DI STRATEGIES TOOL BASKET

This resource explains 20 differentiated instruction strategies. Each strategy is highly flexible and may be used in a variety of ways. To help you decide how to apply a strategy for a specific lesson, use the check boxes located directly below the title of the strategy. Keep in mind that there is no "right" answer for the boxes you check. You may also use the questions below to help you with your decision-making process.

Creating a DI Learning Environment:

- Will you use the strategy to help your students develop the skills they need to function successfully in a DI learning environment?
- Is it a strategy that will help your students learn to be more self-directed?
- Will a specific grouping work well for the curriculum topic with your students?

Connecting Assessment & Instruction:

- Will you use the strategy to assess your students' readiness, interests, or learning profile preferences?

Modifying the Curriculum:

- Will you use the strategy to modify the content, processes, or products of your curriculum?

List of Strategies

BLOOMING ASSESSMENTS

S-1

A tool for . . .

Creating a DI Learning Environment	Connecting Assessment & Instruction	Modifying the Curriculum
☐ *DI Classroom Management*	☐ *Readiness-Based DI*	☐ *Modifying Content*
☐ *Developing Self-Directed Learners*	☐ *Interest-Based DI*	☐ *Modifying Processes*
☐ *Flexible Grouping* ___ *Whole Class* ___ *Heterogeneous Small Groups* ___ *Homogeneous Small Groups* ___ *Individuals*	☐ *Learning Profile-Based DI*	☐ *Modifying Products*

Blooming Assessments is a highly flexible assessment process that can be adapted for all grade levels and subject areas. There are three elements (Blooming Question Prompts, Quick Assessment Options, and Spin Dials), which can be used singly or in combination. The maximum benefit is derived when all three elements are used together. The goal is to use this process continuously, as an ongoing mechanism to assess what students have learned during each day of class. In this way, students become familiar with all levels of critical thinking, become comfortable with all types of quick daily assessments, and learn to use the information they glean from these assessments to improve their own learning.

Blooming Question Prompts
Blooming Question Prompts, which are shown in chart form on page 5, are based on Bloom's Taxonomy. The idea is to use them explicitly so that students not only learn the various levels of critical thinking, but also how to pose questions at each level. Over time, students will be able to create their own questions for each level. These questions can be used without the other two elements of this process (the Quick Assessment Options or the Spin Dials), since they are a type of assessment in their own right. Students should have their own copies of these questions as a reference tool, and teachers may want to post a chart of these questions on the classroom wall.

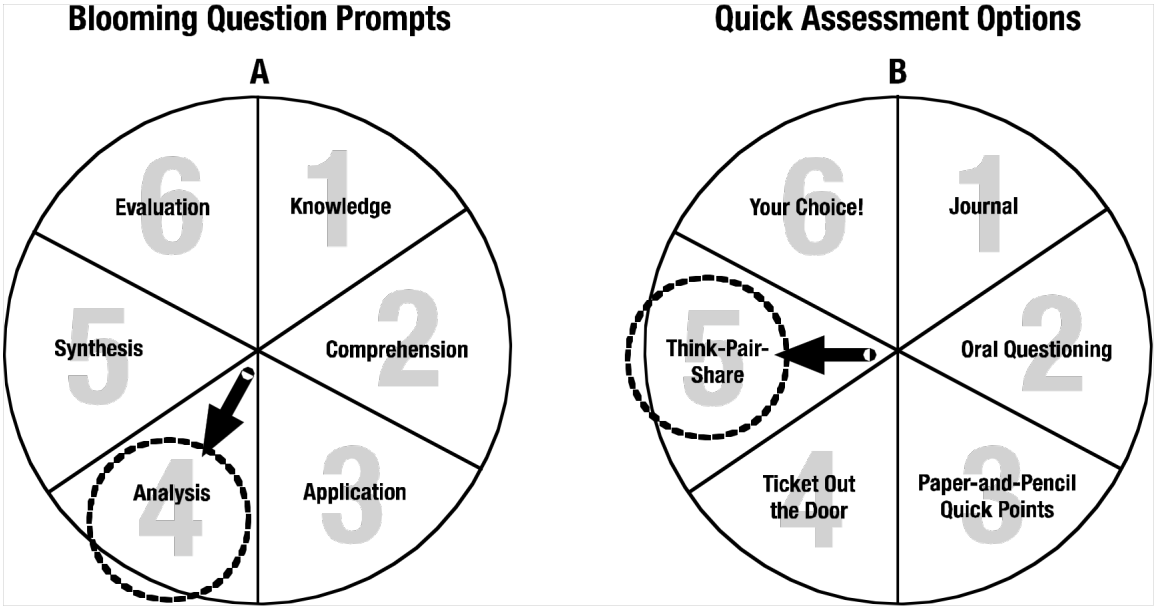
Quick Assessment Options
There are five Quick Assessment Options: *Journal Writing, Oral Questioning, Paper-and-Pencil Quick Points, Ticket Out the Door,* and *Think-Pair-Share Discussions*. Each is designed to be used with a Blooming Question Prompt. Each is also designed to make students accountable for what they have been learning in a way that using the Blooming Question Prompts alone does not. These Quick Assessments stimulate different types of learning styles and require different types of processing. When varied over time, these assessments provide students with a variety of strategies for expressing what they have learned. In the process, they will become more self-aware about their learning. See page 6 for specific information about each assessment.

Spin Dials
There are two spin dials. Each should be customized with appropriate language for the students with whom they are being used.

Dial A is for use with the Blooming Question Prompts. A teacher would spin the dial to select the level of question that would be asked for that assessment. *For example, if the teacher spun a "6," she would create an assessment question using the Level 6 Evaluation question prompts on the Blooming Question Prompts Chart.*

Dial B is for use with the Quick Assessment Options. As you can see in the example dials that follow, the name of each assessment option is listed in one of the six wedges of Dial B, the sixth of which indicating that students may choose which of the five strategies they would like. Teachers would spin this dial after spinning Dial A to see which format students would be using to answer the question just generated.

For example:



*The set of spins above would result in the teacher (or students!) posing a **Level 4 Analysis** question about what the class had just learned. The teacher would use the matching question prompts on the Blooming Question Prompts sheet to phrase the question. Students would process that question using the **Think-Pair-Share Discussion** process.*

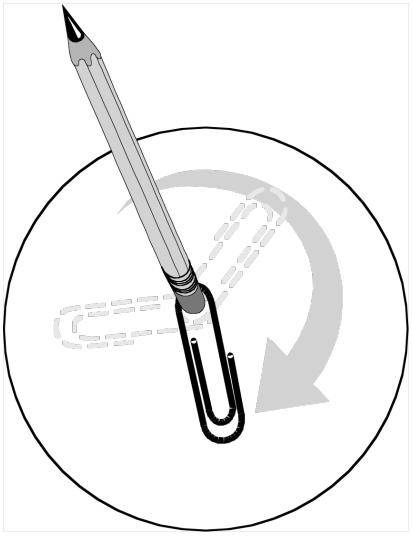
Alternative Applications

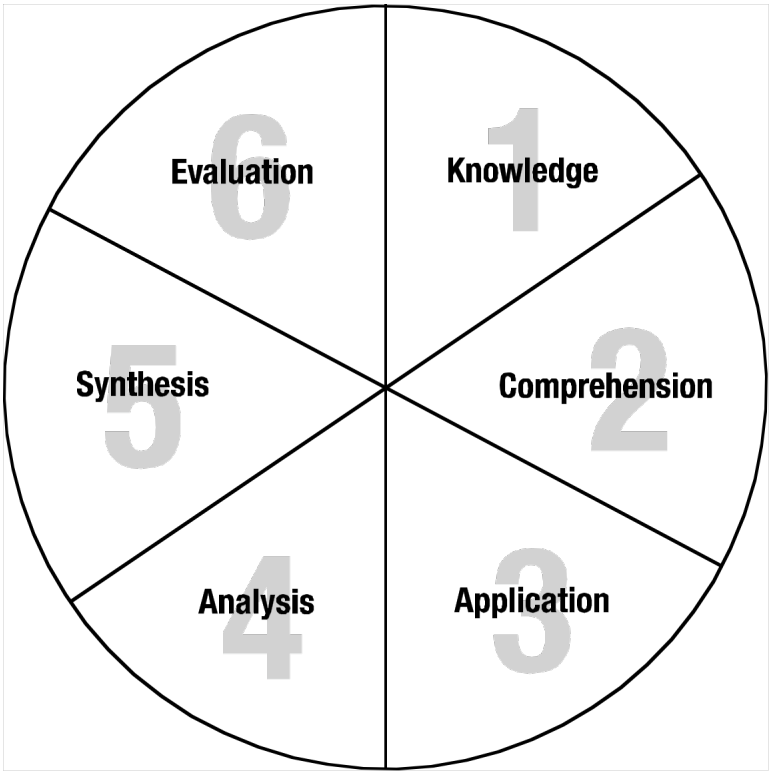
- While students are learning how to use the Blooming Question Prompts, simply turn the dial to whichever type of question you would like them to learn how to use. Teach the questions in succession, giving students enough time to learn each type before proceeding to the next level. When they have learned all six levels, begin to spin the dial. Conversely, create your own dials at each stage of their learning. As soon as they learn two levels of questions, create a spin dial with those two choices. Add others as they learn them.

- While students are learning how to use the Assessment Options, simply turn the dial to whichever type assessment you are teaching them. When they have learned all five assessment procedures, you can begin spinning the dial.

- Teachers and students can also adapt this strategy by creating their own Blooming Question Prompts and by incorporating their own Quick Assessment Options.

Helpful Hint: Make Your Own Spin Dials
To make your own spin dials, copy the enlarged diagram onto transparency film. To create the spinner, use a pencil with an eraser and a large paper clip. Place the paper clip on the dial diagram in the position of the spinner arrow. Place the pencil eraser at the center of the diagram so that it is in the middle of the paper clip, at the exact center of the diagram. As you hold the pencil firmly in place, spin the paper clip.





Blooming Question Prompts Chart

Level 1: Knowledge	Level 2: Comprehension	Level 3: Application	Level 4: Analysis	Level 5: Synthesis	Level 6: Evaluation
The remembering of previously learned material.	The ability to grasp the meaning of material.	The ability to use learned material in new and concrete situations.	The ability to break down material into its component parts and recognition of the organizational principles involved.	The ability to put parts together to form a new whole.	The ability to judge the value of material for a given purpose based on definite criteria.
What is … ? Where is … ? When did … ? Who was … ? How did …? How would you define … ? What happened when … ? Can you list … ?	What do you think ___ meant … ? What is the main idea of … ? How would you summarize … ? What might happen next … ? Can you give examples of … ? What does the chart (graph, video, map, etc.) mean … ?	How would you use … ? What would you do … ? How would you use … ? What is the principle (rule, concept, idea, etc.) behind ___ … ? How else could you … ? How could you demonstrate your understanding of … ?	What is the sequence of … ? How would you classify … ? What conclusions could you draw … ? How does ___ relate (compare, contrast with) to ___ … ? What evidence can you find … ? What inferences can you draw from ___ … ? How would you diagram the sequence (structure, components, etc.) … ?	How would you use___ to do ___ (a new application)… ? If you had ___, ___, and ___, how could you use them to solve ___ … ? What would happen if … ? How could you modify the plot (plan, diagram, chart, picture, etc.) … ? How would you prove that ___ … ? Can you think of an original way to (say, do, show, create, prove, etc.) ___ … ? How could you improve (change, modify, maximize, fix, etc.) ___ … ?	Do you agree or disagree with ___ and why? What would you recommend … ? What choice would you have made … ? How would you justify … ? How well does this story (or any other art form) meet the criteria … ? Why do you think that … ? Based on your own beliefs, what do you think about ___ … ? If you were in this situation, how would you have responded (what choices would you have made, etc.) … ? What might have been a better solution … ?

References:
Barton, L. (1997). Quick Flip Questions for Critical Thinking. Fort Atkinson, WI: Highsmith, Inc.
Gronlund, N. (2000). How to Write and Use Instructional Objectives (6th ed.), p. 112. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Merrill.

Five Quick Assessments

Journal Writing
In response to a Blooming Question prompt, students write their answers in interactive journals. Periodically, the teacher will review the journals and write responses to what each student has written.

Oral Questioning
After stating the Blooming Question prompt and giving students think time, the teacher uses a mechanism for randomly selecting one student's name (from a hat, from a can, using Judy Rex's tongue depressor idea, etc.). The person whose name is chosen answers the question for the whole class. The teacher continues selecting names until satisfied that the question has been fully answered.

Paper-and-Pencil Quick Points
Students write their answers to the Blooming Question on note cards (or the like) and turn them in for extra points. Points can be used for many purposes: (a) to supplement individual grades; (b) to aggregate toward an individual reward of some kind; (c) to aggregate for a group reward of some kind (i.e., for established teams or for the whole class).

Ticket Out the Door
Like Paper-and-Pencil Quick Points, students write their answers to the Blooming Question on a note card, but the card is used as a communication between student and teacher. Students who can easily write the answer do so. Students who have difficulty write what they know, then identify what they did not yet understand. This helps both teacher and student to plan the next day's instruction.

Think-Pair-Share Discussions
After stating the Blooming Question prompt and giving students think time, students pair with a neighbor (this can be a formal or informal process) and share their answers. Their job is to come to consensus about what they think the answer is. At a given signal, the teacher randomly chooses one group to share its answer. Class discussion can follow if there is a need for further clarity.

THE EQUALIZER

S-2

A tool for . . .

Creating a DI Learning Environment	Connecting Assessment & Instruction	Modifying the Curriculum
☐ *DI Classroom Management*	☐ *Readiness-Based DI*	☐ *Modifying Content*
☐ *Developing Self-Directed Learners*	☐ *Interest-Based DI*	☐ *Modifying Processes*
☐ *Flexible Grouping* ___ *Whole Class* ___ *Heterogeneous Small Groups* ___ *Homogeneous Small Groups* ___ *Individuals*	☐ *Learning Profile-Based DI*	☐ *Modifying Products*

Differentiation decisions are based on students' readiness, interest, and learning profile preferences, and the modifications to meet these needs are made in the content, processes, and/or products of the lessons being taught. Carol Ann Tomlinson explains that adjustments in a given lesson can be made when teachers offer students a range of learning tasks developed along one or more of eight continua.

Concrete……..Abstract

Uses:

- Content Differentiation (symbols, representation, ideas, materials)
- Process Differentiation (applications)

Key Questions:

- How important is if for students to be able to have a concrete representation of what they are studying?

Simple……..Complex

Uses:

- Content Differentiation (resources, research, issues, problems, skills, goals)

Key Questions:

- How much detail can the student understand without tipping the scales toward confusion?
- Is there prior knowledge available that can provide a scaffold for new information or skills?
- How much of the "big picture" do students already have?

Basic……..Transformational

Uses:

- Content Differentiation (information, ideas, materials)
- Process Differentiation (applications)

Key Questions:

- How comfortable is a student with the information or skill to be learned?
- Is the student competent and secure enough to apply the information or skill in new ways or in other contexts (i.e., to "transform" it)?

Fewer Facts……..More Facts

Uses:

- Process Differentiation (directions, problem-solving, application, solutions, approaches)

Key Questions:

- How simple must the process of this activity be to ensure that students will be successful with it?
- How many variables can a student successfully deal with?
- How many steps can he or she handle in a sequence?

Smaller Leaps……Greater Leaps

Uses:

- Process Differentiation (application, insight, transfer)

Key Questions:

- What degree of application or transfer would make this activity most meaningful to students?
- How much should students "stretch" to make the challenge of this lesson appropriate?

More Structured……..Less Structured

Uses:

- Process Differentiation (solutions, decision, approaches)

Key Questions:

- How much scaffolding and guidance do students need in order to complete their learning tasks successfully?
- What procedures and learning tools do they need to have "under their belts" before they can make decisions on their own?

Less Independence……..More Independence

Uses:

- Process Differentiation (planning, designing, monitoring)

Key Questions:

- How much choice can a student be given so that he or she feels motivated and still safe?

Slow Pace……..Quick Pace

Uses:

- Process Differentiation (pace of sturdy, pace of thought)

Key Questions:

- What do I know about how my students approach tasks that will help me design lessons that are paced well?
- How do I need to differentiate lesson tiers to accommodate students who move more slowly as well as those who tend to finish more quickly?

References:

Tomlinson, C. A. (1995, October). *Differentiating Instruction for Advanced Learners in the Mixed-Ability Middle School Classroom*. ERIC Digest. Reston, VA: ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Services No. ED389141)

Tomlinson, C. A. (2001c). *How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms* (2nd ed.). Alexandria, VA: ASCD, pp. 46-49.

TELL-ME-MORE INTERVIEWS

S-3

A tool for . . .

Creating a DI Learning Environment

- ☐ *DI Classroom Management*
- ☐ *Developing Self-Directed Learners*
- ☐ *Flexible Grouping*
  - ___ *Whole Class*
  - ___ *Heterogeneous Small Groups*
  - ___ *Homogeneous Small Groups*
  - ___ *Individuals*

Connecting Assessment & Instruction

- ☐ *Readiness-Based DI*
- ☐ *Interest-Based DI*
- ☐ *Learning Profile-Based DI*

Modifying the Curriculum

- ☐ *Modifying Content*
- ☐ *Modifying Processes*
- ☐ *Modifying Products*

Tell-Me-More Interviews are simply a group of questions students can ask one another to get to know each other better. The questions require some degree of risk, so they need to be used *after* students have gotten to know each other well and feel comfortable and safe sharing with one another. DI teachers can write the questions or students can write them, which often results in hilarity of a sort only students of that age group would understand!

The idea is to combine a bit of thinking with a bit of sharing and a lot of fun. You can use this strategy as an energizer, a team- or class-building activity, or just for fun. It's easy to adapt this game to many different formats. You could write out the questions and let students in small groups draw one question that they all take turns answering. You could let each student draw one question and then pair students for rotating interviews in which they take turns asking each other the questions. You could have an "Ask the Teacher a Silly Question" time each week, and let students select one of the questions which you have to answer first. There are endless variations that are limited only by your imagination. Enjoy!

Listed on the next page are a few sample questions for older students, arranged in categories:

Sample Questions

Just Plain Silly	Remember When . . . ?	Deeper Thinking
Would you rather bungee jump from a bridge or go white water rafting, and why?	What was your best Halloween costume ever, and why?	What would you like people to say about you at your retirement banquet?
Would you rather eat three giant pizzas in one sitting or 500 Twinkies in two days, and why?	What was the ugliest thing your parents made you wear as a kid?	If you had a million dollars to spend on anyone but yourself, what would you do?
Would you rather travel around the world in a hot air balloon or a sailboat, and why?	What was a childhood nickname you had, and how did you get it?	Other than being sick, what's a reason important enough for you to stay home from school (or work)?
Would you rather shave your head or pierce your nose, and why?	What's the worst thing you ever had to eat or drink?	What person in history could teach you the most, and why?
Would you rather be able to eat any food you wanted but have to drink only dill pickle juice or drink anything you wanted and eat only junk food?	What's the stupidest fad you ever followed?	What are the advantages of an all-boys or an all-girls school?

References:
West, E. (1997). *2001 Icebreakers.* New York: McGraw-Hill.
Cavert, C., & Frank, L. (1999). *Games & Other Stuff for Teachers.* Oklahoma City, OK: Wood "N' Barnes Publishing.

ANCHORS

S-4

A tool for . . .

Creating a DI Learning Environment	Connecting Assessment & Instruction	Modifying the Curriculum
☐ *DI Classroom Management*	☐ *Readiness-Based DI*	☐ *Modifying Content*
☐ *Developing Self-Directed Learners*	☐ *Interest-Based DI*	☐ *Modifying Processes*
☐ *Flexible Grouping* ___ *Whole Class* ___ *Heterogeneous Small Groups* ___ *Homogeneous Small Groups* ___ *Individuals*	☐ *Learning Profile-Based DI*	☐ *Modifying Products*

Anchors are a DI strategy designed to support self-directed learning and effective classroom management. Anchors provide students with meaningful activities to work on when they have free time, such as at the beginning of class or when they have finished their work early. They are usually designed for individuals to complete alone, but it is also possible to create Anchors for pairs or other small, self-selected groupings.

Anchor activities are always based on the subject matter being taught in the classroom. Anchors are always related to content and skills being learned in class and are changed as often as necessary to keep them fresh and interesting. They are not busywork in any sense of the word. Rather, they are meaningful, worthwhile activities that allow students to deepen their understanding of what they have been working on in class. They may include extended content, related content, additional practice activities, or new applications for what students have learned. Many teachers also include review activities among Anchors as a way to help students refresh their memory and skills.

Anchors are typically sets of activities from which students can pick. They should be engaging, and since Anchors are used during small segments of time, they should either be short or easy to pick up and put down throughout the day or week. Elementary-level teachers may, for example, create a set of five Anchors for each week since their time together spans most of the class day. Secondary-level teachers might create a set of five Anchors for a month, since time with students is typically limited to no more than one period each day.

Anchors are an excellent way to provide activities that meet varying student learning profiles and interests.

References:

King-Shaver, B., & Hunter, A. (2003). *Differentiated Instruction in the English Classroom: Content, Process, Product, and Assessment* (pp. 56, 63). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Tomlinson, C. A. (2003). *Fulfilling the Promise of the Differentiated Classroom* (pp. 47, 104). Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

AGENDAS

S-5

A tool for . . .

Creating a DI Learning Environment	Connecting Assessment & Instruction	Modifying the Curriculum
☐ *DI Classroom Management*	☐ *Readiness-Based DI*	☐ *Modifying Content*
☐ *Developing Self-Directed Learners*	☐ *Interest-Based DI*	☐ *Modifying Processes*
☐ *Flexible Grouping* ___ *Whole Class* ___ *Heterogeneous Small Groups* ___ *Homogeneous Small Groups* ___ *Individuals*	☐ *Learning Profile-Based DI*	☐ *Modifying Products*

In this course, the term **Agendas** refers to a DI strategy designed to support self-directed learning and effective classroom management. This strategy is also a way in which teachers can differentiate for readiness. DI Agendas should not be confused with *meeting* agendas or *class* agendas, whose purpose is to track and schedule a series of activities within a single meeting or class day. Rather, DI Agendas are an organizational framework that DI teachers use to orchestrate assigned student tasks. This distinction will become clearer when you look at the examples on the next page.

Anchors have some similarities with Agendas. Both are designed to help students become self-directed. Both involve elements of choice. Both can provide students with meaningful work to do during free time.

However, Agendas are targeted to specific students rather than to an entire class. Agenda items are specific practice activities that individual students need to complete as a means of increasing their proficiency in understanding the subject matter or skills being taught. While several students in a class might have several agenda items in common, they will also have different items that are targeted specifically to their own proficiency level.

Furthermore, Agenda items are assignments. Students are free to complete their Agenda activities in any order they choose, but all activities must be completed. Typically, an Agenda includes practice activities for an entire week. As students complete their items, they also make some type of record of what they have done and/or what they have learned. In other words, they are held accountable and it is their responsibility to document completed work in a manner agreed upon. Many teachers use folders for this purpose.

Often, DI teachers use the Agenda items as a basis for collaborative discussion between student and teacher. Together, they discuss not only what work has been completed, but how well the assignments helped the student to learn, what still needs to be practiced, or any other questions the student may still have. Conferences built around Agendas, especially if done on an ongoing, regular basis, are an excellent way for students to take charge of their own learning and for teachers to assess how best to structure the next set of Agenda items for them.

The examples below include Agendas for two different students in the same classroom:

Agenda A: Neil Zollner

1. Complete a Hypercard stack showing how a volcano works.
2. Continue to read your personal choice novel, and keep a reading log of your progress.
3. Practice multiplying fractions by completing five of the word problems in your math textbook on pp. 185-186.
4. Create flashcards for the spelling words you missed last week and play the Flashcard Game with at least two partners.

Agenda B: Ashlee Heft

1. Review your Hypercard stack (showing how a volcano works) for accuracy.
2. Continue to read your personal choice novel, and keep a reading log of your progress.
3. Identify at least two examples of a solid, a liquid, and a gas. Explain the characteristics that distinguish them from each other.
4. Scan *Rosa Parks, My Story* for vocabulary words with which you are unfamiliar. Record five words. Predict their meaning, then look up the definitions to see if you were correct.

Reference:
Tomlinson, C. A. (1999). *The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of All Learners* (pp. 66-67). Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

CHOICE BOARDS

S-6

A tool for . . .

Creating a DI Learning Environment

- ☐ *DI Classroom Management*
- ☐ *Developing Self-Directed Learners*
- ☐ *Flexible Grouping*
  - ___ *Whole Class*
  - ___ *Heterogeneous Small Groups*
  - ___ *Homogeneous Small Groups*
  - ___ *Individuals*

Connecting Assessment & Instruction

- ☐ *Readiness-Based DI*
- ☐ *Interest-Based DI*
- ☐ *Learning Profile-Based DI*

Modifying the Curriculum

- ☐ *Modifying Content*
- ☐ *Modifying Processes*
- ☐ *Modifying Products*

Choice Boards are a simple DI strategy that teachers can use to provide their students with choices in the kinds of activities they are going to complete. This strategy is an excellent way to incorporate interest-based differentiation via choice, and many teachers also incorporate differentiation based on their students' learning profile preferences as well. Although the teacher specifies which activities the student will choose from, the student gets to choose one from several sets of options. This strategy provides moderate levels of choice and requires a moderate degree of self-directedness in the students.

For students with a greater degree of self-direction, a DI teacher could use the Choice Board strategy in a slightly different way. This teacher might include assignments associated with several skills within a lesson, or even several lessons. The example that follows this explanation is an example of this higher level application. To incorporate even more choice (assuming a higher degree of self-direction on the part of the students using it), the teacher could offer the choice of completing the chosen tasks in any order as well. Thus, students in the same class could be working on multiple tasks, some at the same time as others, some at different times, depending on the order they selected.

The most important rule in creating Choice Boards is that each of the possible sets of choices needs to lead to the same essential understanding of content or skill (the same K-U-Dos). Parallel options within each set also need to be at a similar degree of difficulty. Otherwise, students may end up selecting options because of how easy they are.

When students in a particular classroom are at very different levels of readiness, the teacher can further adapt the Choice Board structure. One way is to create more than one Choice Board so that students who are below or above the readiness level of the initial Choice Board have work that is at the appropriate degree of challenge for them. In this way students have the same degree of choice available, and their tasks are adapted to different readiness levels. This is an excellent way to ensure respectful work for all students, regardless of their readiness level.

The example below is based on a Choice Board that Carol Tomlinson describes in her book, *The Differentiated Classroom.* Students will select one activity from each of the three sets of activities provided. They will circle their choices and sign the sheet as a record of their plans.

Sample Choice Board

Set 1	**Create a Rhyming Wheel** Use the 10 words from your spelling list. Create as many rhymes as you can for each one. Find two new words from one of the poems in the Poetry Pack and do the same.	**Write a Poem With Rhymes** Read several poems by Jack Prelutsky or Shel Silverstein. Write a silly poem that is at least 10 lines long that includes rhymes at the end of each line.	**Write an Acrostic Poem Based on Your Name** Use the letters of your first or last name or both (you'll need at least six letters!) to begin the first word of each line of a poem about you.
Set 2	**Write Your Own Figure of Speech** Write 10 original figures of speech (metaphors, similes, or analogies). Use each one in a sentence.	**Make a Figures-of-Speech Book** Create a list of at least 10 metaphors you have discovered in reading poetry and literature. Tell what you think each metaphor means.	**Draw Figures of Speech** Use clip art from the computer or draw your own pictures depicting at least five figures of speech you have discovered. Be sure to label each drawing with the figure of speech it represents.
Set 3	**Read and Interpret** Read one of the poems in the Poetry Packet and write about what you think it means.	**Illustrate a Poem** Find a poem in the Poetry Pack that you especially like and illustrate it. Then write about what you wanted to communicate.	**Read & Write** Read about the life of a famous poet. Write a cinquain or diamante poem about the poet.

References:
King-Shaver, B., & Hunter, A. (2003). *Differentiated Instruction in the English Classroom: Content, Process, Product, and Assessment* (pp. 74-76). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
Tomlinson, C. A. (1999). *The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of All Learners* (pp. 69, 92). Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

TIC-TAC-TOE BOARDS

S-7

A tool for . . .

Creating a DI Learning Environment	Connecting Assessment & Instruction	Modifying the Curriculum
☐ *DI Classroom Management*	☐ *Readiness-Based DI*	☐ *Modifying Content*
☐ *Developing Self-Directed Learners*	☐ *Interest-Based DI*	☐ *Modifying Processes*
☐ *Flexible Grouping* ___ *Whole Class* ___ *Heterogeneous Small Groups* ___ *Homogeneous Small Groups* ___ *Individuals*	☐ *Learning Profile-Based DI*	☐ *Modifying Products*

Tic-Tac-Toe Boards, like Choice Boards, provide DI teachers with a way to give their students choices about the ways they process or demonstrate the K-U-Dos of a given lesson. Like Choice Boards and Agendas, Tic-Tac-Toe Boards offer choice within a structure prescribed by the teacher. Of the three choice-based strategies, Tic-Tac-Toe Boards offer the highest choice and require the highest level of self-direction from students.

Tic-Tac-Toe Boards rely on student self-directedness because it is impossible to prescribe the sequence in which activities are completed (as you can with Choice Boards, if you elect to do so). Teachers should not use this strategy if they want students to complete activities in a certain order.

Therefore, Tic-Tac-Toe Boards are typically used for the end-products of assignments (demonstrations of learning) that might be required in a series of lessons or in a unit of study. Each choice results in a mini-product that requires, at the least, application of what has been learned. Depending on the readiness of students, choices on Tic-Tac-Toe Boards may reflect higher levels of critical thinking: analysis, and synthesis.

Tic-Tac-Toe Boards are an excellent way for teachers to differentiate based on learning profile preferences. The Tic-Tac-Toe Board might provide options for nine different ways of demonstrating different aspects of one major skill or understanding, each based on a different intelligence. **Example A** on the next page demonstrates how this might look.

Alternatively, the Tic-Tac-Toe Board could be organized so that all students have to complete activities at several levels of difficulty. In this way, students can't find an "easy way out" because all choices would offer both challenge and comfort. **Example B** demonstrates how this might look.

Finally, as with the Choice Board strategy, DI teachers can also create multiple Tic-Tac-Toe Boards for more than the original level of readiness. In the best of all worlds, this enables all students to have the same number of choices and the same flexibility. Each Board is based on the same key K-U-Dos, but provides an appropriate degree of challenge for groups of students who are at different levels of readiness.

Example A: Solar System

Calculate how much you would weigh on each of the planets. Graph your results.	Facilitate a class discussion to set the criteria for deciding which classmates should be allowed to go on a voyage to the moon.	Compare and contrast characteristics of Earth and Venus using a Venn diagram. For an extra challenge, choose one other planet and make the comparison three-way.
Take analog or digital picture of constellations you see in the night sky. Use the pictures in an illustration that demonstrates the location and relative size of each constellation.	Imagine that you are on a voyage to the planet Mars. Write a play that would reflect what you might see, hear, and be thinking about on your way.	Create a short melody based on at least three different pitches for each of the planets and explain why it is representative of that planet.
Write a poem about why humans yearn to explore space.	Design a rocket that will suit you in space travel and explain why you chose the specifications you did.	Make a model or poster presentation that demonstrates what the greenhouse effect on a planet is.

Example B: Geometry

Select objects from the classroom that could represent a point, a line, a line segment, a ray, and a plane. Create a poster showing these objects, and label them correctly.	Form a group of at least 12 students. Make a circle. Use additional students to "act out" the following concepts within the circle: a radius, a diameter, a chord, and a central angle. Choose at least two other geometric concepts to act out.	Using one or more geometric shapes, design a fabric pattern for a bedspread, curtains, couch fabric, or shirt.
By flipping through math books, work sheets, newspapers, or magazines, locate at least ten quadrilaterals. Cut them out (or copy them), and create a chart that displays them. Use a protractor to measure each angle, and label each quadrilateral. Try to determine what rule about angles is true for all quadrilaterals.	Make up a rap, song, jingle, or chant that clarifies the differences between the terms "similarity" and "congruence," or select two other terms you find difficult to distinguish, and use them instead.	Watch at least ten music videos on television. Your objective is to rank the videos according to their visual appeal and according to their use of symmetry in the "choreographing" of the video. Turn the sound off and focus solely on visual elements of each song. Make a chart to keep track of appeal and symmetry. Display your results. Evaluate if there is a correlation between symmetry and eye appeal.
Use the clock face to determine the degrees in the angles between the minute hand and the hour hand at 10 different times of your choice. Test your estimate with a protractor. Try to create as many different angles as you can.	Using a large protractor (the kind a teacher uses on the blackboard), measure the angle at which branches are growing from ten tree trunks in a wooded area. Measure branches from ten different trees in a sunny, open area. Find the mean and mode of the angle measurements of each set of branches. Write a paragraph explaining what you found when you compared the mean and mode of "sunny" branches to "shaded" branches.	Write a limerick or poem about an unusual geometric shape or geometric object you have identified. Include at least two correct facts about the object.

References:

Hendrickson, J., & Hendrickson, R. (2003). Solar System. In A. C. Rule & L. H. Lord (Eds.), *Activities for Differentiated Instruction Addressing All Levels of Bloom's Taxonomy and Eight Multiple Intelligences* (pp. 9-12). Oswego, NY: State University of New York at Oswego.

King-Shaver, B., & Hunter, A. (2003). *Differentiated Instruction in the English Classroom: Content, Process, Product, and Assessment* (pp. 74-76). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Moriarty, D. C. (2003). Solar System. In A. C. Rule and L. H. Lord (Eds.), *Activities for Differentiated Instruction Addressing All Levels of Bloom's Taxonomy and Eight Multiple Intelligences* (pp. 56-64). Oswego, NY: State University of New York at Oswego.

Tomlinson, C. A. (2003). *Fulfilling the Promise of the Differentiated Classroom* (pp. 130-132). Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Watson, J. (2003). Rain Forests. In A. C. Rule and L. H. Lord (Eds.), *Activities for Differentiated Instruction Addressing All Levels of Bloom's Taxonomy and Eight Multiple Intelligences* (pp. 79-82). Oswego, NY: State University of New York at Oswego.

SIMPLE JIGSAW

S-8

A tool for . . .

Creating a DI Learning Environment	Connecting Assessment & Instruction	Modifying the Curriculum
☐ *DI Classroom Management*	☐ *Readiness-Based DI*	☐ *Modifying Content*
☐ *Developing Self-Directed Learners*	☐ *Interest-Based DI*	☐ *Modifying Processes*
☐ *Flexible Grouping* ___ *Whole Class* ___ *Heterogeneous Small Groups* ___ *Homogeneous Small Groups* ___ *Individuals*	☐ *Learning Profile-Based DI*	☐ *Modifying Products*

The Jigsaw strategy (called the "Simple Jigsaw" in this course) was originally developed in 1978 by Elliott Aaronson as a cooperative learning technique. The purpose of the strategy was to foster a high degree of interdependence among team members, who would share responsibility for learning, then teaching a chunk of content to each other. The idea was that the group's full understanding of the content would not be complete until all chunks were presented. Originally, teachers were advised to create completely new materials with this chunking in place, so that each chunk was fully understandable by itself. When first applied, this strategy was used to chunk large amounts of information, such as the amount of information an entire chapter would introduce.

As time has passed, many versions of the Jigsaw have been developed. It is still used very formally in cooperative learning teams, but it is also recognized as a tool that can be used flexibly anytime a teacher wants students to acquire the information from a piece of written content more quickly than if students read it on their own.

Not only does it buy time, but it allows students a greater opportunity to construct meaning from what they are learning. The act of having to teach something to another person changes the way in which a student addresses the content, usually increasing attention and engagement. The act of discussing it with a group of peers provides for the sharing of individual insights that might not otherwise be brought to light. The fact that all members of the Jigsaw group are mutually responsible for each other's learning changes the kinds of questions asked during discussion.

In a DI classroom, the Jigsaw can be used to help students develop self-directedness. The simple element of choice provided by the Jigsaw strategy increases motivation as well.

References:

King-Shaver, B., & Hunter, A. (2003). *Differentiated Instruction in the English Classroom: Content, Process, Product, and Assessment* (pp. 68-70). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

EXPERT GROUP JIGSAW

S-9

A tool for . . .

Creating a DI Learning Environment	Connecting Assessment & Instruction	Modifying the Curriculum
☐ *DI Classroom Management*	☐ *Readiness-Based DI*	☐ *Modifying Content*
☐ *Developing Self-Directed Learners*	☐ *Interest-Based DI*	☐ *Modifying Processes*
☐ *Flexible Grouping* ___ *Whole Class* ___ *Heterogeneous Small Groups* ___ *Homogeneous Small Groups* ___ *Individuals*	☐ *Learning Profile-Based DI*	☐ *Modifying Products*

Jigsaw variations are based on the principles inherent in the Simple Jigsaw (interdependence, shared responsibility for learning and teaching a chunk of content, collaborative discussion, etc.), but increase the applications of the strategy as a tool for learning.

For situations in which the content to be Jigsawed is (a) new, (b) unusually complex, (c) in need of a deeper level of processing, or (d) if some students would benefit from a discussion about their assigned topic with others having the same assignment—the Expert Group Jigsaw is an excellent strategy to employ.

This Jigsaw variation just adds a step between the assignment of the Jigsawed content to team members and the discussion of it. Individual students are still responsible for reading and understanding their assignment, but before they try to teach it to other group members, they meet with other students who have been given the same assignment. These are Expert Groups, who can discuss the content more thoroughly, help each other understand anything that is unclear, and clarify the main points. After Expert Groups have met, they return to their original teams and share what they have learned with their teammates.

In a DI classroom, the Expert Group Jigsaw provides students with several specific benefits. At the simplest level, it provides a way for students who may not work together otherwise to share information, teach, and learn from each other. This is a class-building outcome. At another level, the Expert Group Jigsaw provides students with opportunities to exercise both choice and responsibility, which are important in developing the self-directed learning skills we want for our students. Last, but not least, the physical movement and discussion involved in this strategy meet the learning needs of two intelligences: bodily-kinesthetic and interpersonal.

Reference:

King-Shaver, B., & Hunter, A. (2003). *Differentiated Instruction in the English Classroom: Content, Process, Product, and Assessment* (pp. 68-70). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

CENTERS

S-10

A tool for . . .

Creating a DI Learning Environment

- ☐ *DI Classroom Management*
- ☐ *Developing Self-Directed Learners*
- ☐ *Flexible Grouping*
  - ___ *Whole Class*
  - ___ *Heterogeneous Small Groups*
  - ___ *Homogeneous Small Groups*
  - ___ *Individuals*

Connecting Assessment & Instruction

- ☐ *Readiness-Based DI*
- ☐ *Interest-Based DI*
- ☐ *Learning Profile-Based DI*

Modifying the Curriculum

- ☐ *Modifying Content*
- ☐ *Modifying Processes*
- ☐ *Modifying Products*

The terms "Centers" and "Stations" are often used interchangeably. As tools for differentiated instruction, however, we will clarify several distinctions between them because they are used for different purposes in a DI classroom. The initial confusion arises simply because, to an observer, they *look* much the same: a designated area of the classroom in which students find special materials or instructions to read about or work on a task.

Here are some of the defining characteristics of Centers:

- Centers are typically changed with each successive unit, often on a seasonal basis or simply at will, depending on the emerging needs, interests, and learning profile preferences of a group of students.
- The number of Centers can change with each unit of study.
- Titles of Centers can also change with each unit. The titles for the Centers for one unit of study are usually different than the titles of successive sets of Centers for other units.

- Once a set of Centers is established, the activities or materials at each Center remain the same for the duration of the unit.
- Centers are used to enhance, reinforce, or extend a particular skill or concept associated with just one unit of study.
- Centers are linked to the K-U-Dos in each unit of study. Often, teachers create Centers for each skill or content area in a unit of study so that students can go to a particular Center to obtain information or practice with that skill or content.
- At other times, teacher use Centers to address content or skills that are interesting and informational, but which would otherwise be missed. In other words, they are less essential, but still relevant.
- The activities and materials at Centers can be used for assigned learning as well as for choice-based learning, in directed practice as well as in free time, interest-based selection.
- The main purpose of Centers is to provide students with activities and materials associated with specific units of instruction that change throughout the year.

Centers are highly flexible for s number of other uses as well. They can address different levels of readiness as well as various interests and learning profile preferences. They can address content differentiation as well as process differentiation. They can address essential K-U-Dos as well as relevant, but less essential information and activities linked to the essential K-U-Dos. They can provide teachers with specific activities or access to information that certain students need to learn or practice, and can be included in Agenda assignments in this way. They can also be included as Anchor options when students have free time. Centers can include activities based on small group work as well as individual work.

In sum, Centers are an extremely flexible DI strategy that can be used at all grade levels and in all content areas.

References:

Tomlinson, C. A. (1999). *The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of All Learners* (pp. 75-76). Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Tomlinson, C. A. (2001). *How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms* (pp. 101, 103). Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

STATIONS

S-11

A tool for . . .

Creating a DI Learning Environment	Connecting Assessment & Instruction	Modifying the Curriculum
☐ *DI Classroom Management*	☐ *Readiness-Based DI*	☐ *Modifying Content*
☐ *Developing Self-Directed Learners*	☐ *Interest-Based DI*	☐ *Modifying Processes*
☐ *Flexible Grouping* ___ *Whole Class* ___ *Heterogeneous Small Groups* ___ *Homogeneous Small Groups* ___ *Individuals*	☐ *Learning Profile-Based DI*	☐ *Modifying Products*

The Stations strategy is often confused with the Centers strategy because there are many similarities between them. For the purposes of its use in a DI classroom, we will clarify several distinguishing characteristics that set Stations apart from Centers.

Stations are typically associated with a set of key skills or content that students work on throughout the entire year. These key areas of study are often derived from the standards, though other basic skills can be used, such as those associated with different intelligences or levels of critical thinking. Examples of stations for various subject areas can be found at the end of this initial description. The topics of these Stations are, in essence, the standards for each subject area. Depending on the grade level, the standards themselves can be the Stations, or the proficiencies within any *one* of the standards could be the basis for a series of Stations. Also note that in some content areas, the standards are focused on content (i.e., Civics, Economics, Geography, and Health), while in other content areas, the standards are focused on skills (i.e., Mathematics, Science, Writing, Reading).

- The number of stations and the titles of each station remain the same all year long.
- Stations may have multiple activities at any one location, and these activities change frequently as students progress in their ability to understand and apply each skill throughout the year.
- The content and skills acquired and practiced at each Station are very closely tied to essential K-U-Dos. They are so important, in fact, that they deserve the kind of yearlong, intensive focus that Stations can provide.
- Stations are primarily used for assigned learning.
- Stations are highly effective in addressing readiness by providing students who need extra practice with a way of continuing to get that practice while the rest of the class moves on or does other activities.

- The main purpose of Stations is to provide continuity in practicing key skills all year long.

Stations are flexible for a number of other uses as well. They can be incorporated into Agenda assignments (this is, in fact, one of the most fruitful uses of the strategy). They can be used to direct group work as well as individual work (though the former is more often the case). Teachers can provide activities at the same Station that are differentiated for more than one level of readiness.

Examples of Stations for Various Content Areas

Math
- Problem-solving
- Number concepts
- Computation
- Measurement
- Geometry
- Probability
- Algebra

Science
- Atmospheric processes and the water cycle
- Earth's composition and structure
- Composition and structure of the universe & the Earth's place in it
- Principles of heredity and related concepts
- Structure and function of cells and organisms
- Relationships among organisms and their physical environment
- Biological evolution and the diversity of life
- Structure and properties of matter

History (Historical Understanding)
- Chronological relationships and patterns
- Historical perspective
- Living and working together in families and communities
- History of own state or region
- Democratic principles and values
- Contributions to culture, economics, and politics from many cultures
- History of peoples and cultures around the world

Writing
- Prewriting
- Drafting and revising
- Editing and publishing
- Stylistic and rhetorical aspects of writing
- Grammatical and mechanical conventions

Reading (General Skills)
- How print conveys meaning

- How print is organized and read
- Using meaning clues
- Basic elements of phonetic analysis
- Basic elements of structural analysis
- Dictionary usage
- Level-appropriate sight words and vocabulary
- Self-correction strategies
- Reading aloud with fluency

Civics

- Ideas about civic life, politics, and government
- Essential characteristics of limited and unlimited governments
- Sources, purposes, and functions of law
- The concept of a constitution
- Major characteristics of systems of shared powers
- Alternative forms of representation

Economics

- Scarcity of productive resources
- Characteristics of economic systems
- Supply and demand
- Market structures and exchanges
- Governmental roles in the economy
- Fiscal policy and monetary policy

Geography

- Characteristics and uses of maps, globes, and other geographic tools
- Location of places, geographic features, and patterns of the environment
- Physical and human characteristics of place
- Concept of regions
- Physical processes shaping patterns of the Earth's surface
- Characteristics of ecosystems on Earth's surface

Health

- Use of health services, products, and information
- Environmental and external factors that affect health
- Mental health
- Emotional health
- Injury prevention
- Disease prevention
- Substance abuse
- Growth and development

References:

Kendall, J. S., & Marzano, R. J. (2001). *Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education* (3rd. ed.). Aurora, CO: Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL); and Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

King-Shaver, B., & Hunter, A. (2003). *Differentiated Instruction in the English Classroom: Content, Process, Product, and Assessment* (pp. 70-71, 81-95). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Tomlinson, C. A. (1999). *The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of All Learners* (pp. 62-68). Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

THINKDOTS

S-12

A tool for . . .

Creating a DI Learning Environment

- ★ *DI Classroom Management*
- ★ *Developing Self-Directed Learners*
- ★ *Flexible Grouping*
  - ___ *Whole Class*
  - ___ *Heterogeneous Small Groups*
  - ___ *Homogeneous Small Groups*
  - ___ *Individuals*

Connecting Assessment & Instruction

- ★ *Readiness-Based DI*
- ★ *Interest-Based DI*
- ★ *Learning Profile-Based DI*

Modifying the Curriculum

- ★ *Modifying Content*
- ★ *Modifying Processes*
- ★ *Modifying Products*

The ThinkDots strategy was developed by Kay Brimijoin in 1999 as a variation of another differentiated instruction strategy, called "Cubing" (Tomlinson, 2003, p. 151). Each set of ThinkDots cards consists of six cards, each with a different number of dots on it, from one dot up to six dots. The six cards are connected with a metal notebook-type ring or string.

Each card has a different question written on it. To use the cards, students roll a die, then answer the question on the card with the matching number of dots. Thus, if a student rolled a die with three dots, he or she would answer the question with three dots.

Questions on each of the six cards can be varied in many ways. Since there are six cards, each can be used to match one of the six levels of critical thinking in Bloom's Taxonomy: Level 1: Knowledge, Level 2: Comprehension, Level 3: Application, Level 4: Analysis, Level 5: Synthesis, and Level 6: Evaluation. Corresponding questions on each card would ask questions using question prompts for that level.

Another variation of the ThinkDot cards involves using questions to stimulate various kinds of intelligences. Although there are eight intelligences, there are six that are not engaged as frequently: bodily-kinesthetic, visual-spatial, musical-rhythmic, intrapersonal, interpersonal, and naturalist. These intelligences could be used to formulate questions on ThinkDot cards that would stretch the way students process information.

ThinkDots can be used in groups, with members taking turns answering questions after each roll of the die. They can be used during a class discussion, with the teacher rolling the die, all groups processing the same question, then one group sharing its answer. Individual students can also use ThinkDots by themselves to deepen their thinking about a topic before writing about it.

ThinkDots can be used for reinforcing skills at various readiness levels. Sets of cards can be color coded to readiness levels so the activities within a set provide the appropriate challenge for the students. These can be used in a small group or independently.

ThinkDots can be expanded for use with activities instead of simply as a means for generating answers to review or think about a topic they have learned. Instead of writing a question on each of the six cards, a teacher could write an activity to complete. Students might complete all six activities in any order, roll to identify one or two of the six to complete, or use the cards in a group to determine who should do each assignment. The variations are endless.

References:

Brimijoin, K. (2005). Differentiation and High-States Testing: An Oxymoron? *Theory Into Practice, 44*(3), 254-261.

Tomlinson, C. A. (2003). *Fulfilling the Promise of the Differentiated Classroom*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

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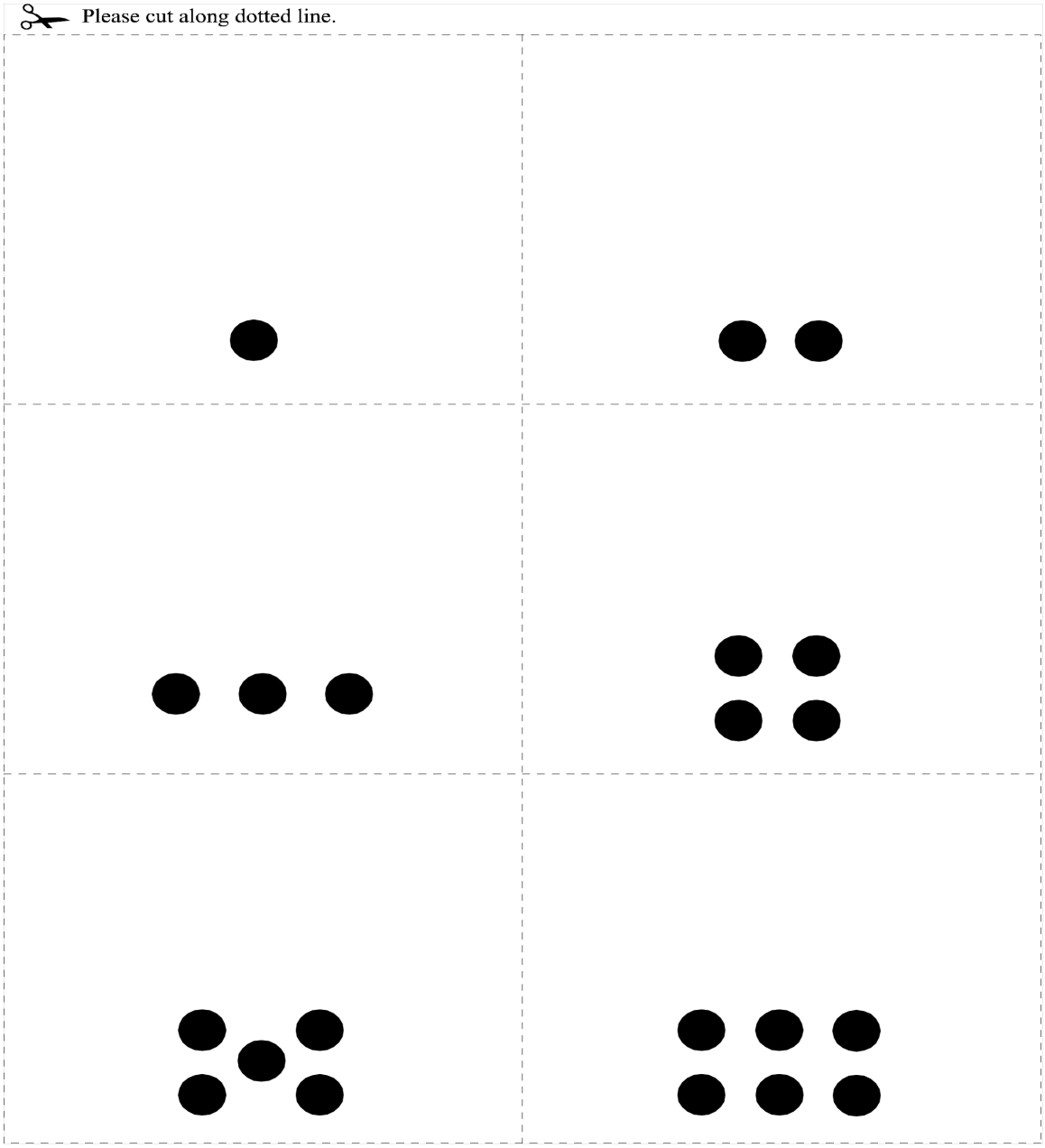

PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING

S-13

A tool for . . .

Creating a DI Learning Environment

- ☐ *DI Classroom Management*
- ☐ *Developing Self-Directed Learners*
- ☐ *Flexible Grouping*
  - ___ *Whole Class*
  - ___ *Heterogeneous Small Groups*
  - ___ *Homogeneous Small Groups*
  - ___ *Individuals*

Connecting Assessment & Instruction

- ☐ *Readiness-Based DI*
- ☐ *Interest-Based DI*
- ☐ *Learning Profile-Based DI*

Modifying the Curriculum

- ☐ *Modifying Content*
- ☐ *Modifying Processes*
- ☐ *Modifying Products*

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) is an approach to teaching that involves students in solving problems that have multiple outcomes, depending on the resources, knowledge, and skills they collectively bring to bear on finding a solution. The goal of these activities is to give students a chance to use what they know in a real-world, active situation that calls for them to apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate as they arrive at a solution.

PBL provides students with experiences they do not normally have. Since teachers in traditional classrooms typically do a disproportionate amount of the work, students learn to be passive. They wait for direction instead of gaining experience in directing their own learning. Yet, as you know, one of the main goals of DI is to help students develop into self-directed learners. PBL is an excellent way to provide students with this kind of experience.

PBL scenarios are intentionally fuzzy. Students work in small groups to find a resolution to a loosely structured problem that can have many different outcomes. They learn much more by grappling with a process of finding resolution because it involves a much greater scope of critical thinking. It also allows students to bring many of their other gifts, interests, and abilities to the process.

Specifically, students acquire the following skills associated with self-directed learning:

- How to clearly define a problem
- How to develop alternative hypotheses (solutions)
- How to find, access, evaluate, and utilize a variety of materials and resources
- How to adjust solutions based on new information
- How to justify choices and explain steps taken in the problem-solving process

PBL activities are designed to be used in groups. In a DI classroom, students can be grouped based on varying intelligence strengths, experience, interests, and/or readiness. Groups can be of mixed readiness levels or similar levels, depending on the type of problem and the skill set and knowledge each person can contribute.

Reference:
Tomlinson, C. A. (1999). *The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of All Learners* (p. 92). Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

GROUP INVESTIGATIONS

S-14

A tool for . . .

Creating a DI Learning Environment	Connecting Assessment & Instruction	Modifying the Curriculum
☐ *DI Classroom Management*	☐ *Readiness-Based DI*	☐ *Modifying Content*
☐ *Developing Self-Directed Learners*	☐ *Interest-Based DI*	☐ *Modifying Processes*
☐ *Flexible Grouping* ___ *Whole Class* ___ *Heterogeneous Small Groups* ___ *Homogeneous Small Groups* ___ *Individuals*	☐ *Learning Profile-Based DI*	☐ *Modifying Products*

The Group Investigation strategy is an excellent way for students to develop skills in self-directed learning through the process of investigation and discovery. This loosely structured strategy relies on prior development of strong DI classroom management, familiarity with flexible grouping, and "in-the-moment" differentiation as the process moves forward. It is primarily interest-based differentiation, but also includes aspects of both learning profile and readiness DI, depending on how it is organized.

Group Investigation is typically a whole-class activity that spreads over several weeks. During this time, students and teacher work together to investigate a K-U-Dos-based topic in depth. The degree of structure can vary, depending on how capable students are of working in a self-directed manner. For example, a DI teacher might choose which students will work together in a grouping, based on their interests or readiness levels. Alternatively, a DI teacher might allow students to self-select the groups they work in, based on their common interests.

As students work together to generate and study information about the main topic, they share not only what they have discovered, but what they have questions about. Class flow moves from whole-group discussion to small-group work, then back again to whole-class discussion as students share what they have learned and plan how they will proceed. This is a highly collaborative process that evolves as the process unfolds.

References:

Tomlinson, C. A. (1999). *The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of All Learners* (p. 92). Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Tomlinson, C. A. (2001). *How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms* (p. 58). Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

GAME OF SELF-DIRECTION

S-15

A tool for . . .

Creating a DI Learning Environment	Connecting Assessment & Instruction	Modifying the Curriculum
☐ *DI Classroom Management*	☐ *Readiness-Based DI*	☐ *Modifying Content*
☐ *Developing Self-Directed Learners*	☐ *Interest-Based DI*	☐ *Modifying Processes*
☐ *Flexible Grouping* ___ *Whole Class* ___ *Heterogeneous Small Groups* ___ *Homogeneous Small Groups* ___ *Individuals*	☐ *Learning Profile-Based DI*	☐ *Modifying Products*

The Game of Self-Direction is a role-based, game-like processing strategy that DI teachers can use to help students intentionally develop skills of self-directedness. It can be adapted to groups as small as four students or as large as six.

The game process includes a series of numbered cards. Each card has a specific information processing and sharing role printed on it.

Example of cards that may be used:

Card No. 1: Read

It is person No. 1's task to select or present a chunk of information that the group will discuss. The chunk of information depends on the way in which the activity is structured. If the group is acquiring new content, this could be a portion of the content that has been organized into chunks from which No. 1 can randomly choose. If the group is discussing answers to previously assigned discussion questions, this could be an answer to a question that person No. 1 has written or thought about.

Card No. 2: Summarize

Person No.2 has to listen closely to what No. 1 says because it is his or her task to summarize the important information. This provides other group members with a second chance to hear and internalize the content, and it provides No. 2 with the stimulus to put the content into his or her own words.

Card No. 3: Expand

Person No. 3 has to listen closely to both No. 1 and No. 2 because it is his or her task to fill in any of the information No. 2 has missed as well as to add any personal insights and connect what has been presented to prior personal knowledge or general understandings shared by the group, based on previous learning.

No. 4: Answer a specific question

Person No. 4 typically answers a question associated with the chunk of content. Just as the chunks of content are preset by the teacher, so, too, are these questions prepared ahead of time. The purpose of the questions is to prod students into deeper analysis of the content. These questions further extend the participant's understanding. A simple alternative way to orchestrate questions for this role is to use a Spin Dial like the ones from S-3 BLOOMING ASSESSMENTS. Person No. 4 could spin the dial to answer a specific question that is written on the Dial.

Person No. 4 is also responsible for collecting, shuffling, and redistributing the game cards for the next round of play.

During any round of play, the roles are implemented in order. Thus, the student with card No. 1 always begins the round (completing whatever the card indicates). The student with card No. 2 goes next, and so forth. Notice that these four roles are critical to information processing and sharing.

To make the game fun and add an element of surprise, the cards are collected, shuffled and dealt out at the beginning of each round for as many rounds as needed, so that students don't know what their task (role) will be during each round of play. This increases attention and engagement. Students love to moan and groan when the same person gets the same task several times in a row. The element of random distribution helps keep what might be an ordinary review discussion lively.

If a DI teacher wishes to make the play less random, the teacher can simply direct students to rotate the role cards one person to the left or right during each successive round. This element of predictability may be more suitable for certain age groups.

The content that students read, summarize, expand upon, answer questions about, and discuss can be almost anything the teacher chooses. It can be new content that the teacher wants students to acquire. It can be a review of objective material or a discussion of ideas. It could also be a brainstorming session. There really is no limit to how it can be used.

The only caveat is that the DI teacher needs to decide ahead of time what the content will be and choose which roles (and associated skills) the students need to work on. The game can easily be adapted by changing the roles on the cards to meet specific needs of students. The order of the roles can be changed as well, and different roles swapped for original ones as students gain expertise in one skill set and go on to develop others.

RAFT

S-16

A tool for . . .

Creating a DI Learning Environment	Connecting Assessment & Instruction	Modifying the Curriculum
☐ *DI Classroom Management*	☐ *Readiness-Based DI*	☐ *Modifying Content*
☐ *Developing Self-Directed Learners*	☐ *Interest-Based DI*	☐ *Modifying Processes*
☐ *Flexible Grouping* ___ *Whole Class* ___ *Heterogeneous Small Groups* ___ *Homogeneous Small Groups* ___ *Individuals*	☐ *Learning Profile-Based DI*	☐ *Modifying Products*

RAFT is an acronym for these four words: Role, Audience, Format, and Topic. The RAFT strategy forces students to process information they have learned rather than to repeat memorized facts. It is an excellent way to help students learn to be more self-directed in their learning by developing three specific skills: thinking flexibly from multiple perspectives, imagining and creating, and thinking and communicating with clarity and precision.

Students are often motivated to complete these assignments because they allow for a high degree of creativity. Like Problem-Based learning assignments, RAFT assignments are open-ended. There is no one correct way to complete them.

RAFT assignments can be created as sets of choices from which students choose, much like a Choice Board would. The examples on the next two pages are of this type. Alternatively, a DI teacher can assign students a particular RAFT assignment from the choices, or the entire class might work on one RAFT assignment at the same time, each student completing it in his or her own way. The only requirement is that each RAFT assignment needs to include all four elements: Role, Audience, Format, and Topic.

There is no set list of roles, audiences, formats, or topics for RAFT assignments. Several choices are listed below for each of these four elements, but you can use your creativity to add your own and combine them in different ways.

Roles	**Audiences**	**Formats**		**Topics**
Writer	Self	Speech	Critique	Issues relevant to the unit topic or time period
Scientist	Friends	Play	Documentary	A topic of personal interest or concern for the role or audience
Travel Agent	Community	Poster	Interview	
Inventor	Parents	Set of rules	Cartoon	
Historian	Students	Packing list	Game	
Reporter	Jury	Map	Journal	
Journalist	Family	Sculpture/Model	Article	
Artist	Visitors	Document	Game	
Adventurer	Cartoon characters	Picture	Brochure/ Ad	
Judge	Animals	Video	List	
Self	Government	Song	Outline	

References:

Kentucky Department of Education. (2003). *Literacy Perks: Program Effectiveness Review for Kentucky Schools.* Retrieved on April 26, 2005, from http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Instructional+Resources/Literacy/Literacy-All+PERKS.htm

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RAFT Assignment Charts

Unit A: Solar System RAFT

ROLE	AUDIENCE	FORMAT	TOPIC
Travel agent	Future travelers to outer space	Travel brochure	Here's a schedule for a trip from Mercury to Pluto with stops at all of the planets, based on the speed of this rocket . . .
Self	Parents	Letter	Dear Mom and Dad, this is where I'd like to live and why I want to go there . . .
Rocket ship supply manager	Supply depot manager	List	Here's what our ship will need to have when we travel to the moon: _____
Ad agency	Television viewers	Television ad	Take a trip to _____ because . . .
Newspaper reporter	Local newspaper readers	Interview of a space traveler	Tell us what it was like to visit . . .
Space biologist	Zoo keeper	Picture	This new creature from ___ belongs in your zoo because . . .

Unit B: Ancient Egypt RAFT

ROLE	AUDIENCE	FORMAT	TOPIC
Historian	Inhabitants of the future	Hieroglyphic	This is a story about a current event . . .
Cook	Royal family	Menu	Come to the royal feast! Our menu will include . . .
Sleuth	Scotland Yard Detective Agency	Report	Was Lord Carnavon's death following his visit to King Tut's tomb caused by a curse?
Tomb builder	King Tut	3-D model	This is what I have in mind for your tomb . . .
Travel writer	Potential travelers to ancient Egypt	Informational brochure	Tips for understanding the class system in ancient Egypt . . .
Self	Child of same age in ancient Egypt	A letter	Things about your life that I would be interested in knowing more about . . .

LEARNING CONTRACTS

S-17

A tool for . . .

Creating a DI Learning Environment	Connecting Assessment & Instruction	Modifying the Curriculum
☐ *DI Classroom Management*	☐ *Readiness-Based DI*	☐ *Modifying Content*
☐ *Developing Self-Directed Learners*	☐ *Interest-Based DI*	☐ *Modifying Processes*
☐ *Flexible Grouping* ___ *Whole Class* ___ *Heterogeneous Small Groups* ___ *Homogeneous Small Groups* ___ *Individuals*	☐ *Learning Profile-Based DI*	☐ *Modifying Products*

Key Elements of Learning Contracts

Learning Contracts are working agreements between students and their teachers that document how a student is going to achieve specific learning objectives. Learning Contracts typically include the following elements:

- The learning objective (goal) of the contract.
- The steps involved (what the student will do).
- Expectations for the quality of the work (guidelines).
- How the work will be assessed.
- When the contract is to be completed (due date).
- Places for the signatures of the teacher and the student.

Learning Contracts extend, enrich, and/or complement the K-U-Dos. DI teachers often use Learning Contracts with the Curriculum Compacting strategy, as well as any time during the duration of a learning unit when one or more students have achieved proficiency in meeting the K-U-Dos of the unit and are ready to extend their learning. Alternatively, DI teachers can let all student work on extended activities using Learning Contracts when they have finished a unit. Many teachers use Learning Contracts with final projects, especially when there are multiple options.

Learning Contracts: A Negotiation Between Teacher and Student

Teacher Responsibilities

When a student is given the opportunity to do his or her work in the context of a Learning Contract, the first thing a teacher must do is meet with the student to clarify the objectives of the activity, expectations for both behavior and quality of work, the ways in

which the student and teacher will meet regularly to evaluate how the activity is proceeding, and the means by which the student's learning will be assessed. In other words, the teacher provides as much structure as the student needs to be successful, depending on the student's level of readiness, experience in using the process, and ability to work in a self-directed manner.

Shared Responsibilities
Together, the teacher and student negotiate some or all aspects of the work to be done in the Learning Contract. They decide the specifics of what will be learned, the activities that will be used, a timeline for accomplishing all elements of the task, and what the format of the finished demonstration of learning will look like. Both teacher and student sign the contract when negotiations are complete and agreed to.

Student Responsibilities
It's the student's responsibility to complete the agreed-upon work, be responsible for turning work in on time, ask for help when it's needed, self-assess along the way to track his or her own progress, and reflect on what has been learned.

What's the Theory Behind Using Learning Contracts?

Learning Contracts are an excellent tool to help students develop the skills associated with self-directedness. Educational research tells us that when students go about learning something on their own, they are often more engaged. In traditional education, by comparison, learning activities are structured by the teacher. Learners are told what to do, how to do it, and what resources to use.

Additional research also indicates that students learn more deeply and permanently when they use their own initiative. By participating in the process of identifying their own learning needs, planning an activity to meet those needs, selecting resources to use, implementing one's own plans, and evaluating the outcome, students develop a strong sense of ownership for the process as well as for the learning that accompanies it. They have the opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning and exert control.

Learning Contracts function as both a teaching strategy as well as an assessment tool. They are a way in which students of virtually any age in any subject area can work to achieve proficiency in a particular content area or with specific skills while, at the same time, having the opportunity to plan and carry out learning activities in their own way. DI teachers can meet the ZPD (Zone of Proximal Development) of their students and work collaboratively with them to determine the activity.

FAQs

What do contracts look like?
Contracts are typically one-page formats and can take on whatever elements the DI teacher believes will document the important elements of the agreement and help students know what to expect and do.

How long should contract activities last?
This depends on the age, the content, and the experience level of your students. Using Learning Contracts is a procedure that needs to be learned. Once students are familiar

with how it works, the scope and duration of contracts can increase, but only after students have experienced initial success with shorter variations.

Do I have to use Learning Contracts only with one student at a time, or can I use them with the whole class at the same time?
A DI teacher can certainly have an entire class working on Learning Contracts simultaneously. In some ways, this would make teaching the process itself easier since it would be a whole-class activity. On the other hand, the DI teacher would need to find time for individual conferences (negotiations) with every single student before, during, and after the contracts were completed. DI teachers in this situation usually carve out a "Learning Contract" work time each day. Many also incorporate whole-class sharing sessions during which students can share about their trials, tribulations, problems, and solutions, and gain insight from one another.

Suggestions for Smooth Implementation

Make it possible to adjust the Contract after it has been signed. Students who are new to the Learning Contract process may agree to parameters that are not realistic or may find that other circumstances intervene to change the activity or its product. It's a learning process. Students need to understand that when they sign their names to a document, it's a formal commitment. They also need to learn to think through the whole process before they begin. If they are not able to make adjustments along the way, especially in initial forays into using this strategy, they may miss out on that important lesson. The only caveat is that the adjustments must be done formally, with written changes being made to the original contract (as they would in real life), and through the same collaborative process between teacher and student. Plan for a debriefing during which teacher and student document what went well, what they would do differently the next time, and how the process could be improved. If teachers regularly use student input to make future changes, students feel genuinely heard and respected.

Tips From the Trenches

1. If you are short on time, consider providing resources from which students can pick so they don't have to find their own.

2. When using Learning Contracts with the whole class, do the initial negotiations with homogeneous small groups that may share either the same interests or the same readiness levels so that they can collaborate about resources and activity ideas. They can also help each other during work time.

3. If the activity in any Learning Contract involves work outside of the classroom, consider having the parents sign the contract in addition to the teacher and the student. This gives the parents a heads-up that may be helpful for students who are less self-directed or who need to use time usually spent on other activities in order to finish the designated project or activity in the contract.

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Greenwood, S. E. (2002). Contracting Revisited: Lessons Learned in Literacy Differentiation. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, 46*, 338-349.
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Regina Public Schools and Saskatchewan Learning (2003). *Best Practices: Instructional Strategies & Techniques: Learning Contracts*. Retrieved July 20, 2005, at http://wblrd.sk.ca/~bestpractice/contract/assessment.html

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I-SEARCH

S-18

A tool for . . .

Creating a DI Learning Environment	Connecting Assessment & Instruction	Modifying the Curriculum
☐ *DI Classroom Management*	☐ *Readiness-Based DI*	☐ *Modifying Content*
☐ *Developing Self-Directed Learners*	☐ *Interest-Based DI*	☐ *Modifying Processes*
☐ *Flexible Grouping* ___ *Whole Class* ___ *Heterogeneous Small Groups* ___ *Homogeneous Small Groups* ___ *Individuals*	☐ *Learning Profile-Based DI*	☐ *Modifying Products*

The I-Search strategy provides DI teachers and students with a means of orchestrating a *personal quest* for information as compared to the *collaborative quest* you learned about in the Group Investigation strategy. Its goal is self-understanding about how one learns. As such, it is an excellent tool to help students become self-directed learners.

The I-Search process was developed as a means of inviting students into the research process in a way that is engaging and relevant to them. It encourages students to stretch their minds and find new places to gather the information they are researching.

The final report in an I-Search includes not only the information students have learned, but also a reflection about the *process* they used to gather and understand it. Even more interesting is the fact that the final demonstration of what has been learned is always presented in the first person (i.e., "This is what I learned and what I did . . ."). Thus, the outcome of this activity is as much about the information or skills learned as it is about the process each student used to obtain and understand it. The presentation becomes a personal story of the journey of learning each student has taken. When a group of students has the opportunity to hear about the personal learning journeys of other students, they add even greater insight to their own understanding of the learning process. What begins as a personal journey ends by illuminating the experiences of the entire class.

The key element is that students choose topics that are personally interesting to them, and this becomes the motivation for engaging in the successive steps of the strategy.

Overview of the Process

The I-Search process includes four general steps: selecting a topic, finding the information, using the information, and developing a final product.

1. **Teacher** teaches basic support skills (reading for comprehension, main ideas, taking notes, summarizing, reflecting, reading expository and narrative texts, using the dictionary, Internet search skills, etc.).

2. **Students select a topic** that is of interest to them, using the four questions below to guide them in making this selection:

What do I want to know?
Some teachers encourage students to create a general word web of things they are interested in at home, at school, in their family, and in their community. They may discover commonalities among their different interests, and one may emerge that would not have been considered otherwise. Many teachers use a KWL (***K****now,* ***W****ant to Know,* ***L****earned*) chart—like the one the instructor used in Section One to generate course expectations—to help students generate information they already know about their topic.

Where can I find the answer?
Students can use the "W" of the KWL chart to identify and write questions about what they want to learn. Many students who are used to very narrow objective questions may need help in creating higher-order thinking questions to guide their search.

How will I record the information I find?
This step of the process can include any number of different kinds of comprehension strategies, depending on the age, learning profile, and skills of the students. Graphic organizers, drawings, charts, mind maps, written notes; all are possibilities.

How will I show what I have learned?
Students will report what they have learned, but also the story of how they learned it. As they enter into the research process, they need to be aware of this because it affects how and what they record as they are in the midst of collecting and synthesizing their information. Perhaps the most interesting feature of the process is that the report is in first person. Options abound: written reports, oral presentations, poster demonstrations, books, PowerPoint presentations, storyboards, photo essays, a video.

3. **Teacher clarifies deadlines for each segment of the process, which includes:** selecting the topic, collecting the research, studying the research, preparing the final report, giving the final report.

4. **Students complete their research.** Many students will need help identifying the ways they can collect meaningful information. In addition to the typical print resources available in the school media center, I-Search encourages students to do interviews (on which they take notes and for which they prepare questions in advance), Internet searches (which require students to be able to distinguish good resources from less valuable ones), and other resources they might not ordinarily consult: dictionaries, almanacs, atlases, periodicals, and books.

5. **Students prepare to demonstrate what they have learned.** Each display of knowledge typically includes the following four parts:

   (a) A summary of what the student has learned
   (b) An explanation of why the student chose that topic and the questions used to guide the search
   (c) A record of the research activities: what the student did to gather, record, and study the information collected
   (d) Conclusions about what the student discovered as a result of the process

6. **Students demonstrate what they have learned.** Because the scope of these projects is so large, many teachers spend the time necessary to let each student share something about his or her I-Search with the class. Since the I-Search is a "first-person" report, it is especially well-suited to the presentation format.

Helping Struggling Readers

Make sure there are interesting resources available at the appropriate grade level. Consider letting partners who share interests complete the research and reading together. Provide scaffolding for the collection and recording of information so that part of the process does not become overwhelming. Be very specific about expectations and check in with struggling students frequently to give support and guidance. Invite struggling students to use the help of parents, other adults, or older children to help them read the materials collected. Suggest that if students do interviews, they tape record them. Later, students can ask for help in recording the most important information they gained from them.

Helping ELL (English Language Learner) Readers

Consider many of the suggestions given for struggling readers. Also, give students a chance to respond to what they hear and understand graphically. When possible, provide information in the student's original language first, then ask the student to read it in English. Spend extra time making sure the student is aware of important vocabulary words. Allow the student to depict his response through pictures, diagrams, or other symbols, or to dictate his final report for someone else to write.

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CURRICULUM COMPACTING

S-19

A tool for . . .

Creating a DI Learning Environment	Connecting Assessment & Instruction	Modifying the Curriculum
☐ *DI Classroom Management*	☐ *Readiness-Based DI*	☐ *Modifying Content*
☐ *Developing Self-Directed Learners*	☐ *Interest-Based DI*	☐ *Modifying Processes*
☐ *Flexible Grouping* ___ *Whole Class* ___ *Heterogeneous Small Groups* ___ *Homogeneous Small Groups* ___ *Individuals*	☐ *Learning Profile-Based DI*	☐ *Modifying Products*

Curriculum Compacting is a DI strategy that provides DI teachers with a way to differentiate in an individualized way for high-ability learners. Although this strategy is frequently used with gifted learners in a mixed-ability classroom, it is by no means an option solely for gifted students. There are often times when students, gifted or not, come to our classrooms with a high degree of proficiency in a topic that other students are just learning.

Curriculum Compacting is especially useful when there is a student whose readiness level regarding a particular unit of study is different than that of the rest of the class. When there are not enough Tiers to accommodate this student with an adequate degree of challenge, it is more beneficial for the student to pursue an alternative activity that provides an appropriate degree of challenge. Just as students at or below grade level need activities within their Zones of Proximal Development (ZPDs), so, too, do advanced learners above grade level.

This strategy was developed by Renzulli and Reis, and includes three basic steps:

1. Pre-assessment at the beginning of a unit

2. Elimination of content or skills that students already know

3. Replacing this content or skills with alternative topics or projects (Stepanek, 1999)

Pre-Assessment

To make compacting work, the DI teacher has to know exactly which K-U-Dos a unit of study will address. The pre-assessment must be based on those key concepts and skills. The pre-assessment needs to be comprehensive and challenging enough to make sure that students who score well actually *do* know the key concepts and skills. Some teachers use

end-of-unit tests, others use their own prepared tests from previous years, essay questions, or brief teacher-student interviews to make this determination.

Teacher-Student Collaboration

Students who have demonstrated their proficiency on the pre-test then collaborate with their teacher to determine what alternative activities will replace those that will be eliminated. Some students may be capable of working on an independent project of their own design, while others may need the teacher to assign a specific project or activity. The more a DI teacher knows about the interests and learning profile preferences of a student, the better the teacher will be able to guide or provide the student's alternative activities. The more that student has demonstrated skills of self-directedness, the greater the latitude the DI teacher can give the student in selecting and working on an independent project.

Students who "compact out" of a unit do not necessarily absent themselves from all activities that the rest of the class is completing. There may be certain skills or key understandings among those for which they were pre-assessed that they still need to work on. In this case, these students would rejoin the class for the activities associated with those specific skills or understandings. In other cases, the DI teacher might simply assign the student activities related to those skills or understandings which the student would complete independently. There might be times when the student would join the rest of the class for discussions, problem-solving activities, or inquiry-based activities.

Grading and Tracking Issues

Curriculum Compacting is not "extra credit" work. Students who compact out do not get extra credit for their compacting work, nor is it graded. Compacting students will rejoin the class when it is time to take whatever final assessment the teacher provides. The grade received—just as for other students in the classroom—goes in the grade book.

Though the compacting work is not graded, neither is it a free-for-all without supervision or student responsibility. The keys to making Curriculum Compacting work depend on two practices: (a) making sure that the compacting work is engaging and appropriately challenging for the student and (b) keeping accurate records of what the student has agreed to do. Smith and Renzulli suggest using a document for each compacting student that might look something like the example in Figure 1.

Smith and Renzulli also suggest using a contract to make sure "up front" that students understand what they are expected to do, when the work is to be completed, and any special guidelines involved. The simple, generic Compacting Contract you will see in Figure 2 covers several different variables which the teacher can check off as needed.

With parent volunteers or paraprofessional support, students as young as first graders can take part in Curriculum Compacting. It can be used with virtually any grade level or subject area. As Auld et al. explain:

> Curriculum compacting is a very "real" way to meet the needs of the high-ability learners in your classroom. As with any change in your classroom, you must remember to start slowly. Try compacting with only one or two students in one subject area at first. Once you become familiar with the process you will be more comfortable in using it. Curriculum compacting will allow you the freedom to work

with these students with only a minimal amount of disruption to your class. In turn, you are providing a great learning experience for high-ability learners. (2000, p. 41)

Compacting Agreement

Student Name: _____

K-U-Dos for this Unit:	Documentation of Mastery	Alternative Activity

Adapted from J. Stepanek, (1999), p. 36.

Figure 1

Variation: Most Difficult First

A variation of the Curriculum Compacting strategy that can be used especially well in mathematics classrooms is called "Most Difficult First" (Weinbrenner, 1992). It can be used on a smaller scale, such as with individual assignments as opposed to entire units of study. The teacher identifies the five (this is an arbitrary number) most difficult problems in an assignment. Students have the option of completing these five only instead of doing the entire assignment. If students are successful, they are given free time to work on an alternative activity (ungraded) that interests them and is related in some way to the K-U-Dos of the course. This option is made available to all students in the class.

Compacting Contract

Student Name: _____

Agreements:

☐ The student agrees to complete the project described below and share it with the rest of the class by this date: _____.

☐ The student will take part in class learning activities when given one day of notice by the teacher.

☐ The student agrees to demonstrate competency with any assessment activity in order to continue this arrangement for subsequent lessons within this unit or subsequent units.

☐ The student agrees to complete additional independent study about the following key concepts or skills:

Compact Project or Learning Activity Description:

Special Guidelines (for student's responsibilities as an independent learner while teacher is involved with the rest of the class):

Teacher's
Signature

Student's
Signature

Adapted from S. Weinbrenner and P. Espeland, *Teaching Gifted Kids in the Regular Classroom*, (2000), Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit.

Figure 2

References:

Auld, C., Brown, J., Duffy, M., Palter, N., Hammond, T., Jensen, D. et al. (2000). *Promising Curriculum and Instructional Practices for High-Ability Learners Manual.* Lincoln, NE: Nebraska State Department of Education.

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King-Shaver, B., & Hunter, A. (2003). *Differentiated Instruction in the English Classroom: Content, Process, Product, and Assessment* (pp. 35-36). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

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TIERED INSTRUCTION

S-20

A tool for . . .

Creating a DI Learning Environment	Connecting Assessment & Instruction	Modifying the Curriculum
☐ *DI Classroom Management*	☐ *Readiness-Based DI*	☐ *Modifying Content*
☐ *Developing Self-Directed Learners*	☐ *Interest-Based DI*	☐ *Modifying Processes*
☐ *Flexible Grouping* ___ *Whole Class* ___ *Heterogeneous Small Groups* ___ *Homogeneous Small Groups* ___ *Individuals*	☐ *Learning Profile-Based DI*	☐ *Modifying Products*

Carol Ann Tomlinson refers to the Tiered Instruction strategy as the "meat and potatoes" of differentiated instruction. DI teachers can learn to use this strategy to provide groups of students at two or more (rarely more than four) levels of readiness with K-U-Dos-based lessons that are appropriately challenging and engaging.

DI teachers' success in implementing the Tiered Instruction strategy relies on having many "building blocks" of DI in place: a thorough understanding of the FRAME-CAB principles, DI classroom management procedures, skills associated with the DI teacher's role as facilitator and collaborator, an understanding of The Model for Differentiating Instruction, experience and understanding regarding DI strategies, and students who have begun to develop skills of self-directedness.

Tiered Instruction is a mega-strategy, offering DI teachers the potential for incorporating six types of differentiation within one planning process: readiness-, interest- and learning profile-based DI, plus content-, process-, and product-based DI. With so many variables from which to build, tiered lessons vary widely in complexity and scope. Yet all tiers meet the same four basic criteria:

1. Grouping decisions are based on assessed learning needs.
2. All tiers are based on the same key knowledge and skills.
3. Appropriate challenge and adequate support are provided.
4. Activities at all tier levels are equally engaging.

There are three types of tiered lessons: interest-based, learning profile-based, and readiness-based. DI teachers can use the Decision Points questions (WHY? WHAT? HOW?) to help them make important decisions regarding any tiers they develop. In interest-based tiers, DI teachers use students' interests to "get at" content or skills in a way that is engaging and motivating. In learning profile-based tiers, DI teachers use innate skills and mindsets associated with students' learning profile preferences to help students acquire and practice, and demonstrate what they have learned in a way that makes sense to them. In readiness-based tiered lessons, DI teachers create tiers as a means of adjusting the content, processes, and/or products of a lesson in a way that

provides students with learning experiences that are at an appropriate degree of challenge.

Decision Points for Tiered Lessons

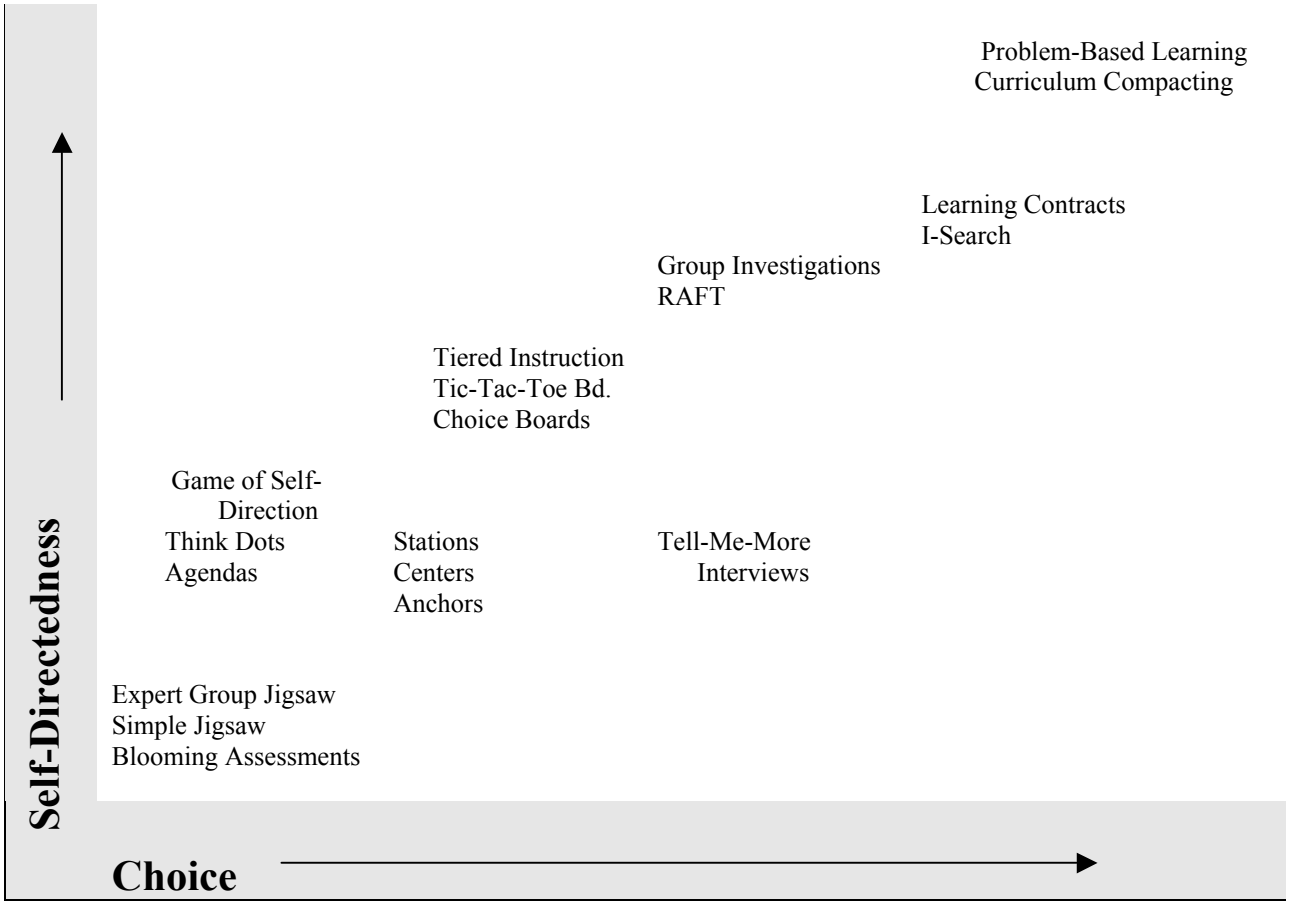
WHY?	What is your target for the tiers you are creating: readiness, interest, and/or learning profiles?	
	How many groups does your assessment indicate for this lesson?	
WHAT?	What aspects of the tiers do you need to differentiate in order to provide your students with appropriate challenge plus adequate support: content, process, and/or product?	
	CONTENT Needs:	*Will students in all tiers use the same materials? Do you need to scaffold materials in any way to provide students with access to the content in the materials?*
	PROCESS Needs:	*Will students in all tiers do essentially the same activity as a means of processing the content, or will some tiers have different processing activities?*
	PRODUCT Needs:	*Is there a culminating demonstration of learning in these tiers? If so, are the tiers differentiated by readiness, interest, learning profile, or a combination of these?*
HOW?	Can you identify any specific DI tools (other than the Tiered Instruction strategy) you will consider using to orchestrate student learning in these tiers?	

Tiered Instruction Lesson Planner

Title:			
Grade Level:			
Subject Area:			
Key Understanding:			
Target: (Circle)	*Readiness*	*Interest*	*Learning Profile*

	Generate three interest-based tiers that would help your students understand or demonstrate the key understanding for this lesson. Remember that interest-based tiers are at the same degree of challenge. The variable is the topic.	
Tier I	CONTENT Needs:	
	PROCESS Needs:	
	PRODUCT Needs:	
Tier II	CONTENT Needs:	
	PROCESS Needs:	
	PRODUCT Needs:	
Tier III	CONTENT Needs:	
	PROCESS Needs:	
	PRODUCT Needs:	

Success Ladder



The DI strategies taught in this course offer students varying degrees of choice and responsibility. As students learn to work independently within various degrees of structure, they gradually become more self-directed.

"A student's education must provide experiences by which students gradually learn to take charge of their own learning, to become increasingly more aware of their behaviors and their effects on others, and to strengthen their fortitude and resilience to self-correct and self-modify. Thus, the school becomes the launchpad for a life of self-directed learning."
— Art Costa & Bena Kallick, educators and authors