



# ***Kansas Effective Practices Instructional Toolkit***

## Gifted 101 and Beyond

In a Pinch: Strategies, Links and References



## **GENERAL EDUCATION INTERVENTIONS**

### **Purpose**

In order to meet the needs of all students in a heterogeneous classroom, teachers must be able to clearly identify ability levels of students who demonstrate capabilities beyond the general education curriculum. Classroom teachers who have an understanding of the characteristics of giftedness and general education interventions will better meet the needs of students with diverse skill levels and learning styles. When teachers implement differentiated curriculum, they maximize learning opportunities for all students. Differentiation of curriculum is a continuous educational process for all students and especially for those students who are gifted.



### **Differentiated Curriculum**

*Differentiation* is not a recipe for teaching. It is not an instructional strategy. It is not what a teacher does when he or she has time. It is a way of thinking about teaching and learning. It is a philosophy. As such, it is based on the following set of beliefs:

- Students who are the same age differ in their readiness to learn, their interests, their styles of learning, their experiences, and their life circumstances.
- The differences in students are significant enough to make a major impact on what students need to learn, the pace at which they need to learn, and the support they need from teachers and others to learn it well.
- Students will learn best when supportive adults push them slightly beyond where they can work without assistance.
- Students will learn best when they can make a connection between the curriculum and their interests and life experiences.
- Students will learn best when learning opportunities are natural.
- Students are more effective learners when classrooms and schools create a sense of community in which students feel significant and respected.

Differentiation must be a refinement of, not a substitute for, high quality curriculum and instruction. Expert or distinguished teaching focuses on the understanding and skills of a discipline, causes students to wrestle with profound ideas, helps students organize and make sense of ideas and information, and aids students in

connecting the classroom with a wider world (Brandt, 1998; Danielson, 1996).

Differentiation - one facet of expert teaching - reminds us that these things are unlikely to happen for the full range of students unless curriculum and instruction fit each individual, unless students have choices about what they learn and how, unless students take part in setting learning goals, and unless the classroom connects with the experiences and interests of the individual. Differentiation states what must be done, builds on core teaching and learning practices that are solid, and refines them for maximum individual growth.

**Principles of a differentiated curriculum for high-ability learners include some or all of the following:**

- Presenting content that is related to broad-based issues, themes, or problems.
- Integrating multiple disciplines into the area of study.
- Presenting comprehensive, related, and mutually reinforcing experience within an area of study.
- Allowing for the in-depth learning of a self-selected topic within the area of study.
- Developing independent or self-directed study skills.
- Developing productive, complex, abstract, and/or higher level thinking skills.
- Focusing on open-ended tasks.
- Developing research skills and methods.
- Integrating basic skills and higher-level thinking skills into the curriculum.
- Encouraging the development of products that use new techniques, materials, and forms.
- Encouraging the development of self-understanding, i.e., recognizing and using one's abilities, becoming self-directed, and appreciating similarities and differences between oneself and others.
- Evaluating student outcomes by using appropriate and specific criteria through self-appraisal, criterion-referenced and/or standardized instruments.

A general education teacher should differentiate curriculum in response to the learner's needs, guided by the following general principles of differentiation.

**Respectful Tasks:** A classroom teacher ensures that students' learning is respected. The teacher does this by assessing the readiness level of each student by evaluating competency in the skills and concepts included in the local curriculum standards, expecting and supporting continual growth in all students by providing challenging curriculum, offering all students the opportunity to explore skills and understanding at appropriate degrees of difficulty, offering all students tasks that are equally interesting, important, and engaging.

**Flexible Grouping:** Teachers link learners with essential understandings and skills at appropriate levels of challenge and interest. This could mean that students are working in-groups on a variety of tasks at the appropriate depth, complexity, and speed for those involved.

**Ongoing Assessment and Adjustment:** Throughout units, teachers use assessments to yield an emerging picture of those students who understand key ideas and can perform targeted skills. The teacher then shapes the next lesson to fit again the needs of the individual students. Assessments need not be formal "tests" but may come from activities such as group discussions, journal or portfolio entries, skill inventories, homework assignments, or interest surveys.

**In a differentiated classroom, teachers differentiate *content, process* and *product* according to student's *readiness, interest, and learning profile*:**

- Content – what the teacher wants the students to learn and the materials or resources through which that is accomplished
- Process – activities designed to ensure that students use key skills to make sense out of essential ideas and information
- Products – vehicles through which students demonstrate and extend what they have learned
- Readiness – a student's entry point relative to a particular understanding or skill
- Interest – a child's curiosity or passion for a particular topic or skill
- Learning profile – how individual students learn

**In differentiated classrooms, students demonstrating a need for instruction beyond that of the general education curriculum should be offered a range of instructional and management opportunities such as:**

- Compacting – students are allowed to demonstrate proficiency in curriculum outcomes, units, or courses and progress to more appropriate/challenging instruction. This reduces redundancy and allows for advanced programming.
- Enrichment Clusters – students are grouped according to ability for instructional purposes. Enrichment clusters stress student choice and students as producers of useful products.
- Interest Centers – a center within the classroom that links curriculum topics to areas of student talent and interest in depth or breadth.
- Tiered Assignments – assignments designed for varying ability levels. More complex assignments better meet the needs of high-achieving students.
- Tiered Products – products specifically designed to demonstrate understanding of topic in a more in-depth manner.
- Graduated Rubrics – the standard and level of student proficiency and accomplishments designed for students and teachers to measure learning outcomes. Graduated rubrics offer clear expectations for quality and levels of excellence encouraged among high-ability learners.
- Independent Study – topics selected by students for in-depth study including a statement of student objective, research, and planned presentation. Students design products to demonstrate their understanding of a topic. Independent study encourages student autonomy in planning and problem solving.
- Alternative Assessments – students are offered opportunities to demonstrate their understanding of material learned in “real-world” ways.

**Low Preparation Differentiation**

Choice of Books  
Homework Options  
Use of Reading Buddies  
Various Journal Prompts  
Varied Pacing with anchor options  
Student/Teacher Goal Setting  
Work Alone or Together  
Flexible Seating  
Varied Computer Programs

**High Preparation Differentiation**

Tiered Activities  
Tiered Products  
Independent Study  
Multiple Texts  
Multiple Testing Options  
Alternative Assessments  
4-MAT  
Course Compacting  
Spelling by Readiness

Design-A-Day	Varying Organizers
Varied Supplemental Materials	Community Mentorships
Options for Varied Modes of Expression	Tiered Centers
Varied Scaffolding	Interest Centers
Computer Mentors	Stations
Think-Pair-Share by Readiness, Interest, Learning Profile	Group Investigations
Open-Ended Activities	Choice Boards
Explorations by Interest	Think-Tac-Toe
Options for Competition	Simulations
Flexible-Learning Groups by Readiness, Interest Learning Profile	Students are Assessed in Multiple Ways



## **GIFTED GENERAL EDUCATION INTERVENTION STRATEGIES**

What strategies have you used to differentiate curriculum for this student? A minimum of three- five interventions needs to be implemented for general education intervention purposes. The effectiveness of the strategies used with individual students will be discussed by the general education intervention team.

**Date Initiated:**

**Degree of Effectiveness:**

**Indicate 1-3 These Additional Opportunities Need To Be Continued**

**3 = Highly Effective**

**2 = Moderately Effective**

**1 = Ineffective**

**\* = Preferred Strategies for Gifted**

### **ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIES**

- Set time expectations for assignments, short term, and long term
- Organize a notebook or folder to help organize work
- Develop a contract for student responsibilities\*

### **BEHAVIORAL STRATEGIES**

- Share talents with peers and younger students
- Provide opportunities to develop leadership skills\*

### **PRESENTATION STRATEGIES**

- Give both oral and visual instructions for assignments
- Vary the method of lesson presentation: **a)** lecture, **b)** small group, **c)** use audio-visual materials, **d)** demonstrations, **e)** experiments, and/or **f)** games
- Arrange for a mentor to work with the student in his/her own interest area or area of greatest strength\*
- Utilize additional library and multimedia resources for independent research\*

### **CURRICULUM STRATEGIES**

- Determine whether materials are appropriate to the student's current interest
- and functioning levels
- Reassign student to appropriate academic group
- Expand vocabulary skills
- Provide fewer drill and practice activities when the material is learned\*
- Use alternative activities/materials to enrich district curriculum (Ex: Extension activities from teacher's

editions)\*

- Provide appropriate instruction/materials related to student's preferred learning style
- Provide opportunities for development of creativity
- Give a pre-test and, if the student knows the material, proceed to the next level\*
- Provide independent learning activities
- Assign higher-level questions: Minimize recall questions and emphasize application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation questions\*
- Provide instruction in research skills needed to conduct an independent study in student's interest area
- Provide text written at a higher level\*
- Provide problem solving along with computation in math class
- Advanced Studies (Math, Math Counts, Pre-Algebra, Science Olympiad, Honors, AP, IB)\*
- Enrich the curriculum "horizontally" with materials and activities which extend a topic\*
- Alternate assignments in place of what rest of class is doing\*
- Plan with student alternate activities\*
- Other\_\_\_\_\_