemon per participant

Process:

In this activity lemons are used to illustrate a few important points about individual differences. Pass out a lemon to every participant. Tell each person to take a little time to really study her/his lemon. Ask each person to examine it, get to know it, and take time to “bond” with it. (That should bring a laugh). Stress that it is important that each participant truly know his or her own lemon.

Have someone collect all the lemons in a box or basket. Mix them up. Spread all the lemons on a table at the front of the room. Ask participants to come up and pick up their personal lemons and take them back to their seats. (If there is some disagreement about who owns a particular lemon, try to help them sort out the problem.)

When all participants have retrieved their lemons, ask the audience, “How did you know which lemon was yours?” “How sure are you that you have the correct lemon?”

Discuss the fact that even though all the lemons were roughly the same size and color, there were distinct differences if one looked closely enough. Help the audience members apply that analogy to students. Ask them to discuss the importance of recognizing differences in our students. You may point out that even when something is labeled “a lemon,” it has its own unique and important traits.

--from *Because You Teach: A Dynamic Musical Resource for Innovative Staff Development* by Kathy Hunt-Ullock, Monte Selby, Debbie Silver, and Rick Wormeli, 2006. Incentive Publications: Nashville, TN.

I CAN DO SOMETHING!

- Objectives:** To remind teachers that every individual has different strengths and weaknesses
To review the concepts of multiple intelligences
- Time:** 15 minutes
- Materials:** *I Can Do Something!* hand-outs
Checklists for Assessing "How Students Are Smart" hand-outs
Small prizes

Process:

Tell the participants they are going to have a chance to win "fabulous" prizes. Do not disclose what the prizes are. Explain that each person is to read over the eight possible tasks and sign her/his own name by one task that would be easy to do. (Even though they may be able to do more than one task, they should pick only the task easiest for them to do.) After signing their own sheets, participants begin moving around collecting signatures from others who can perform the remaining tasks.

Emphasize that it is not acceptable to just say one can perform a task, a person must actually *do* the task before signing another person's sheet. Every task must have a different signature so that there are eight different signatures on the paper in the end.

As soon as one collects eight different signatures, s/he shows the completed sheet to the facilitator and collects a prize. (Keep the prizes small and fun so that the focus is on the process and not the incentive). After awarding a few prizes give a signal that all prizes have been awarded, and participants should return to their seats.

Debrief the activity by asking participants if they found a variety of strengths among their peers. Point out that even though one may or may not be able to one thing does not necessarily indicate a strength or lack of it in a particular intelligence. A strength can be validated by having several indicators for it.

Pass out the *Checklists for How Students Are Smart* hand-outs. Explain that being able to check off several items in a category usually indicates a strength for that particular intelligence. Ask audience members if they have already made such observations about their students. If not, the checklist is a good place to start. (If the checklist is not age-appropriate for the participant's students, urge them to find or write a modified version to use with their classes.)

Discuss why it might be beneficial to know the main strengths of every student. Ask teachers what kinds of decisions they can make based on this information. Ask them what else is important to know about every student in the classroom.

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Name- _____

I CAN DO SOMETHING!

The purpose of this “get acquainted” activity is to start thinking about the different areas of intelligence. Participants are to mix freely and try to get seven different people to sign the blanks (each participant may sign her/his own sheet once). In order to record a name in the blank, the person signing must actually perform the task (not just say that she/he can do it). The object is to be one of the first people to collect different signatures for every task.

Find Someone Who Can:

tell a joke or make a pun.

finish this numerical sequence: 81, 196, 100, 169, 121, ____, and explain the logic behind it.

within 20 seconds name 6 traits scientists use to sort plants into categories.

hop on one foot 3 times in a row without losing balance.

can tell you how tall you are within 1/2 an inch.

can sing the “do-re-mi-fa-so-la-ti-do” sequence backwards and on key.

can name 5 clubs or organizations in which s/he held an office.

tell you 5 times s/he “went against the crowd” because of a personal conviction.

Checklists for Assessing “How Students Are Smart”
Adapted by Debbie Silver

Name of Student- _____

Check all the items that apply:

Linguistic Intelligence (Word Smart)

- 1. Is a good reader.
- 2. Enjoys word games.
- 3. Is a good joke teller/ story teller.
- 4. Has a good vocabulary for age.
- 5. Enjoys listening activities.
- 6. Likes to write stories and/or poems
- 7. Communicates with others in a highly verbal way.
- 8. Appreciates rhymes, puns, and/or nonsense words.
- 9. Has a good memory for words, stories, details.

Other linguistic strengths:

Logical-Mathematical Intelligence (Number Smart)

- 1. Asks a lot of questions about how things work.
- 2. Has a good sense of cause and effect.
- 3. Finds math games interesting.
- 4. Can see and repeat patterns easily.
- 5. Enjoys working puzzles and brainteasers.
- 6. Understands computer programming.
- 7. Is a logical thinker.
- 8. Can estimate things involving numbers with relative ease.
- 9. Can work math concepts in head.

Other logical-mathematical strengths:

Visual-Spatial Intelligence (Picture Smart)

- 1. Reports clear, visual images (or dreams).
- 2. Can envision objects from more than one perspective.
- 3. Daydreams more than peers.
- 4. Likes to draw and/or create art projects.
- 5. Has a good eye for detail and color.
- 6. Is good at spatial games like chess and Tetris.
- 7. Likes movies, slides, or other visual presentations.
- 8. Can move between 2-dimensional and 3 dimensional representations with ease.
- 9. Can read and/or create maps.

Other visual-spatial strengths:

Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence (Body Smart)

- 1. Is very coordinated.
- 2. Exceptionally mobile: moves, twitches, fidgets, taps when seated for long.
- 3. Enjoys working with clay, finger paint, and other tactile media.
- 4. Can mimic others' gestures, posture, and movements
- 5. Must touch anything new or interesting.
- 6. Loves to take things apart and put them back together.
- 7. Uses dramatic body movements for self-expression.
- 8. Enjoys running, hopping, climbing, wrestling, or similar activities.
- 9. Exhibits fine motor control (crafts, painting, etc.).

Other bodily-kinesthetic strengths:

Musical Intelligence (Music Smart)

- 1. Can detect music that is off-key, off-beat, or disturbing in some way.
- 2. Remembers melodies of songs.
- 3. Taps rhythmically as he/she works or plays.
- 4. Sensitive to environmental noise (rain on the windows, etc.).
- 5. Plays a musical instrument and/or sings in a choir.
- 6. Has a good singing voice.
- 7. Responds favorably when music is played.
- 8. Sings songs that he/she has learned.
- 9. Unconsciously hums much of the time.

Other musical strengths:

Interpersonal Communications Intelligence (People Smart)

- 1. Establishes meaningful peer relationships.
- 2. Seems to be a natural leader.
- 3. Empathizes with others.
- 4. Likes to play with others.
- 5. Shows good teamwork skills.
- 6. Others seek this student's company.
- 7. Has two or more close friends.
- 8. Frequently acts as a mediator and/or peace maker.
- 9. Enjoys teaching others.

Other interpersonal communication strengths:

Intra-personal Awareness Intelligence (Self Smart)

- 1. Displays a sense of strong will.
- 2. Enjoys playing or working alone.
- 3. Has high self-esteem.
- 4. Has a good sense of self-direction.
- 5. Does not mind being different from others.
- 6. Has a realistic view of his/her strengths and weaknesses.
- 7. Is able to deal effectively with successes and failures.
- 8. Has an interest or talent that is not readily shared with others.
- 9. Seems to “march to the beat of a different drummer.”

Other intra-personal awareness strengths

Naturalistic Intelligence (Nature Smart)

- 1. Likes to identify and classify living and nonliving things in nature.
- 2. Cares for pets or animals.
- 3. Understands repeating patterns in nature and the universe.
- 4. Seems more “in tune with nature” than peers.
- 5. Would rather be outside than inside.
- 6. Has a demonstrated appreciation for a part of the natural world (i.e. dinosaurs, clouds, rocks, etc.)
- 7. Likes to garden and/or appreciates plants.
- 8. Understands and appreciates the environment.
- 9. Loves to collect things from nature.

Other naturalistic strengths

*--from **Drumming to the Beat of Different Marchers: Finding the Rhythm for Teaching Differentiated Learning** by Debbie Silver, 2005. Incentive Publications: Nashville, TN.*

Hearing a Different Drummer

Objectives: To help participants observe how people's perceptions are not always alike

To initiate a discussion on how students learn in different ways

Time: 15 minutes

Materials: One sheet of copy paper for each participant

Process: Pass out one sheet of copy paper to each participant and ask everyone to listen closely and follow your directions precisely.

Give these directions:

“Hold your sheet of paper in front of you with both hands. Close your eyes, and do not open them again until I ask you to. Follow my exact directions, but ask no questions. Do not say anything until I ask you to open your eyes.

Fold your paper in half. (Pause). Fold your paper in half again. Fold your paper in half again. (Pause). Tear off the right-hand corner. (Pause). Turn your sheet over. (Pause). Tear off the left-hand corner. (Pause). Unfold your sheet of paper, and hold it in front of you. (Pause). Open your eyes.”

It will be immediately obvious that everyone does not have the same finished product. Discuss how individuals create understandings for themselves in different ways. Apply this to Individual differences in the classroom

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Inspiring “Different Marchers”

Objectives: To help teachers reflect on the true purpose of education

To help teachers clarify their roles as educators

Time: 20 – 50 minutes

Materials: Journals
Pens or pencils
Copies of the quotes

Process:

Ask teachers to answer the following questions in their journals:

- A. How important is it for teachers and schools to recognize and validate multiple intelligences and varied learning styles?
- B. Do you see a disconnect between the philosophical view “students can learn but at different rates” and the current trend towards more standardized teaching and testing? Explain.
- C. How do you feel about the following statement? “As a classroom teacher my responsibility is to teach according to the state standards. It is up to individual students to find a way to meet the class norms and the district’s expectations. That’s the way it is in life, and that’s the way it is in here.”

Ask them to summarize and respond to one or more of the following quotes:

- 1. “To teachers, students are the end products, -- all else is a means. Hence there is but one interpretation of high standards in teaching; standards are highest where the maximum number of students – slow learners and fast learners alike – develop to their maximal capacity.”
--Joseph Seidlin
- 2. “The essence of education is not to stuff you with facts but to help you discover your uniqueness, to teach you how to develop it, and then to show you how to give it away.”
--Leo Buscaglia
- 3. “Education should never work against a person’s destiny, but should achieve the full development of his own predispositions. The education of a man today so often lags behind the talents and tendencies which his destiny has implanted in him. We must keep pace with these powers to

such an extent that the human being in our care can win his way through to all that his destiny will allow – to the fullest clarity of thought, the most loving deepening of his feeling, and the greatest possible energy and ability of will.

This can only be done by an art of education and teaching which is based on a real knowledge of man.”

--*Rudolf Steiner*

4. "Education is not filling a bucket, but lighting a fire.”

--*William Butler Yeats*

--from *Because You Teach: A Dynamic Musical Resource for Innovative Staff Development* by Kathy Hunt-Ullock, Monte Selby, Debbie Silver, and Rick Wormeli, 2006. Incentive Publications: Nashville, TN.

LIST OF RELATED CITATIONS AND RECOMMENDED READINGS
TEACHERS AS LEARNERS FOR DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION
PRESENTED BY DR. DEBBIE SILVER

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ERIC #: ED221530

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Roses

**"When we plant a rose seed in the earth,
we notice that it is small,
but we do not criticize it as 'rootless and
stemless.'**

**We treat it as a seed, giving it the water
and nourishment required of a seed.**

**When it first shoots up out of the earth,
we do not condemn it as immature and
underdeveloped; nor do we criticize the buds
for not being open when they appear.**

**We stand in wonder at the process taking
place**

**and give the plant the care it needs at
each stage of its development.**

**The rose is a rose from the time it is a
seed to the time it dies. *Within it, at all times,
it contains its whole potential.* It seems to be
constantly in the process of change; yet at
each state, at each moment, it is perfectly all
right as it is."**

--Timothy Gallaway