



Differentiating Instruction

Story Time!

"A Tale of Three Ralphs"

By Miriam Minkowitz

Illustrated by Debra Solomon



A Tale of Three Ralphs

by Miriam Minkowitz
Illustrated by Debra Solomon



Once upon a time there lived a husband and wife who decided that if they ever had children, they would do everything in their power to be the fairest parents in the entire world. "To make sure that we bring up all our children equally fairly," they vowed, "let's make one Golden Rule: EACH CHILD WILL BE TREATED *EXACTLY ALIKE*—WITH ABSOLUTELY NO EXCEPTIONS."

Soon the husband and wife had a little baby son. They named him Ralph, and they loved and cherished him very deeply. He grew and grew, and the little family was incredibly happy.

When Ralph was three years old, his parents had a second child. This time it was a baby girl. Remembering their rule to treat each of their children *exactly alike*—with absolutely *no exceptions*—they named her Ralph also. For a moment, they thought about calling her Ralph the Second.

"But that's not *exactly* what we called our first child," protested the husband.

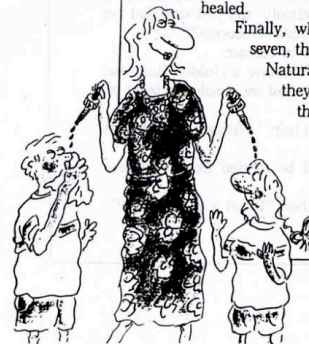
"You're right," agreed the wife. "It wouldn't be fair." So they decided to call the new baby just plain Ralph.

As time went on, no matter what happened, the parents kept their promise to treat each of their children exactly alike. And so, when their first Ralph developed a runny nose, they gave *both* children nose drops. And when their second Ralph fell down while roller-skating, both children went around with bandaged knees until the second Ralph's cut was completely healed.

Finally, when the first Ralph was ten, and the second Ralph was seven, the proud parents had a third child—a beautiful baby daughter.

Naturally enough, they named her Ralph, and soon afterward, they brought her home from the hospital. It was then that the husband and wife first began to notice that their decision to treat each of their children *exactly alike*—with absolutely *no exceptions*—was causing a few problems.

For one thing, since they wanted to keep newborn Ralph in diapers, they had to make the other Ralphs wear diapers as well. And, since newborn Ralph couldn't walk,





Is It Fair to Differentiate?

Is it fair NOT to differentiate?



Questions Addressed



- **What is differentiation?**
- **Why do teachers differentiate instruction?**
- **For whom do we differentiate?**
- **When do we differentiate?**
- **How do we differentiate?**
- **What about students with dyslexia or other disabilities?**



What Is Differentiation?

“Matching instruction to meet the different needs of learners in a given classroom that includes small groups and increased practice opportunities...”

— Florida Center for Reading Research, 2006



What Is Differentiated Instruction?

“A teacher proactively plans varied approaches to what students need to learn, how they will learn it, and/or how they can express what they have learned in order to increase the likelihood that each student will learn as much as he or she can as efficiently as possible.”

— Tomlinson, 2003, p. 151



Elements of Differentiated Instruction

- **Content:**
What knowledge and skills students need to master
- **Process:**
How students use activities to master the content
- **Product:**
How students express their learning



Why Do We Differentiate?

- **Access to learning**
- **Motivation, engagement, relevance**
- **Efficiency of learning**
- **Appropriate level of challenge**
- **Opportunity to express learning**



Why Differentiate Instruction?

Gifted and Talented	Gifted and Talented	Above Average	Above Average	Above Average	Above Average
At Grade Level	At Grade Level	At Grade Level	At Grade Level	At Grade Level	At Grade Level
At Grade Level	At Grade Level	At Grade Level	At Grade Level	At Grade Level	At Grade Level
Struggling	Struggling	Struggling	Struggling	Disabilities	Disabilities



What the Research Says

- **Traditional whole-class lecture formats are ineffective for the following:**
 - **Individualizing instruction**
 - **Providing sufficient learning support**
- **Small-group differentiated instruction leads to increases in reading achievement.**



Benefits of Differentiated Instruction

- **Effective for gifted-and-talented students and for struggling students**
- **Specifically targets students' learning strengths and needs**
- **Improves the reading achievement of struggling readers**
- **Maximizes student engagement and opportunities to provide immediate, specific feedback**



For Whom Do We Differentiate?

- **Differentiate for any student who needs a different approach to learning.**
- **Everyone has different strengths and weaknesses. There will come a time when each of us needs a different approach.**



Why Some Students Struggle

- **Genetically related neurological factors:**
 - **Dyslexia**
 - **Dysgraphia**
 - **Attention deficit disorder**
- **Environmental factors:**
 - **Lack of adequate instruction**
 - **Insufficient early language experiences**



Students' Diverse Needs

- **Linguistic comprehension and vocabulary knowledge:**
 - **Extent of conceptual and factual knowledge**
 - **Use of cognitive strategies to “fix” comprehension difficulties**
 - **Reasoning and inferential skills**
- **Accurate and fluent reading skills:**
 - **Limited phonemic awareness**
 - **Lack of letter knowledge**
- **Motivation to understand and interest in reading activities**



Effects of Early Reading Difficulties

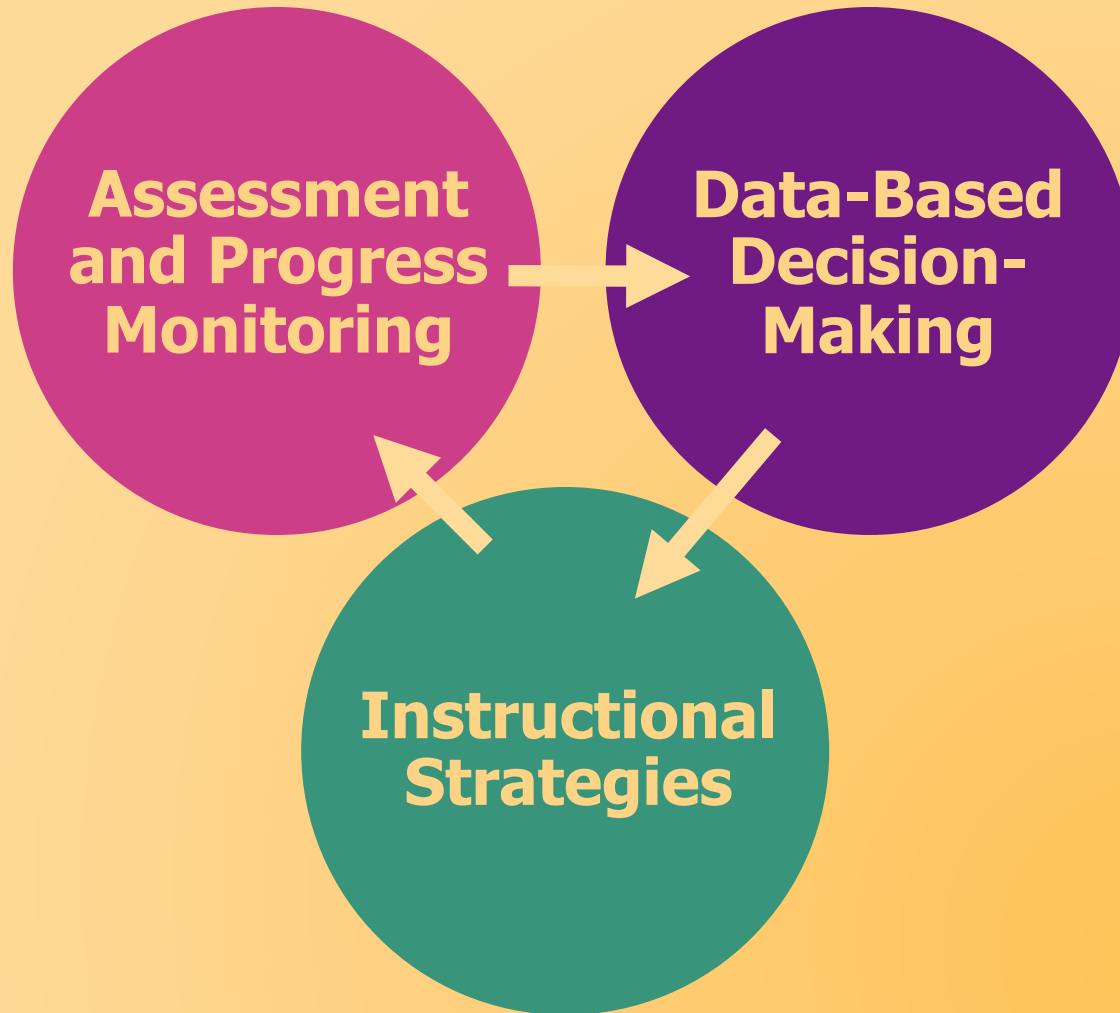
- **Students who have difficulties in the beginning stages of learning to read often fall further and further behind their peers.**
- **There is a 90 percent chance that a student who has reading problems at the end of first grade will still struggle with reading at the end of fourth grade.**



When to Differentiate Instruction

- **Intervention should begin in kindergarten and continue in first grade.**
- **First-grade teachers can make a difference!**

How Do We Differentiate Instruction?





Instructional Strategies



- Differentiate overall instruction by adapting one or several of the following:
 - Content
 - Activity
 - Grouping
 - Delivery
 - Materials
- How did you modify instruction in one of these areas?



**Instructional
Strategies**



Teachers Who Differentiate

- **Provide specific alternatives for individuals to learn as deeply and quickly as possible**
- **Assume students have different road maps for learning**
- **Hold students to high standards**
- **Group students to positively influence levels of individual student engagement and progress**



Teachers Who Differentiate (cont.)

- **Ensure that students do the following:**
 - **Work harder than they meant to**
 - **Achieve more than they thought they could**
 - **Believe that learning involves risk, error, and triumph**
- **Share that success stems from hard and informed work**



Differentiation Is a Necessity

- **For some students all of the time**
- **For all students at least some of the time**

Scaffolding Instruction

Adjusting instruction to meet students' specific needs





What Is Dyslexia?



“Dyslexia means a disorder of constitutional origin manifested by a difficulty in learning to read, write, or spell, despite conventional instruction, adequate intelligence, and sociocultural opportunity.”

— Texas Education Agency, 2014, p. 8



What Is Dyslexia? (cont.)



“Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.”

— Lyon, Shaywitz, & Shaywitz, 2003, p. 2



Dyslexia Facts

IS

- **A collection of language-based difficulties**
- **A neurobiological difference**
- **At all intellectual and socioeconomic levels**
- **Extant, despite good instruction**
- **Found to affect other areas, such as writing, math, sequential skills, and emotions**

IS NOT

- **Seeing letters backward**
- **Due to lack of motivation**
- **Caused by laziness**
- **Identified only in third grade or later**
- **Limited to English speakers**
- **Untreatable**



Identify Dyslexia Early!



Your first-grade students can be identified for dyslexia—in fact, research suggests that kindergarten is not too early.

“It is important that the school district NOT delay identification and intervention processes until second or third grade...”

— Texas Education Agency, 2014, p. 13



Common Risk Factors



- **At your table, read aloud the common risk factors associated with dyslexia on pages 9 and 10 of *The Dyslexia Handbook*:**
 - **Volunteer one: Read preschool.**
 - **Volunteer two: Read kindergarten and first grade.**
- **Think of your most challenging student.**
- **Does your student have any of these characteristics?**



Highest-Impact Practices

- **Provide explicit and systematic instruction.**
- **Provide more time and practice opportunities.**
- **Target knowledge and skills that have the highest impact on learning to read.**
- **Provide instruction in small, same-ability groups.**
- **Maximize students' engagement and participation.**



Instruction for Students With Dyslexia



- Each school must provide an identified student an instructional program.
- The essential components of reading must be addressed.
- The intervention must include the following:
 - Multisensory instruction
 - Systematic, cumulative, explicit instruction
 - Synthetic and analytic instruction



Differentiating Instruction Strategies



Find and read Handout 2: Differentiating Instruction Strategies.



Differentiated Instruction Facts



DOES

- Adapt curriculum and instruction to meet the needs of each student
- Provide a variety of ways to explore content and receive information
- Provide varied strategies to make meaning of ideas and information
- Provide multiple opportunities to demonstrate learning
- Plan specific and adaptive content, processes, and products

DOES NOT

- Use a “one-size-fits-all” curriculum and instruction model
- Make all tasks the same
- “Get through” or “cover” the required materials and information
- Give students extra problems or assignments as they finish their work
- Grade students “harder” or “easier” than others



Examples and Nonexamples of Differentiated Instruction



Examples

- Using assessment data to plan instruction
- Teaching targeted small groups
- Using flexible grouping patterns
- Matching text level to student ability
- Tailoring independent projects to student ability

Nonexamples

- Using only whole-group instruction
- Using small groups that never change
- Using the same reading text with all students
- Using the same independent seatwork assignments for the entire class



The Importance of Reading

“Reading is the fundamental skill upon which all formal education depends. Research now shows that a child who doesn’t learn the reading basics early is unlikely to learn them at all. Any child who doesn’t learn to read early and well will not easily master other skills and knowledge and is unlikely to ever flourish in school or in life.”

— Moats, 1999, p. 5



Oral Language Development



Oral Language Development

“Research consistently demonstrates that the more children know about language...the better equipped they are to succeed in reading.”

— Burns, Griffin, & Snow, 1999, p. 8

- **Oral language involves both speaking and listening and includes vocabulary development.**
- **Children need numerous opportunities to engage in frequent, meaningful, and focused conversations with responsive peers and adults.**



Essential Language Systems

Phonology

the basic sound
units of language

Vocabulary

knowledge of
words and their
meanings

Grammar

system for combining
words into phrases and
sentences that make
sense

Pragmatics

appropriate use of
language to
communicate
effectively (includes
extended discourse)



The Language-Literacy Connection

Oral Language

Reading and Writing

Phonology

Alphabetic principle (how sounds in spoken words are represented by letters in written words)

Vocabulary

- Listening comprehension
- Word recognition
- Reading comprehension

Grammar

- Listening comprehension
- Reading comprehension

Pragmatics

- Listening and reading comprehension
- Written composition
- Understanding what teachers say



Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills



ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS (TEKS)



1(27) Students use comprehension skills to listen attentively to others in formal and informal settings.

1(28) Students speak clearly and to the point, using the conventions of language.

1(29) Students work productively with others in teams.



A Language-Centered Classroom



Teachers

- Engage students in extended conversations
- Encourage students to tell and retell stories and events
- Discuss a wide range of topics and word meanings
- Use new and unusual words
- Ask open-ended questions
- Give explicit guidance in vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation
- Encourage language play

Students

- Explore and experiment with language
- Name and describe objects, actions, emotions, and locations
- Ask and answer *wh-* and *how* questions
- Hear appropriate models of language use
- Discuss topics of interest to them



Optimal Language Interactions

Small, partitioned spaces

- **Higher-quality verbal interactions**
- **More cooperative play**
- **Greater use of language-related activities**

Large, open spaces

- **Poor language interactions**
- **Less use of language-related activities**



Diverse Experiences

Scaffold

Adjust instruction to account for the differences in students' knowledge and experiences.





Scaffolding Students' Language



- **Model the use of extended language.**
- **Use questions and prompts (or cues).**
- **Restate and expand ideas using new vocabulary and sentence patterns.**
- **Request clarification and elaboration.**
- **Promote questions among students.**
- **Provide feedback to encourage, explain, and evaluate responses.**




Consider Diversity: English Language Learners

- **Ground instruction in existing native language development.**
- **Increase accessibility to the instructional language.**
- **Provide authentic opportunities for collaboration and language use.**
- **Provide models of academic language.**
- **Provide structured English vocabulary and language instruction.**



Progress Monitoring

- 
- **Monitor oral language development by listening to individual students' language.**
 - **Adapt instruction to meet individual needs.**



Oral Language Lessons



- **Choose a children's book.**
- **Read Lesson 1 on the Oral Language Lesson handout.**
- **Using the Sharing Hand Planning Guide, write six questions.**
- **Practice the lesson.**



Listening Comprehension



What Is Listening Comprehension?

- **Refers to students' understanding of stories and other texts that are read aloud to them**
- **Lays the foundation for students to later be able to “understand what they read, remember what they read, and communicate with others about what they read”**

— National Institute for Literacy, 2001, p. 48




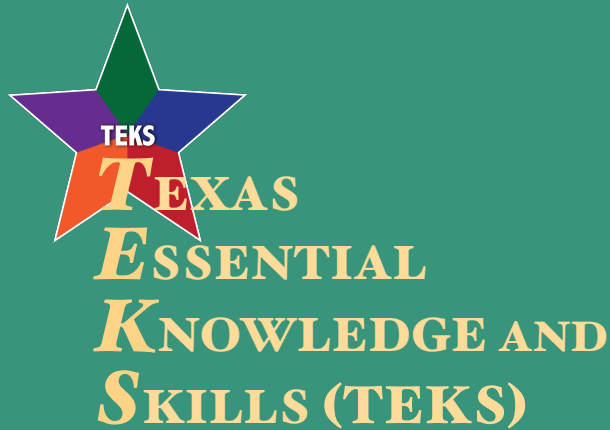


Listening Comprehension

Listening comprehension is enhanced as students listen to stories that are read aloud, participate in discussions of stories, and engage in other literacy-related activities.



Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills



Listening and Speaking:
1(27) Students use
comprehension skills to
listen attentively to
others in formal and
informal settings.

Reading:
1(4) Students
comprehend a variety of
texts drawing on useful
strategies as needed.



Listening Comprehension Instruction

When you read aloud, encourage children to...

- **Make predictions**
- **Answer questions about the book's content**
- **Read and talk along**
- **Share their own interests related to the book's content**
- **Ask questions of you and their peers**
- **Re-enact or retell the story**



Research-Based Comprehension Instruction

Comprehension instruction can include showing children how to...

- **Monitor their comprehension**
- **Summarize**
- **Recognize story structure**
- **Use graphic organizers**
- **Answer and generate questions**



Monitoring Understanding



“Thinking aloud” models how good readers monitor their understanding of what they are reading.

Demonstrate...

- **How you picture in your mind what is happening in a story or book**
- **How you reread certain parts**
- **How you stop and summarize what has happened**
- **How you regularly make predictions**



Reading Aloud Different Types of Texts



Narratives

Tell a story using a familiar story structure that includes a beginning, a middle, and an end

Expository (or informational) texts

Tell about one or more topics in different and varied ways



Reading Aloud Different Types of Texts (cont.)

Reading narrative and expository texts aloud to students helps them...

- **Make connections to real-life experiences and build background knowledge**
- **Increase their vocabulary and understand different types of books**



Teaching Narrative Story Structure

Story elements generally include...

- **The setting and a character or characters with a problem to solve or goal to achieve introduced at the beginning of a story**
- **A series of plot episodes in the middle of a story**
- **The resolution of the problem or the attainment of the goal at the end of the story**



Teaching Expository Text Structure

The organizational structure of expository texts can differ from one text to another and sometimes within a single passage.



Graphic Organizers



- **Can guide students' thinking and help them remember important elements and information in both narrative and expository texts**
- **Can be used before, during, and after reading**



Effective Questioning

Effective
questioning
includes...

- **Giving students a purpose for listening and reading**
- **Focusing students' attention on a topic and what is to be learned about the topic**
- **Helping students think about what they hear read aloud**
- **Encouraging students to be aware of what they do and do not understand**
- **Helping students to relate the content of what they are learning to what they already know**



Scaffolding: Using Different Types of Questions



Literal Questions

Encourage students to become aware of the information in the text

Open-Ended Questions

Encourage students to extend their thinking about the text and to use more elaborate language as they discuss the text



Asking Questions Along the Continuum



- **Write several questions to ask before reading and several questions to ask after reading.**
- **At your table, role-play a read-aloud session.**





Consider Diversity: English Language Learners

- **ELLs might struggle with comprehension because of limits in vocabulary and background knowledge, as well as structural differences between languages.**
- **During listening comprehension instruction, ELLs learn to do the following:**
 - **Derive meaning from text**
 - **Talk about text**
 - **Focus on what they are learning**



Consider Diversity: English Language Learners (cont.)



- **Activate and build background knowledge.**
- **Preview new vocabulary, concepts, and linguistic structures.**
- **Use graphic organizers and think-alouds.**
- **Summarize, discuss text, and monitor comprehension frequently.**
- **Create supportive environments.**



Progress Monitoring: Listening Comprehension



Informal ways
of knowing
whether students
understand what
is being read to
them include...

- **Asking questions that will help students clarify the text**
- **Discussing the text**
- **Observing students' behavior and listening to their responses**
- **Having students retell or dramatize the story**



The Importance of Comprehension

“Even teachers in the primary grades can begin to build the foundation for reading comprehension. Reading is a complex process that develops over time... emphasize text comprehension from the beginning, rather than waiting until students have mastered ‘the basics’ of reading...Beginning readers, as well as more advanced readers, must understand that the ultimate goal of reading is comprehension.”

— National Institute for Literacy, 2001, p. 55



Carry It Through



Complete Handout 13 with your partner for the last three sessions of the Academy:

- **Differentiating Instruction**
- **Oral Language Development**
- **Listening Comprehension**