**Differentiated Strategies for Inclusiveness**

Differentiated instruction:

* encourages inclusion of all students
* provides instruction across all levels of student achievement and ability
* addresses different learning styles
* allows teachers to reach all of the students some of the time
* allows for diversity among students
* fosters relationships and self-worth
* meets social, emotional, and academic needs
* increases self-efficacy

Principles of a Differentiated Classroom:

* Learning Experiences are based on diagnosis of student readiness, interest, and/or learning profile
* Content, Activities (Process), and Products are developed in response to varying needs of varied learners
* Teaching and Learning are focused on key concepts, understandings, and skills
* All students participate in work that is engaging and "respectful" (appropriate to student readiness, interest, and/or learning profile)
* Teacher and students work together to ensure continual engagement and challenge for each learner
* The teacher coordinates use of time, space, and activities
* Flexible grouping ensures consistently fluid working arrangements including whole class learning, pairs, triads and quads, student-selected groups, teacher-selected groups, and random groups
* Time use is flexible in response to student needs
* A variety of management strategies (such as learning centers, interest centers, compacting, contracts, independent study, tiered assignments, learning buddies, etc.) is used to help target instruction to student needs
* Clearly established individual and group criteria provide guidance toward success
* Students are assessed in a variety of appropriate ways to demonstrate their own thought and growth
* Incorporates thematic and topical instruction (they are not the same)

Elements of Differentiated Instruction

Teachers can differentiate

product

process

Content

according to students’

Learning styles

Interests

Readiness

through a range of instructional and management strategies such as adjusting questions, anchor activities, interest centres, learning centers, graphic organizers, independent projects, learning contracts, rubrics, scaffolding, student choice, think-pair-share etc..

Differentiation of instruction

is a teachers’ response to learners needs

Guided by general principles of differentiation such as

Appropriate tasks

Ongoing assessment and adjustment

Flexible grouping

**Flexible grouping**

**WHAT IS FLEXIBLE GROUPING?**

Flexible grouping is a range of grouping students together for delivering instruction. This can be as a whole class, a small group, or with a partner. Flexible grouping creates temporary groups that can last an hour, a week, or even a month. It’s not permanent, but it is a temporary way for students to work together in a variety of ways and configurations depending upon activity and learning outcomes.  
  
In order to successfully differentiate instruction through flexible grouping, teachers must consider student learning profiles. In order to promote maximum learning, students need to move frequently among groups according to their specific needs.

* Flexible groups provide opportunities for students to be members of more than one group.
* The key to successful grouping is to monitor student progress.
* For example, a student may be grouped with one set of students during a supported-reading lesson and grouped with another set of students during a word-sorting activity.
* Flexible grouping appeals to students who prefer working with a variety of classmates rather than with the same students all the time.
* In small groups, struggling readers receive explicit, intensive instruction they need, as well as opportunities for collaborative work with classmates who are more proficient readers.
* The key to successful flexible grouping is to monitor student progress. Determine memberships of groups based on student skills, prior knowledge, and interests

**Guidelines for Managing Flexible Groups**

1.     Before grouping students for any activity, ask yourself: "What is the learning outcome of this activity and what is the best type of grouping to meet this learning outcome?" Then group your students accordingly.

2.     Use various types of assessment data to help you in forming groups.

3.     Use some kind of record-keeper so you and your students will know at a glance who is in each group for a particular activity. Use color coding, numbers, clothespins, index cards, checklists, charts or any other system that works for you.

4.     Give explicit instructions about the task each group is going to do before the groups begin to work.

5.     Classroom rules for group work should be written, posted, and understood by all.

6.     Model and practice procedures and routines for getting into groups so that movement becomes easy and automatic.

7.     Be clear about procedures and routines used during group work. These usually involve distributing, collecting and storing materials, moving chairs and/or desks for group work, getting help from the teacher, and monitoring/dealing with the noise level in the classroom.

8.     Don't give students too long at any given time to work in a group. The length of time partly depends on the ages of your students and grade level of your class. It also depends on the maturity and attention spans of your students.

9.     Have a specific procedure for stopping group work and returning to a whole class setting. The more your students practice and do this, the less confusion and disruption there will be.

10.  It is helpful for each student to have some type of Learning Log to record what he or she did in the group on a particular day. You may also want to use a group self-assessment instrument.

**Think-Pair-Share**

**Think**-**pair**-**share** (TPS) is a collaborative learning strategy in which students work together to solve a problem or answer a question about an assigned reading. This technique requires students to (1)**think** individually about a topic or answer to a question; and (2) **share** ideas with classmates.The Think-Pair-Share strategy is designed to differentiate instruction by providing students time and structure for thinking on a given topic, enabling them to formulate individual ideas and share these ideas with a peer. This learning strategy promotes classroom participation by encouraging a high degree of pupil response, rather than using a basic recitation method in which a teacher poses a question and one student offers a response. Additionally, this strategy provides an opportunity for all students to share their thinking with at least one other student which, in turn, increases their sense of involvement in classroom learning.  Think-Pair-Share can also be used as in information assessment tool; as students discuss their ideas, the teacher can circulate and listen to the conversations taking place and respond accordingly.

In this strategy, a problem is posed, students have time to *think*about it individually, and then they work in *pairs*to solve the problem and *share*their ideas with the class.  Think-Pair-Share is easy to use within a planned lesson, but is also an easy strategy to use for spur-of-the-moment discussions.  This strategy can be used for a wide variety of daily classroom activities such as concept reviews, discussion questions, partner reading, brainstorming, quiz reviews, topic development, etc.  Think-Pair-Share helps students develop conceptual understanding of a topic, develop the ability to filter information and draw conclusions, and develop the ability to consider other points of view.

Think:  Teachers begin by asking a specific higher-level question about the text or topic students will be discussing. Students "think" about what they know or have learned about the topic for a given amount of time (usually 1-3 minutes).

 Pair:  Each student should be paired with another student. Teachers may choose whether to assign pairs or let students pick their own partner.  Remember to be sensitive to learners' needs (reading skills, attention skills, language skills) when creating pairs.  Students share their thinking with their partner, discuss ideas, and ask questions of their partner about their thoughts on the topic (2-5 minutes).

Share:  Once partners have had ample time to share their thoughts and have a discussion, teachers expand the "share" into a whole-class discussion. Allow each group to choose who will present their thoughts, ideas, and questions they had to the rest of the class.  After the class “share,” you may choose to have pairs reconvene to talk about how their thinking perhaps changed as a result of the “share” element.

**Steps**

• Decide on how to organize students into pairs.

• Pose a discussion topic or pose a question.

• Give students at least 10 seconds to think on their own. (“think time”).

 • Ask students to pair with a partner and share their thinking.

• Call on a few students to share their ideas with the rest of the class. Hints and Management Ideas

• Pre-assign partners. Rather than waiting until the discussion time, indicate in advance who students’ partners will be. Otherwise, the focus may become one of finding a partner rather than of thinking about the topic at hand.

• Change partners. Students should be given an opportunity to think with a variety of partners.

• Give “think time”.

• Monitor the discussions. It is important to listen to some of the discussions so that common misconceptions can be addressed and unique ideas shared with the whole group.

**Benefits of Think-Pair-Share**

• When students have appropriate “think time”, the quality of their responses improves.

• Students are actively engaged in the thinking.

• Thinking becomes more focussed when it is discussed with a partner.

 • More of the critical thinking is retained after a lesson if students have an opportunity to discuss and reflect on the topic.

• Many students find it safer or easier to enter into a discussion with another classmate, rather than with a large group.

• No specific materials are needed for the strategy, so it can easily be incorporated into lessons.

 • Building on the ideas of others is an important skill for students to learn.