

# GIFTED AND TALENTED

## SERVICE NEWSLETTER



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*“You must learn a new way to think before you can master a new way to be” – Marianne Williamson*

### WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE?

The more schools I visit, and the more teachers I speak with, the more I learn how the idea of differentiated instruction is truly a philosophy. It is not an idea that can be taught, but rather something that you do because you believe in teaching to reach all learners.

Recently I came across an article that asked the following questions:

- Are we willing to teach in whatever way students best learn, even if it's not the way we best learn?
- Do we have the courage to do what works, not just what's easiest?
- Do we actively pursue our own awareness of students' knowledge, skills, and talents so that we can provide a match for their learning needs?
- Do we actually make those matches?
- Do we continually build a large and diverse repertoire of teaching strategies so we have more than one way to teach?
- Are we open to correction by others?
- Do we push students to become their own advocates for how to learn, and do we give them the tools to do so?

These are the guiding questions behind the DI philosophy. None of this changes any of the strategies or ideas that have been presented, but rather, for me at least, clarifies the goal and purpose of practicing differentiated instruction in the classroom. We all were asked at one point or another to give our philosophy on education. I am sure over the years it has changed some. Take a minute to think about your current teaching philosophy...

- What is your teaching philosophy?
- Do you already believe and practice differentiated instruction and need further support?
- Is there room in your philosophy to incorporate more of this idea?
- What is your goal for you students when they leave your class?

Eighty percent of differentiation is mind-set; the rest is craft.

To see how much your classroom reflects the differentiated philosophy, take this [self-assessment](#). Think of it like a scale, where 0 is most traditional and 10 is most differentiated. Put an X where you feel your classroom practices fall. Then think back to your philosophy. Does it match your practices? Can you take two or more ideas to set goals for yourself for next year?

This is not something that can be done overnight. It is a big idea that needs your time and attention. Reflect and think about what your goals as an educator are. Can differentiated instruction get you to that place? Are you willing to try? What do you believe?

Resource: "Differentiation at the Secondary Level". <http://www.ohiorc.org/adlit/inperspective/issue/2007-02/Article/feature.aspx>.

### JAVITS – ONLINE PD

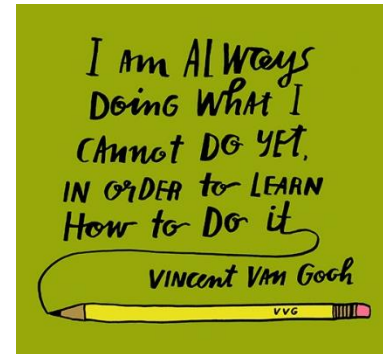
If you have missed out on the opportunity this year to learn some basics of DI, DI strategies, and/or would like to learn more about gifted students, then JAVITS could be the answer you are looking for.

This online module, allows you to explore five topics at your own pace, which include: Top Ten Things Teachers Should Know about Gifted Students, Differentiated Instruction in the Regular Classroom, Testing and Identification, Social & Emotional Needs of Gifted Students, and Acceleration. You will be able to complete any or all of the topics. Everything is online and you will be able to turn it in to your district for CEUs upon completion of reflection questions.

If you are interested in this professional development, created by ODE, contact me at [ktebbe@auglaizeesc.org](mailto:ktebbe@auglaizeesc.org).

## IDEAS TO TRY YET THIS YEAR

Testing is almost through and the students (and you too) are getting antsy for summer break. Now is the perfect time to try some new things to keep your students on their toes while you experiment first hand with new ideas you can use next year. Here are some simple ideas to get you started.



### Grouping Strategies:

- Flexible Grouping – based on specific learning needs or preferences, fluid membership, work on different activities based on need, and regrouped as needed. Grouping based on individual skill mastery, preferences or interests
- Ability/Aptitude Grouping – based on performance, rigid membership, work on same or similar activities, and may be regrouped based on instructional needs. Grouping based on perceptions about innate ability.
- Cooperative Groups – random by ability or preference, fluid membership, work on same task, and may be mixed by strengths. Grouping for purpose of developing collaborative skills.

### Anchor Activities:

- What are they?
  - Specific, ongoing, independent activities
  - Relate to content being learned throughout the year
  - Engaging and meaningful tasks (not busy work or packets)
- Why use them?
  - Strategy to engage students who complete work at different times
  - Allow time for teachers to work with individuals or small groups.

- How to assess anchor activities?
  - Ongoing records and/or checklists
  - Student conferences and goal setting
  - Learning journals and/or contracts
  - Student portfolios
  - Rubrics

### Orbital Studies:

- What are they?
  - Independent study on a student selected topic that orbits around the curriculum.
  - Short-term (3-6 week) investigations presented to the class using a display or demonstration.
  - May also include a handout for the audience
- Why use them?
  - Can be used as an anchor activity
  - Allow students to explore their own interests within the area of curriculum being studied.
  - Promotes independence and creative thinking
  - Hits on College and Career Readiness standards
- How to assess orbital studies?
  - Student and teacher collaborate on a rubric
  - Student conference and goal setting
  - Learning contract
  - Student portfolios

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## READY TO USE MATERIALS/RESOURCES

- You can find other great ideas to try out this year in the article "[Hands-Off Teaching Cultivates Metacognition](#)" by Maats and O'Brien.
- Curious how your students prefer to work on projects? Check out this [Preassessment of Project Preferences](#). Great resource to learn more about your students.
- [Matching Assessment with Students' Strengths](#) gives further insight on how you can use Multiple Intelligences to meet your students' needs.
- Showing regard for others is a trait that successful people may exhibit. Try these K-5 activities from [Learning to be a Durable Person](#) by Mary Hennenfent.
  - [Activity 16 – Caught in the Act](#)
  - [Activity 17 – You're Mean](#)
- [Stimulate Creative Thinking](#) activities are quick and easy activities to keep your students going. Check these out.
- Something else to try out with your students, social media as a tool for learning. Check out this article: "[50+ Tools for Differentiating Instruction Through Social Media](#)".

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### **Multiple Intelligence Surveys**

Assess your students' multiple intelligences to discover innovative ways to help your students succeed based on their intelligence.

- Have students take an online assessment at: <http://literacynet.org/mi/assessment/index.html> or download and print the document at: <http://surfaquarium.com/MI/inventory.htm> to determine their best learning intelligence.
- Check out the additional practice resources at <http://literacynet.org/mi/assessment/index.html> for an overview on each intelligence to learn how you can mix this into your lesson plans.

**Extra Credit:** Create a Choice Board using what you learned about the intelligences of your students for your next learning target.

Get more information and samples of Choice Boards at:

- <http://www.theartofed.com/2012/07/11/how-to-use-choice-boards-to-differentiate-learning/>
- <https://daretodifferentiate.wikispaces.com/Choice+Boards>
- <http://literacycrossdisciplines.cmswiki.wikispaces.net/Choice+Boards>

Other Resources:

"Resources for Differentiation" – <http://resources-for-differentiation.wikispaces.com/>.

CHECK IT OUT!



While this video, called "I am Gifted", is geared toward gifted learners, I think this is true for all of our students in one way or another....

<http://www.teachertube.com/video/i-am-gifted-126208>