DIFFERENTIATING INSTRUCTION
ASSESSMENT IS THE

With Jane Gertler, EdD
The Churchill School and Center
May 17, 2011
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Overview of the Session

• “Assessment is today’s means of modifying tomorrow’s instruction.”
  - Carol Ann Tomlinson

• As teachers, we are continuously assessing and evaluating our students to ensure that they are moving toward mastering required standards. An effective system of assessment begins with pre-assessment to inform our instruction. Ongoing assessment throughout the learning process is also critical because it helps us plan those differentiated aspects of our instruction in order to meet the needs of all learners in the classroom.
Session Goals:

• Recognize the need to be clear about learning objectives even before you plan your first unit lesson.

• Learn about the role of pre-assessment in a differentiated classroom.

• Consider multiple forms of assessment to create a comprehensive portrait of students’ progress.

• Understand a model for grading exceptional learners.
“We have to know where we want to end up before we start out – and plan to get there. That is, we must have solid curriculum and instruction in place before we differentiate them.”

- Carol Ann Tomlinson
Determine OBJECTIVES

What students will KNOW:
Facts (names, dates, places, etc)
Vocabulary

What students will UNDERSTAND:
Big ideas
Generalizations about a topic or concept

What students will BE ABLE TO DO:
Skills (basic, thinking, planning, discipline-based)
All the Concepts and Content in Your Curriculum

An additional 15% of the curriculum
What you want many of your students to know and be able to do

~15%

80% of Curriculum
What you want all your students to know and be able to do

~80% curriculum

100% of Curriculum
What you expect a few students will be able to learn
Example of k – u – b IN MATH

• KNOW
  - The characteristics of base ten number system

• UNDERSTAND
  - How a place value system is different from other number systems
  - How the values of the different places are determined in a place value system.

• BE ABLE TO DO
  - Compare our base ten system with Roman numerals
  - Write about how the systems are alike and different
  - Design another place value system
WHAT IS THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN A DIFFERENTIATED CLASSROOM?
“You can’t prescribe without diagnosing – and you can’t diagnose without preassessment.”
“PREASSESSMENT is the trigger that activates the differentiated curriculum”

- E.J. Braggett (1994)
PREASSESSMENT

• Elicit information about students’ readiness to learn skills and concepts.

• Gather information about students’ preferred modes of learning (including learning styles and grouping preferences).

• Gather information about students’ attitudes about the learning, interests within the study and initial questions.

- Catherine M. Brighton, *Preassessment: A Differentiation Power Tool*
PREASSESSMENT (contd)

• Be focused and clear about necessary knowledge, skills, and understandings.

• Match the intended learning experiences.

• Be focused and clear about what information would be most useful to know from the students.

• Use a variety of methods: i.e interviews, discussions, writing, graphic.

• Keep the preassessments as concise as possible.
Use a Variety of Preassessments

• Pre-Tests
  - Ex. “end of chapter” or “end of unit” test administered at the beginning of an instructional sequence.

• Entrance/Exit cards
  - Help to determine where to begin the learning sequence.
  - Can inform initial groupings of students.

• Portfolios

• Observation/Individual conferences

• Interest Surveys
Example: **Entrance Cards**

- What do you remember about...that we discussed yesterday?
- Write one thing you learned as a result of yesterday’s activity.
- Today we will work on...How do you think it connects to...that we have been working on this week?
- Do you need help with the concept we discussed yesterday?
Example: Exit Cards

- What activity did you work on today?
- What part of it was easy for you?
- If you had a chance to edit your work, what types of errors did you find?
- Do you need more practice on...that we worked on today?
- What aspect of...would you like to study?

C.Wurtzel
Example: Pretest to Assess Readiness (Grades 3 and 4 Fraction Unit)

• In this unit, you will learn how to:
  • Demonstrate the meaning of the numerator and denominator of a fraction.
  • Find and describe equivalent fractions.
  • Convert mixed numbers to fractions.

• What do you already know about fractions?
  • What does fraction mean? How would you explain it to someone younger?
  • Show some examples of what you can do with fractions (i.e. +, -, x, ÷, factoring).
  • Give examples of how you have used fractions in your life.
Example: Pretest to Assess Readiness

• Graphic organizer: **My K-W Chart**

• Students detail what they know (K) and what they want to find out (W).

• Information in the “K” column can be analyzed in relation to core goals and objectives.

• Questions in the “W” column can be the basis for differentiated learning experiences.
### Example:
**My KW Chart About SPACE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>K...What I Know</th>
<th>W...What I Want to Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pluto is the farthest planet - I think</td>
<td>How do they build rockets?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are 9 planets. Earth is 3(^{rd})??</td>
<td>Is there a planet X?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Russians sent a monkey to the moon before the U.S.</td>
<td>Why do some spaceships blow up?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neil Armstrong was the first person to walk on the moon.</td>
<td>Is there a movie about Neil Armstrong?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NASA is the name of the US space program, but I’m not</td>
<td>Why did people go to the moon anyway?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sure what the letters stand for.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example: Five Most Difficult First

• Preassessment strategy recommended by Roberts & Roberts (2001) for “gifted and talented” students.

• Ask the five most difficult questions to be answered at the end of a unit or lesson – at the beginning.

• If a student can answer those, prior to the start, then a differentiated learning experience is appropriate.
Example: EXIT SLIP

Name__________________________________________

• What activity did you do today?
• What was easy for you?
• If you had a chance to correct your work, what types of errors did you find?
• Do you need help with any concept during tomorrow’s class? If yes, attach your work to the exit slip and describe what you think would help.
• What are you going to work on tomorrow?

— Adapted from The Differentiated Math Classroom by Miki Murray

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What do you do with PREASSESSMENT data?

- Preassessment data feeds into the reflection, decision, design and implementation cycle.

- Preassessment data guides preliminary diagnosis about where students can best begin their work on a particular topic.
What do you do with PREASSESSMENT data? (CONT’D)

Decide on:

• flexible student groupings

• possible mini-lessons

• interventions

• compacting

• enrichment activities
Assessment for Learning – Formative
“Effective Assessment resembles a photo album – a collection of evidence – rather than a single snapshot.”

- Tomlinson & McTighe, 2006
Formative Assessment

• During learning

• Supports ongoing student growth

• Informs students about themselves

• Occurs during teaching to influence learning

• Provides immediate and specific feedback to guide teaching and learning.
Examples of Formative Assessment in the Differentiated Classroom

- Small group discussions
- Journal entries
- Exit cards
- Portfolios
- Interest surveys
- Skills inventories and performance tasks
- Homework based on learning experiences
- Observations
- Quick writes
- Student self-assessments (must provide a scoring guide)
In order to improve learning, you must understand:

– the desired goal
– your present position
– a way to close the gap between the two
Assessment of Learning

Establish Indicators of Success
Describe criteria to measure success
Measure students accordingly
Report results in a clear and consistent manner
Summative Assessment

• After learning
• Provides information about student’s achievement at the end of a period of instruction.
• Matches the learning opportunities provided for the student.
• Includes more than one assessment method (aka – a “photo album”).
Summative Assessment

• A single grade cannot effectively report all that we need to say about a student’s learning.

• Factors to report are:
  – Grades for achievement of goals
  – Progress toward goals
  – Work habits
Product/Project Assessments

• A project can be an assessment task given to an individual student or a group of students on a topic.
• The project results should be assessed. The process can be assessed as well.
• The project may involve in-class and out-of-class development.
• The projects should be primarily a learning experience, not solely an assessment task.
Burke (1994) identifies the following advantages of project assessment tasks:

- Provide students with opportunities to use their multiple intelligences to create a product
- Allow teachers to assign projects at different levels of difficulty to account for individual learning styles and ability levels
- Provide an alternative for students who have problems reading and writing
- Allow students to share their learning and accomplishments with other students, classes, parents, or community members
- Provide positive reinforcement for students who would not get recognition on traditional tests or writing assignments
Student Self-Assessment Checklist for Group Project

Student Name: ___________________________ Date: __________________

☐ I listen attentively to others.
☐ I express my thinking clearly and consisely.
☐ I take turns.
☐ I show respect for alternative points of view.
☐ I synthesize information from others.
☐ I analyze the ideas of others.
☐ I remember significant information.
☐ I identify issues.
☒ I make connections to prior knowledge and experiences.
☐ I stay on topic.
Student Self-Assessment End – of – the-Year

What I’ve Achieved

• My favorite topic in ___ was ___
• I improved most in...
• I will always remember...
• Goals I accomplished this year were...

What I Want To Achieve

• I want to improve in...
• I’d like to learn how to...
• I’m looking forward to...
GRADING EXCEPTIONAL LEARNERS

“Fair isn’t always equal”
- Rick Wormeli
A Model for Grading Exceptional Learners

For each reporting standard ask:

1. Is this an appropriate expectation without adaptations?
   - No. The student will need adaptations in this area.
   - Yes. The student can achieve this standard with no supports or adaptations.

2. What type of adaptation is needed?
   - Accommodation. The required adaptations do not alter the standard.
   - No change in grading is required.
A Model for Grading Exceptional Learners (cont’d)

2. What type of adaptation is needed?

Modification. The required adaptations fundamentally change the standard.

3. Determine the modified standard.
   Change the standard to include appropriate skills and criteria for this student.

4. Grade based on modified standard.
   Use the same grading “ruler” as for the class, but on the appropriate standard.

5. Report the meaning of modified grades.
   Add a notation to the report card and the transcript, and connect to a progress report.

Critical questions for students, teachers, and parents

• What is a “fair” way to grade?
• How can accommodations or modifications affect grading?
• When can/should special grading procedures be implemented?
• What types of grading “adaptations” are available and how should they be used?
A Fair Grading System

- Provides opportunities for high grades to be earned.

- Provides meaningful grades that reflect experiences in the classroom.

- Includes flexibility as needed to meet individual needs.

- Maintains high student accountability even when a grading system is individualized.
**About Hidden Sparks**

**Hidden Sparks** is a non-profit fund whose purpose is to help children with learning differences reach their full potential in school and life. Hidden Sparks develops and supports professional development programs for Jewish day schools to help increase understanding and support for teaching to diverse learners.

Guided by a philosophy that by helping schools meet the needs of children with learning and behavioral differences, ultimately all students will benefit. Hidden Sparks’ programs combine professional development in learning and positive behavioral support, guided classroom observation and one on one coaching. The Hidden Sparks model and program is currently in 21 Jewish Day Schools/Yeshivot in New York and 7 in Boston, through a partnership with Gateways: Access to Jewish Education.
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