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Introduction

Before you read on . . .

- How do you define differentiation?
- What makes differentiation difficult?

Bring to mind the names of two or three students that you think would benefit from differentiated instruction.

Ask teachers to define differentiation and you'll get a wide variety of answers. For a moment, let's look at a definition:

> Differentiation: tailoring instruction to meet individual learners' needs, styles, and interests.

That's the problem right there. In one sentence, teachers are being asked to differentiate for student needs, multiple intelligences, learning styles, interests, cultural background, abilities, and more. You can read books and attend workshops on how to differentiate for each one of these factors.

It's overwhelming, isn't it?

But what if you had one framework that helped you organize all of these facets of differentiation into one model for planning lessons? What if it gave all students access to rigorous thinking tasks? What if that same model helped you understand your own strengths as a teacher and those of your colleagues as well?

WHY READ THIS BOOK?

That's what this book is about, helping you organize all the above ways to look at students through *one* framework so that you can

- Recognize genuine differences in what individual students need to both *love* school and *learn*
- Develop and use differentiation strategies that are manageable and effective
- Put into practice concrete ideas that have been tested in diverse schools.

That framework is personality type.

WHAT IS PERSONALITY TYPE?

Type isn't a panacea, but a rich theory. Think of it as a toolkit that helps you organize, and therefore access, the tools you need to reach the wide variety of

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1

Why Use Type for Differentiation?

Before you read on . . .

Think of a student you've struggled to reach academically.

- Why do you think that student struggles?
- What academic strengths does the student have?

About two weeks into the school year, a middle-school math teacher asked me to observe a class of students whose test scores the previous year were low. "I'm trying out a new number sense activity," she said. "I'd like your opinion."

I sat on the back ledge of the classroom, watching the 17 students estimate, measure, and take notes. Within two minutes I knew one boy's name. "Alex,[1] where's your notebook?" "Alex, please write this down." "Alex, head off the desk." "Alex, put that away!"

Later, the teacher commented, "I've tried moving Alex close to me, pairing him with my best student, calling his home, but he won't work on the basic skills he needs to progress."

Next door in Language Arts, another boy named Carl stared into space, completing only two of a dozen worksheet questions on a story the teacher had read aloud. "He has to be ADD," the teacher whispered. "Unless I'm on him every second, Carl does nothing."

For the final project on that story, I helped the Language Arts teacher plan several options from which the students could choose. Alex and Carl decided to work together on a picture book. They made up an entirely new adventure tale about the story's characters. They turned it in on the due date. Their drawings were detailed and humorous. They even spent a precious lunch period adding color with the teacher's art supplies. We took pictures of the two boys, grinning broadly, their book open to their favorite illustration.

[1]Throughout these pages, names and details have been changed to protect both teachers and students.

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CASE STUDIES—USING TYPE FOR STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

The following case studies are designed to provide practice in distinguishing between normal type differences in students and other kinds of problems. Might type information provide new strategies a teacher could use before turning to behavior interventions or evaluation for learning disabilities?

Conjectures about a student's type, though, remain conjectures; the student has a right to confirm his or her own preferences, as is described on page 164. However, teachers can use type information to develop intervention strategies, just as they use a variety of other books and resources.

As you read through each brief description, look for clues to distinguish the child's type preferences. The information is designed to provide information on the preferences as opposed to comprehensive descriptions. You may not be able to distinguish all four preferences, but enough information is given to determine the dominant function, as discussed in this chapter. Examine the behavior clues (pages 25–26) and the information on the preceding eight pages for ideas.

Then look at the information on learning styles for students with that dominant function. Suggest a couple of ways a teacher might meet the student's needs. Consider, too, how closely the student's preferences match your own. How does this influence your ability to come up with new strategies to use with the student?

Note, too, that *all* of the case studies are examples of when school goes wrong, not typical behavior. In each case, though, teachers assumed a behavioral problem or learning disability until they rethought behavior in terms of type.

1. Jonathon moved here a few years ago from another school and has made a few close friends. He still talks about how small the classes were and how they could call teachers by their first names. Teachers here often get frustrated because Jonathon doesn't always pay attention—he seems lost in his own thoughts. Often, he procrastinates before starting, asking questions about what to do only if a teacher seeks him out. He seldom has time to finish up and do his best work.

Jonathon seems to prefer Introversion. He chose a few close friends, likes small classes, and seems to daydream, lost in his own thoughts. One might also guess that he prefers Feeling, given that he liked having close relationships with the teachers at his old school. The procrastination indicates a preference for Perceiving, although he may just be disengaged, still longing for his old school.

From these clues, Jonathon may be an Introverted Feeler. Reviewing the information on page 37, the description of John matches the description of "What you might see if school isn't working." A teacher might try the following:

- Find out Jonathon's interests and hobbies and then try to connect these with a school assignment. Although most teachers attempt to get to know their students in this way, Jonathon may not have been very forthcoming. The teacher still might need to open the subject after being very observant—noting the books he chooses to read or talking with other teachers about whether he's shown interest in other assignments.

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