

Preface

Differentiated instruction has become one of the—if not *the*—most widely adopted instructional approach since the concept was articulated by Dr. Carol Tomlinson in her seminal work, *The Differentiated Classroom* (Tomlinson, 1999). Not only has this instructional approach captured the hearts and minds of educators across the nation, it has been applied to one degree or another in virtually every state and in many nations around the world (Bender, 2009a; Bender & Waller, 2011a; 2011b; Berkeley, Bender, Peaster, & Saunders, 2009). In fact, differentiated instruction has now been enshrined in various response to intervention (RTI) initiatives in nearly every state since many state RTI plans have differentiated instruction embedded within them as the basis for Tier 1 instruction in the general education classroom (Berkeley et al., 2009).

This relatively simple idea that teachers should present varied instructional options and activities based not only on the academic content to be covered but also on the learning styles, preferences, strengths, and weaknesses of the learners in the class has clearly taken root (Bender, 2012a, 2008; Tomlinson, Brimijoin, & Narvaez, 2008), and today it is difficult to find a teacher that is not re-creating his or her instructional approach with an eye toward increasing the variation of instructional activities and assessment practices in his or her classroom.

Moreover, it is difficult to find anywhere in the history of educational reforms in this nation any comparable fundamental change in instructional paradigm that was not based in either legislation or a court-mandated educational transition. Differentiated instruction is, indeed, a major transition of instruction that has been and continues to be based on a grassroots movement among educators seeking a more effective way to teach the highly diverse students found in most classrooms today (Bender, 2012b; Bender & Waller, 2011b). Thus, Dr. Tomlinson has done a great service to all educators and, more importantly, to all students in this nation and around the world with the development of this instructional approach.

As this book is published in 2012, it is safe to assert that the concept of differentiated instruction has not only been widely adopted but has indeed grown up (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011; Tomlinson, 2010)! In fact, the meaning of the

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term *differentiation* has changed or migrated to some degree over time from the initial construct as proposed in 1999, and understanding this change over time is critical to understanding the differentiated instructional construct. In fact, there are several notable changes in the theoretical basis for differentiated instruction, as well as multiple other educational initiatives and transformations in instructional practice, that are impacting teachers' collective efforts to differentiate the instruction in their classrooms (Bender & Waller, 2012b). Thus, the concept of a new *differentiated instruction*, as introduced herein, seems very apropos.

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For example, unlike the initial work on differentiated instruction, today's differentiation is not tied exclusively to one learning style approach any longer (Bender & Waller, 2011a; Sousa & Tomlinson, 2010, 2011). Rather, differentiated instruction emphasizes many different conceptualizations of learning styles, student learning preferences, and ability differences. Also, both increased

application of instructional technologies and the more recent response to intervention initiative (RTI) have impacted the differentiated instructional approach to such a degree that discussion of any one of these factors in isolation—differentiated instruction, technology in the classroom, and RTI—is virtually meaningless (Bender & Waller, 2011a). In today's classroom, each of these factors impacts the other, and thus, they must be considered together in order to make meaningful instructional recommendations for teachers.

This book represents an initial attempt to explore how differentiated instruction has been transformed by the cross-fertilization of these recent educational initiatives. The various chapters emphasize instructional suggestions for educators working with students with learning disabilities and other disabilities in the general education-inclusive class as well as with nondisabled students who may be struggling in the curriculum. Thus, any educator with a focus on the primary and elementary grades may find this book useful, including

General education teachers	Special education teachers
School psychologists	School administrators
Professional learning communities	Other educational administrators

DESCRIPTION OF THIS BOOK

This book is intended as a professional development book for practicing teachers and, possibly, a supplemental book in college instructional methods courses. With a strong focus on 21st century teaching practices, the book provides numerous instructional strategies for teaching within the context of the Common Core State Standards (www.corestandards.org/the-standards), standards which have been adopted by many states as one foundation of the school curriculum. Each chapter in the book will present specific instructional strategies related to these standards and intended for the general education class.

Many of these strategies will emphasize technology applications as well as the most modern and relevant differentiated instructional practices. Various interest boxes will be presented for supplementary information as needed, and numerous teaching tips, holding specific instructional guidelines for specific teaching tactics will be included in each chapter.

Chapter Descriptions

Chapter 1: *Differentiated Instruction: Then and Now.* This chapter will briefly describe the history of differentiated instruction as a concept, beginning in 1999 and moving through 2012. The chapter will open with an extended discussion of several things that have impacted the differentiated instruction concept, including increased emphasis on brain-compatible instruction and less on the multiple intelligences paradigm. Then, a variety of brain-friendly instructional examples are provided. Next, technology will be described as one factor that can increase and enhance differentiated instruction, along with implementation of Common Core State Standards and the response to intervention (RTI) instructional approaches. Further, the case will be made that these three instructional innovations—differentiation, RTI, and increased use of technology, are mutually supporting in today’s classrooms. Then the application of differentiated instruction specifically for students with learning disabilities and other learning challenges is discussed.

Chapter 2: *Universal Design and Differentiated Instructional Models.* This chapter presents the concept of universal design as the basis for effective classroom organization, showing how universal design will assure access to the general education curriculum for students with learning disabilities and other learning problems. Initially, the chapter describes methods for organizing the class for effective differentiation. Finally, four models of differentiated instruction are described, including modification of a traditional lesson plan using learning centers for differentiation, project-based learning as a differentiated instructional model, and the newest model of differentiated instruction, the “flipped” classroom.

Chapter 3: *Technology and the New Differentiated Instruction.* This chapter will describe a variety of innovative technology-based instructional tactics appropriate for differentiating classroom activities. Initially, a description of the changing model of knowledge for the 21st century will be presented, which will lead to a focus on technology-based instructional ideas, including webquests for differentiating instruction, class blogs, and using wikis in the classroom. Next, several specific instructional tools will be described in detail, including use of social networking for instruction, simulation and gaming formats, the flipped classroom, and Khan Academy—an anytime, anywhere teaching and learning tool. Finally, these tech-based teaching tools will be discussed in terms of the new differentiated instruction and how these tools are transforming the teaching and learning process.

Chapter 4: *Response to Intervention and Differentiated Assessment Strategies.* RTI will be described as a recent innovation that is working for students with learning disabilities and other learning challenges across the nation. RTI is

described in terms of the three-tier pyramid with an emphasis on differentiated instructional assessments in Tier 1 coupled with multiyear universal screening measures. Next, progress monitoring practices in differentiated instruction is discussed, and progress monitoring in Tiers 2 and 3 is described in detail. Next, a case study RTI procedure is presented, with an emphasis on the assessment practices within RTI. Finally, a brief discussion on grading in differentiated instruction is presented, and specific options for grading differentiated instructional activities are provided.

Chapter 5: *Instructional Support Strategies in Differentiated Classes.* Provision of a variety of instructional supports for students with learning disabilities and other learning challenges is critical in differentiated classes for all students with academic deficits because such supportive strategies allow teachers to differentiate the lessons based on students' needs. This chapter presents a variety of supportive instructional techniques, including scaffolded instruction, content enhancements, story maps, graphic organizers, study guides, classwide peer tutoring and reciprocal teaching.

Chapter 6: *Cognitive Strategy Instruction for Differentiated Classes.* In addition to the instructional support strategies above, the research on metacognition has presented an array of additional strategies for the differentiated class. This chapter presents several metacognitive instructional strategies that have been proven to work for students with learning disabilities and other academic deficits. These may be used in the general education class, in special education settings, and in Tiers 1, 2, or 3 in an RTI framework. Strategies include implementation of a cognitive strategies model and self-monitoring. A case study RTI procedure will be described in which an eighth-grade student with reading comprehension problems received a Tier 2 cognitive strategies intervention to increase reading comprehension.

Next, as schools move into 21st century teaching, personal responsibility for learning has been increasingly emphasized, and self-regulation strategies for planning and monitoring of one's own cognitive understanding and behavior have become increasingly important. Self-monitoring and self-regulation of learning for differentiated classes are presented in detail, along with guidelines for implementation.

Appendix: *Intervention Curricula Used for Differentiated Instruction and RTI.*

The Goal

Schools will continue to move into several new and uncharted areas over the next decade, including implementation of the Common Core State Standards, the growing emphasis on the flipped classroom, Internet-based learning, the use of Facebook, Twitter, or other social media, or continuing RTI implementation, including implementation in the upper-grade levels. It is clear that all educators need an understanding of how these innovations fit within their efforts to provide differentiated instruction for all students. Many of the changes are already under way in education, and most will provide excellent opportunities for teachers to structure highly differentiated instruction in their classes.

However, it is one thing to understand and implement any of these single innovations; it is another thing altogether to understand how they fit within the “whole” of differentiated instruction in the classroom, and the latter understanding is critical.

The goal of this book, therefore, is to provide specific instructional strategies for a variety of primary and elementary instructional situations that integrate these innovations in such a way as to result in provision of highly differentiated instruction for students with learning disabilities and others who may struggle in the general education classrooms. I sincerely hope and honestly believe that this book will be of use in that regard.