

## What is Differentiated Instruction?



Differentiated Instruction is based on the following beliefs:

- Students differ in their learning profiles
- Classrooms in which students are active learners, decision makers and problem solvers are more natural and effective than those in which students are served a "one-size-fits-all" curriculum and treated as passive recipients of information
- "Covering information" takes a backseat to making meaning out of important ideas.

The key to a differentiated classroom is that all students are regularly offered CHOICES and students are matched with tasks compatible with their individual learner profiles.

Curriculum should be differentiated in three areas:

1. Content: Multiple options for taking in information
2. Process: Multiple options for making sense of the ideas
3. Product: Multiple options for expressing what they know

### DIFFERENTIATION FOR ADVANCED LEARNERS

Differentiation for the advanced learners involves the adjustment of curriculum and instruction by using one or more of the following four dimensions:

#### 1. Depth

Depth refers to the concept of challenging learners by enabling them to venture further, deeper, and more elaborately into the area under study.

Questions related to the dimension of depth:

- What details further the understanding of this area of study (i.e., theme, concept, topic, generalization, issue, theory, or principle)?
- How can study of the known be directed towards the unknown, the concrete directed towards the abstract, and the familiar directed towards the unfamiliar?
- What facts, concepts, generalizations, principles, and theories are related to the area of study?
- What patterns and/or trends exist within the area of study?
- What structure(s) and rule(s) characterize the area of study?

#### 2. Complexity

Complexity refers to the concept of broadening the learner's understanding of the area or areas under study by asking him/her to make connections, relationships,

and associations between, within, and across subjects and disciplines.

Questions related to the dimension of complexity:

- What new relationship can be made within, between, or among the area of the study and any other areas of study?
- How can this subject be viewed from many and varied perspectives? What are the problems and issues within this area of study?
- What might be multiple solutions to a problem identified within the area of study?
- What are the prevailing themes related to the area of study?
- What influence has "time" had on knowledge related to the area of study?

#### 3. Novelty

Novelty refers to the concept of gaining a personal understanding of the area under study or constructing meaning of knowledge in an individualized manner.

Questions related to the dimension of novelty:

- How can knowledge in the area of study be interpreted personally?
- How can one restate or express in personally important ways knowledge from this study?
- What type of investigation or experiment can be designed to learn more about the area of study?
- What type or original investigation or experiment can be developed to prove or disprove an idea about this area of study?

#### 4. Acceleration or Pacing

Acceleration refers to the concept of altering the pace or speed of learning and providing more sophisticated resources for learning in order to challenge learners.

Questions related to the dimension of acceleration:

- What advanced resources can be used to enhance understanding of the subject under study?
- What are the strategies needed to study the subject at a more sophisticated level?