
Differentiation in Practice

A Resource Guide for Differentiating Curriculum, Grades 5–9

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Introduction

This book is part of a series of ASCD publications on differentiating instruction. Each is designed to play a particular role in helping educators think about and develop classrooms that attend to learner needs as they guide learners through a curricular sequence.

How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms (Tomlinson, 2001) explains the basic framework of differentiation. Such a framework allows teachers to plan in consistent and coherent ways. *The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of All Learners* (Tomlinson, 1999a) elaborates on the framework and describes classroom scenarios in which differentiation is taking place. A third book, *Leadership for Differentiating Schools and Classrooms* (Tomlinson & Allan, 2000), discusses how to link what we know about school change with the goals of differentiation and seeks to provide guidance for educational leaders who want to be a part of promoting and supporting responsive instruction. In addition to these books, an ASCD Professional Inquiry Kit called *Differentiating Instruction for Mixed-Ability Classrooms* (Tomlinson, 1996) guides educators, in an inductive manner, to explore and apply key principles of differentiation.

Three video programs, all produced by Leslie Kiernan and ASCD, give progressively expansive images of how differentiation actually looks in the classroom. *Differentiating Instruction* (1997) shows brief applications of differentiating content, process, and products according to student readiness, interest, and learning profile in primary, elementary, middle, and high school classrooms. It also illustrates a number of instructional strategies used for purposes of differentiating or modifying instruction. *At Work in the Differentiated Classroom* (2001) shows excerpts from a month-long unit in a middle school classroom as means of exploring essential principles of differentiation, examines management in differentiated settings from primary grades through high school, and probes the role of the teacher in a differentiated classroom. *A Visit to a Differentiated Classroom* (2001) takes viewers through a single day in a multi-age, differentiated elementary classroom. Each of these materials attempts to help educators think about the nature of classrooms that are defensibly differentiated and move toward development of such classrooms. Each of the publications plays a