

Contents

Nothing New in Education.....	1
Differentiated Learning and Standards	3
A Teaching Repertoire.....	5
Change	6
Challenge	7
Choice	9
Change the Content.....	11
Complexity	11
Resources	12
Learning Environment	13
Change the Process.....	15
Direct Instruction	15
Cooperative Interactions	16
Modes of Inquiry	18
Change the Product.....	20
Entry Points	20
Expressive Modes.....	22
Accountability.....	23
Bibliography	25

NOTHING NEW IN EDUCATION

There is nothing new in education! Ideas just come around again... with new names... the latest buzzwords if you will. Think about the evolutionary paths of the ideas in Figure 1.

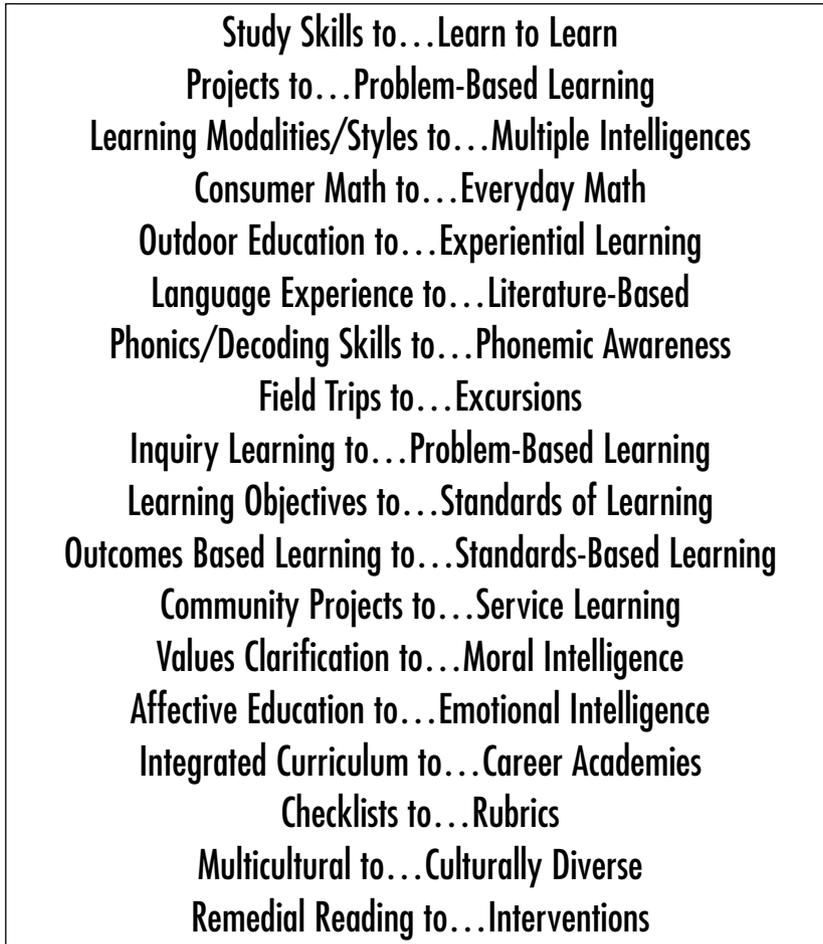


Figure 1.

If teachers have been around long enough, they've seen—and heard—it all before. This is said not in a cynical way, but in a way that honors a profession that is continually trying to do “the right thing.” New terminology is our way of presenting the newest approach to recurring challenges. A rose by any other name may actually smell sweeter. Giving an idea a new name, is, in essence, creating a new way, a change that addresses, again, the prevailing issues.

Thus, to say that nothing changes in education is really a false generalization. Many things do change in education, for example, the terminology as illustrated in the previous text. There are also changes in structures, changes in approaches, and changes in modalities. All made with the best of intentions, changes are initiated, implemented, and institutionalized (Fullan, 1999) under the guise of school reform. They are our earnest efforts to improve schooling and to increase achievement for all students.

DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING AND STANDARDS

The concept of differentiated learning has a similar evolution to the concepts shown in Figure 1. At one time, we used the phrase *individualized instruction*; then, we shifted to *personalized instruction*. And, currently, we use the phrase *individual educational plans* or IEPs to name the required model for developing learning plans tailored for special needs students. The preferred phrase now in general education is *differentiated instruction*.

All of these phrases refer to the concept of meeting the individual needs of each learner, of customizing instruction to help students learn. They are about tailoring learning to the learner. In a more folksy manner, it is about “different strokes for different folks.” But, to put the focus more squarely on the learner, the term “differentiated instruction” has been shifted slightly to read “differentiated learning” in this text.

In addition to differentiated learning, a second player on the field of educational innovations is the standards movement. The two concepts—standards for all students and differentiation for each student—may sound diametrically opposed. How can teachers teach the same standard curriculum to all and at the same time teach differently to each, according to individual needs, talents, and abilities? Yet, the message is really quite consistent.

The two concepts - standards for all students and differentiation for each student - may sound diametrically opposed.
