

Bainbridge Island School District

K-6 Educational Programs & Innovation Committee

Differentiation in the Elementary Grades**Definition:**

The U.S. Department of Education defined the terms: personalization, differentiation and individualization in its 2010 Education Technology Plan. The DOE definitions were expanded upon by Bray and McClaskey in their “Personalized Learning Chart”:

Differentiation starts with groups of learners and “refers to instruction that is tailored to the learning preferences of different learners. Learning goals are the same for all students, but the method or approach of instruction varies according to the needs and preferences of each student or what research has found works best for students like them.”

Individualization starts with the need of an individual learner and “refers to instruction that is paced to the learning needs of different learners. Learning goals are the same for all students, but students can progress through the material at different speeds according to their learning needs. For example, students might take longer to progress through a given topic, skip topics that cover information they already know, or repeat topics they need more help on.”

Personalization starts with the learner and “refers to instruction that is paced to learning needs, tailored to learning preferences, and tailored to the specific interests of different learners. In an environment that is fully personalized, the learning objectives and content as well as the method and pace may all vary (so personalization encompasses differentiation and individualization).”

-All quotes from U.S. Dept of Ed. 2010 Education Technology Plan

Purpose of Differentiation:

Differentiated instruction is an approach that assumes there is a diversity of learners in every classroom. The purpose of differentiation is to match instruction to the different instructional needs of groups of students. Those differences can vary by skill level, ability, social/emotional needs or student interests.

Strategies for Differentiation:

Teachers create different types of groups depending on the subject or purpose of lesson. Strategies for meeting different needs of learners include:

- Vary Groups:
 - Creating subgroups within a class
 - Having students “walk to math” or “walk to reading”
 - Using volunteers to work with small groups or individual students
- Vary Materials:
 - Assigning different materials or tasks to groups of students
 - Using a variety of resources/materials in instruction (e.g. visual, auditory, kinesthetic, etc.)
- Vary Process:
 - Vary complexity of tasks or questions
 - Vary type of activities assigned to students
- Vary Assessment:
 - Vary the frequency or length of time of assessment
 - Vary type of assessment – mode, materials

Strategies for Supporting Teachers with Differentiation:

- Recruitment/training of volunteers
- Providing tools for assessing/diagnosing needs of students (special need for ongoing assessment – not just periodic)
- Providing tools for data analysis
- Providing resource materials to differentiate instruction (e.g. leveled readers)
- Providing technological tools – adequate number of devices and access to instructional programs or software that will support differentiation (even individualization) of instruction
- Providing training for teachers – Carol Ann Tomlinson?

Recommendations:

Personalization vs Differentiation vs Individualization Chart

Personalization	Differentiation	Individualization
starts with the learner	starts with groups of learners	starts with the need of an individual learner
connects with interests, passions, and aspirations	adjusts to learning needs of groups of learners	accommodates learning needs of the individual
learners actively participate in the design of their learning	explicit instruction based upon the learning needs of groups of learners	explicit instruction based upon the learning needs of an individual learner
learners have a voice and choice on what they learn	teachers create or adapt instruction and choose roles for learners based on different needs of learners	teachers customize lessons and tasks for learners based on individual needs
different objectives for each learner	same objectives for groups of learners	same objectives for learners with specific objectives for individuals who receive one-on-one support
learner selects appropriate technology and resources to support their learning	technology and resources are selected to support the learning needs of groups of learner	technology and resources are selected to support the learning needs of an individual learner
learners build a network of peers, experts, teachers, and paraprofessionals to guide and support their learning	learners are reliant on the guidance of teachers to support their learning	learners are dependent on individual teachers or paraprofessionals to support their learning
competency-based models where the learner demonstrates mastery	based on Carnegie unit (seat time) and grade level	based on Carnegie unit (seat time) and grade level
assessment AS learning	assessment FOR learning	assessment OF learning
teachers develop capacity to create independent learners who set goals, monitor progress, and reflect on learning and summative assessments based on student mastery	assessment involves time-based testing and teachers provide feedback to advance learning	summative assessment is grade-based and involves time-based testing which confirms what learners know and don't know



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