



GWINNETT
COUNTY
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SCHOOLS

Differentiating Instruction

Responding to the Needs of All Learners

Based on the work of Carol Ann Tomlinson

Presented by [REDACTED]

Questions to Consider

- Do all students learn in the same way or at the same pace? How is this reflected in your class?
- Which students seem to be more engaged in your class? Why?
- What evidence do you use to determine that students understand a concept? have mastered a skill?
- Do you have a sense of who is learning as the class period progresses?
- Do students learn better in large groups or small groups or when taught individually? Why?
- How would you describe your....
 - teaching style?
 - classroom environment?
 - use of and variety in instructional strategies?
 - use of and variety in assessment?
 - ways of addressing varied learner needs?

What is Differentiation?

- “Differentiation is an organized yet flexible way of proactively adjusting teaching and learning to meet kids where they are and help them to achieve maximum growth as learners.”
- “A differentiated classroom provides different avenues to acquiring content, to processing or making sense of ideas, and to developing products so that each student can learn effectively.”

Carol Ann Tomlinson

What Differentiation is Not

- Not Individualized Instruction of the 1970s
- Not just another way to homogeneously group
- Not tweaking assignments by student ability (not lower level do less, higher level do more)
- Not chaotic
- Not student-driven with the teacher in the background

What Differentiation Is

- Proactive to meet the variety of learning needs of students
- More qualitative than quantitative
- Based in and driven by assessment results
- Multiple approaches to content, process and/or product
- Dynamic, not static, instruction

Assumptions

- **Students differ as learners.**
- **To learn well, each student needs appropriate challenge, success, and learning experiences.**
- **It is unlikely that we will achieve instructional fit by ignoring student differences.**
- **Attending to student differences requires a flexible approach to teaching.**
- **Successful attention to student differences must be rooted in solid curriculum and instruction.**
- **There are a variety of instructional strategies that can be used to achieve high-quality, differentiated instruction.**
- **Developing differentiated classrooms requires educators not so much to develop a new “bag of tricks” as to rethink assumptions about teaching and learning.**

Assumptions

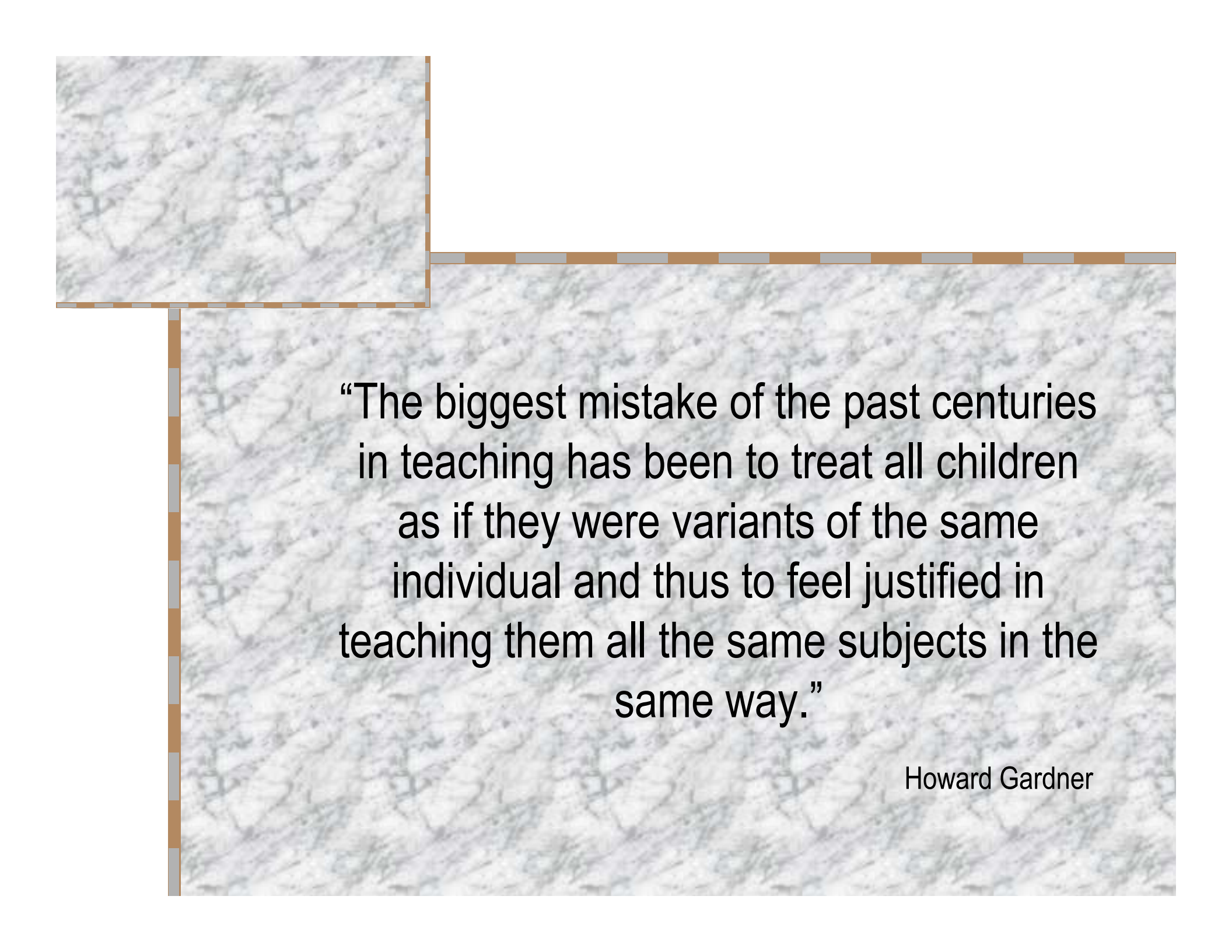
- **“One size fits all” instruction is not a good fit for many learners in academically diverse classrooms.**
- **Teachers in a differentiated classroom continually study their students’ learning.**
- **Good teaching is predicated on a teacher’s clarity about what learners should know, understand and be able to do as a result of instruction.**
- **Teachers focus student learning on key knowledge and skills but at varying degrees of abstractness, complexity, and structure.**
- **Students should work on “respectful tasks” which offer different content, product or processes for learning.**
- **Flexible grouping allows learners to work in a wide range of configurations while targeting specific learner needs.**

Processing Time

- 2 Minute Buzz
- Works-Quirks-Questions
- P - M - I
- Ahas and Affirmations

Can It Be Done?

- Think-Pair-Share
- + - ?



“The biggest mistake of the past centuries in teaching has been to treat all children as if they were variants of the same individual and thus to feel justified in teaching them all the same subjects in the same way.”

Howard Gardner

Role of Assessment

- Assessment informs instruction on a daily basis to guide teachers in planning or modifying instruction.
- Diagnostic
- Formative
- Summative
- Formal and Informal

Curriculum Plan

- “When a teacher lacks clarity about what a student should know, understand, and be able to do as a result of a lesson, the learning tasks she creates may or may not be engaging and we can almost be certain the tasks won’t help the students understand essential ideas or principles.” Carol Ann Tomlinson
- What do you want each student to come away with as a result of participating in a lesson or completing an assigned activity?

Differentiate by modifying...

■ Content

- What students should know, understand and be able to do as a result of a unit of study

■ Process

- Activities designed to guide students to make sense of the content or able to use the skill presented

■ Product

- How students demonstrate what they have come to know, understand, and/or be able to do

The Equalizer

- Work with a partner on a Double Entry Journal
- Handout 11

Learning Environment

- Teach students first, subjects second
- Know students as individual learners (motivation)
- Strive for engagement and understanding
- Set high expectations... and provide ladders
- Help students make their own sense of learning (through context and relevance)
- Talk about the learning process (metacognition)
- Use positive energy and humor
- Continue to develop expertise

Two Essentials for Learning

■ Engagement

- “Engagement is the magnet that attracts learners’ meandering attention and holds it so that enduring learning can occur.”
- Captures learners’ interest / curiosity / attention and causes development of opinion

■ Understanding

- More than recall or regurgitation of facts
- Learner “owns” the concept and is able to transfer the knowledge to new situations

Tomlinson, page 38

2nd column

Why Differentiate Instruction?

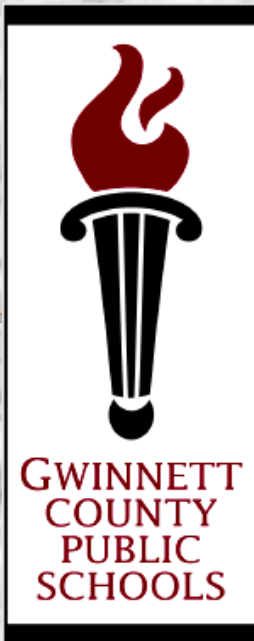
- RAFT Activity (Role Playing)
- Overhead 19

Getting Started

- Examine your philosophy about individual needs
- Start small and grow slowly
- Envision how a differentiated activity would look
- Establish routines and procedures early
- Give thoughtful directions for differentiated activities
- Teach students to work for quality
- Step back and reflect, using a support system as appropriate

Questions to Reconsider

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- What evidence do you use to determine that students understand a concept? have mastered a skill?
- Do you have a sense of who is learning as the class period progresses?
- Do students learn better in large groups or small groups or when taught individually? Why?
- How would you describe your goals for potential changes in your....
 - teaching style?
 - classroom environment?
 - use of and variety in instructional strategies?
 - use of and variety in assessment?
 - ways of addressing varied learner needs?



Assessment and Curriculum Mapping: Guiding Planning for Improved Student Achievement

AKS as Curriculum

- What GCPS students should
 - Know (content)
 - Understand (concepts and principles)
 - Be able to do (skills and processes)
- Clear standards for teaching and learning
- How can we be sure we teach all the AKS and, more importantly, that students have learned?

Instructional Strategies

- Tomlinson, chapters 7 and 8
- Tomorrow's session
- Classroom Instruction that Works Robert Marzano
- Teaching with the Brain in Mind Eric Jensen
- Best Practices Steven Zemelman, Harvey Daniels, Arthur Hyde

Curriculum Calendar

- Semester Overview Calendar
- Planning for Specific Instruction (Thursday)



Bibliography

Tomlinson, C.A. (1991). *The differentiated classroom: Responding to the needs of all learners*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.