

INTRODUCTION

OH, THE MANY HATS WE WEAR DAILY AS EDUCATORS. HOW MANY roles must we assume in order to meet the unique needs of our students? We know that one style does not fit everyone because each individual comes to each learning experience with a unique bank of prior knowledge and experiences. We consider the learner's needs and choose the most appropriate style for each activity or event.

In these daily activities, we wear a variety of hats for each occasion. We are aware of the need for them to be appropriate, so we search for the right one!

Hats are worn for specific jobs and special occasions. For example, police officers, firefighters, and members of the armed services wear uniform hats. Educators wear uniform hats, too, as they carry out federal, state, and local mandates and standards. The established standards provide a framework for expectations and responsibilities in each grade level. It is important for educators to become familiar with the uniform hats needed for their state, district, and school. They must keep these accessible at all times to carry out mandates. While these hats are passed to teachers from outside the classroom, the way a teacher chooses to wear them while teaching the standards is usually in their control.

Differentiated management challenges educators to wear a variety of management hats daily as they adapt to the students' unique needs. Most teachers have a large collection of comfortable hats—or favorite instructional approaches. Often, a teacher's favorite, and most comfortable, instructional hat does not coordinate with a particular student's strengths or preferred method of learning. When this occurs, the teacher must wear an uncomfortable hat in order to reach that learner.

Responsive educators must go to great lengths to find the right hat for each student's learning styles. For example, when a struggling student is a visual learner and visual/spatial approaches are the teacher's weakness, that teacher needs to put on a glitzy hat and move into uncomfortable, visual strategies to help the learner.

STRATEGICALLY PLANNING DIFFERENTIATED MANAGEMENT

According to Gregory and Chapman (2007), differentiation is a philosophy. To make sure all students are learning every day, teachers choose to differentiate instruction. For this to happen, teachers purposely plan to meet each learner's varied needs. This is not an easy task.

The differentiation movement is making educators more aware of the need to reach the diverse needs of the population in a classroom. This idea has been discussed for centuries, but today, more than ever, educators are doing a better job of meeting this goal. They are improving because they have more assessment tools, instructional techniques, models, strategies, and resources. This belief is creating more multidimensional classrooms than ever before. But with so many activities and assignments going on simultaneously, teachers need well-planned management strategies to be successful.

WHAT ARE DIFFERENTIATED MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES?

Differentiated management strategies organize and customize instruction to provide the very best learning opportunities for each student. Routines and rules are carefully selected and designed to meet learners' changing needs.

Teachers who are taking the first steps into differentiated instruction need to begin with small steps, choosing one or two strategies or activities to implement at a time. Teachers currently using differentiated management techniques can adapt the ideas to tweak their skills, reaffirm their beliefs in present approaches, add novel strategies, or a new twist to old ways of doing things. The checklists, charts, outlines, activities, and suggestions in this book can be used to plan and organize differentiated instruction.

The keys to successful use of differentiated instructional management include the following:

- Maintaining a learning environment that is comfortable and stimulating
- Assessing students' individual needs before, during, and after learning
- Using the assessment data to plan strategically with the most beneficial models, techniques, and strategies
- Selecting and organizing instructional activities for the total group, individuals, partners, and small groups
- Instilling each student's desire to learn and improve

TEACHER JUDGMENT: CHOOSING THE APPROPRIATE HAT FOR THE OCCASION

Teacher judgment is a key to selecting the appropriate hat to wear for each instructional event. For example, when assessment data is analyzed, the teacher makes decisions about how to use the results. Here are some questions to address in selecting the hat to wear for the student's best interest.

- What is the best strategy to use so this individual can learn this concept?
- Do I need to assume the role of a facilitator or teacher?
- Does the student need to work independently or with a partner?
- Will I need to rewind or fast forward the curriculum for this student?
- Do I need to continue with grade-level instruction for this learning segment?

Effective instructional management decisions are based on the teacher's ability to select the standard and the content information to reach and teach each learner. Selection, organization, and pacing of instruction for the student's uniqueness are determined by many factors, including the learner's . . .

Knowledge base	Cultural background	Learning styles
Strengths and needs	Special needs	Preferences
Cognitive ability	Personality	Interests

ANALYZE SELF AND PURPOSE OF DIFFERENTIATING

Teachers need to take a look at themselves before deciding to differentiate their instruction. They need to decide what they currently are doing well to meet the unique needs of learners in their classroom, what can be done better, and why they feel they should work toward building a differentiated curriculum. The following checklist will answer some of these questions.

Fill in the answers to the questions below to see how ready you are to implement differentiation strategies into your classroom. Keep this survey so you remember the areas to improve.

Y = YES! I do this!

N = NEED! I need to improve in this area.

To differentiate, a teacher needs to . . .

1. ____ Know standards and students.
2. ____ Teach with knowledge, passion, and "with-it-ness."
3. ____ Use assessment data to guide planning for the diverse needs of the students.
4. ____ Give students more control of learning to make the information their own.
5. ____ Customize individual and small group assignments that fit using the most effective resources for the individual student's need.
6. ____ Establish flexible grouping to engage students in meaningful activities that teach the standards.
7. ____ Provide choice.
8. ____ Reteach to zap gaps.
9. ____ Provide enrichment and enhancement opportunities for learners according to their knowledge base.
10. ____ Create an optimal learning environment.

Introduction. 1	
<i>Stages</i>	<i>Implementation Thoughts and Reactions to Buy-In</i>
Stage 1: Not interested <i>I don't need a new hat.</i> [Complete denial]	<input type="checkbox"/> My old hat is very comfortable. <input type="checkbox"/> I don't have the time or energy to try anything new. <input type="checkbox"/> This new style will soon pass.
Stage 2: Discovering <i>Trying on the new hat.</i> [Investigation]	<input type="checkbox"/> I'll just try it on to see how it fits. <input type="checkbox"/> I may keep wearing my old hat. <input type="checkbox"/> I can try this one again later. <input type="checkbox"/> Others like this style, but do I need it? <input type="checkbox"/> I feel uncomfortable when wearing it.
Stage 3: Wearing the hat <i>This hat works on certain occasions.</i> [Buy-in]	<input type="checkbox"/> Wearing it more often because it is working for you <input type="checkbox"/> Seeing how to make it fit into your daily routine <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling confidence <input type="checkbox"/> Wearing it for specific occasions and times
Stage 4: Favorite hat <i>This is my best hat!</i> [Preferred approach]	<input type="checkbox"/> Wearing it as your most comfortable hat <input type="checkbox"/> Wearing it with pride and encouraging others to wear it <input type="checkbox"/> Keeping it in an accessible place <input type="checkbox"/> Other people see it working for teaching and learning in my classroom

ANALYZING MANAGEMENT STYLE

Each teacher has a personal management style that is reflected in daily teaching. Some are more comfortable in quiet rooms, while others need the buzz of active learning. A teacher's personality is reflected in the management style implemented in the classroom.

Some students respond to their teacher's style, while others may be very uncomfortable in the learning environment. It's important for the teacher to look around and make sure all the students are comfortable. This is when "knowing your students" becomes so important. If a student thrives on movement but is never allowed to get the wiggles out by getting up and taking a quick walk around, comprehension will ultimately suffer.

Think about your personal teaching style. What management strategies support your own . . .

- Learning style?
- Personality?
- Intelligences?
- Tolerance levels?

ANALYZING TEACHING STYLE

The following Likert scale can be used as an informal self-analysis of teaching styles. Teachers may find that, when they fill it out or think about it, their approaches fall between the two extremes. That's okay. It can be used to move in the right direction.

<i>Teacher centered</i>		<i>Student centered</i>
teacher directed	←————→	facilitator
enforces strict rules	←————→	self-directed learners
unaware of personal needs	←————→	meets personal needs
delegates responsibilities	←————→	shares responsibilities
subject/task focus	←————→	student focus

OUR GOALS IN WRITING THIS BOOK

We wrote this book to assist teachers with the complex task of managing differentiated instruction. We know the body of knowledge related to differentiated instruction continues to grow as researchers share information about how the brain learns. Brain imaging is not available to classroom teachers so we have to take the findings of brain specialists to identify the best practices for individual learners.

Our beliefs for effective teaching and learning are based on the latest brain research that guides our work. We believe effective differentiating teachers

- Provide management tips and strategies to design and maintain an organized, productive learning environment for each student.
- Present models as blueprints for planning and organizing differentiated instruction.
- Present management techniques and ideas to effectively incorporate flexible grouping strategies as needed.
- Add to the repertoire of strategies for differentiated instruction.
- Assist in the process of gathering and managing assessment data before, during, and after learning to guide instruction.
- Provide planning suggestions and tools that can be used to strategically manage differentiated instruction and lead each student to success.

We encourage readers to adapt our ideas and suggestions to manage differentiated instruction. Choosing the right hat at the right time to “Put on the Ritz” gives each student optimal learning opportunities.

READY FOR THE CHANGE!

As teachers get comfortable with the idea of differentiation, they need to examine whether they are ready to implement the change within their own classrooms.

Where do you fall in your readiness to make the change in your classroom? Take a look at the following figure and see which describes you. Are you ready for a change?

Introduction.2	
<i>Teacher Position</i>	<i>Reactions and Actions Toward Change</i>
Holding back	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> You are fearful of the new idea. <input type="checkbox"/> You think, “I don’t believe this could ever be for me.” <input type="checkbox"/> You do not perceive differentiation as a valuable use of your time. It would not be worth the time and energy you would need to put into it. <input type="checkbox"/> You are required to teach using a mandated program or method. The changes needed to differentiate are out of your control.
Ready to move forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Obtain support with colleagues or other educators who believe in the value of differentiation. <input type="checkbox"/> Examine and appreciate your beliefs and opinions. <input type="checkbox"/> Confront your fears and barriers to change. <input type="checkbox"/> Explore and learn about new possibilities. <input type="checkbox"/> Keep in mind that change comes gradually. Begin to change and adjust the instructional techniques and strategies that are in your comfort zone. <input type="checkbox"/> Ask yourself questions similar to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Which strategies and activities do I want to keep? ○ What is the easiest adjustment or change I can make to move forward?

A PREVIEW OF THE BOOK

Each strategy, technique, and guideline was carefully selected. The management tips were narrowed to five-star summary statements. We hope they give our readers star power to work smarter, not harder.

This book does not address discipline. As a matter of fact, we avoided this “D” word. We believe that appropriate management strategies minimize and eliminate behavior problems, so we addressed the “D” of differentiation instead.

Below is a chapter-by-chapter description, making it easy for teachers to read through and know what to expect and where to go for specific topic discussions.

Managing the Differentiated Learning Environment

The environment plays a vital role in what and how much students learn. This chapter explores ways to improve the classroom environment to increase student learning. Both the physical and emotional climate of the room is important to the community of learners who call it home. In this section, teachers will learn to put on their chef’s hat in order to cook up a recipe for affective and cognitive success in their classrooms.

Managing Differentiated Models

When a special activity, event, or unit of study is coming up in a classroom, teachers can pull out their formal planning hats! By choosing the best framework for the instruction, the goals of the lesson will be met in an engaging way, and students will learn.

Teachers are challenged every day to fill in the gaps for the students who do not have the proper background to be ready to learn the standards and the information that will be taught. Students who know the information need to be challenged. This chapter will help teachers know just which model to choose to meet the needs of everyone in their class, so everyone learns every day.

Managing Grouping Strategies

Like the baseball or football coach, a teacher needs to continually assess his or her students’ skills, how they’re improving, and what they still need to work on. When a teacher puts on a coaching hat, she or he is required to determine how students’ needs will best be met. Do they need to work on a specific skill with a small group? Should they work alone to move further ahead while the rest of the class receives additional instruction in an area they have already mastered?

When a teacher remembers to keep grouping flexible and add variety to his or her grouping strategies, students stay engaged in learning. This chapter explores various flexible grouping strategies and discusses how to use them in the classroom, while managing several different activities going on at the same time.

Managing Instructional Strategies

Pulling from their treasure box of hats, teachers have many different choices in how they approach their teaching. This chapter will discuss some of the many varied strategies for meeting the unique needs of the different learners.

Teachers can learn to put on their magician’s hat and pull out the perfect strategy to engage all students in the “act” of learning. They will have a classroom of students who are focused and ready to learn. When students are learning in appropriate leveled activities, they learn happily.

Managing Differentiated Assessment

Teachers are sometimes like detectives trying to solve a case. They need to compile the data to draw conclusions about their case—or class. Because of the differentiated movement, teachers are putting on their detective hats and assessing before, during, and after the learning. Assessment reveals needed information about what a learner knows and doesn't know. It provides valuable insight into student needs and assists teachers in planning well-rounded and meaningful lessons.

Both informal and formal assessments provide teachers the tools to plan strategically to meet the unique needs of the learners. Teachers assess students with many formal assessment tools. Many take hours of preparation. Some informal tools such as response cards or signals can provide immediate information needed to show how to plan for individual needs.

This chapter is designed to help teachers put on that detective hat, assess their students in meaningful ways, and use the data to solve the mystery of what each student needs to learn in order to be successful.

Managing Plans for Differentiated Instruction

Once teachers have the tools and elements necessary to create a differentiated environment in their own classrooms, they need to don their captain's hat and chart a course for the adventure of meeting the varied needs of their students. This chapter brings together those elements and helps teachers plan deliberately and for specific purposes. It allows teachers the freedom to choose the right hat for the occasion.

UNDERSTANDING THE BOOK FORMAT

The following format is followed with each model and strategy to keep the book consistent and easy to follow.

What is _____?	This provides a working definition and description of the model or strategy presented.
What are the instructional benefits?	This presents a rationale for using the model, tool, or strategy to meet the diverse needs of students.
Teacher's role	The necessary steps for implementing the model or strategy are outlined.
Demystifying	The information in this section can be used to explain this model or strategy to your students, parents, or colleagues.
Student's role	This explanation of the student's role can be adapted and presented to your students as they take an active part in learning.
Five-star management tips	The suggested techniques and approaches are presented to begin using the model or strategy right away.
Examples	The sample situations provide practical suggestions for the models and strategies.