

# *The Differentiation Workbook:*

A step-by-step guide to planning  
lessons that appropriately challenge all  
students

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[www.coreeducationalconsulting.com](http://www.coreeducationalconsulting.com)

Washington, DC

Published by Core Educational Consulting, Inc.

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ISBN: 978-0-9789772-0-7

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# Contents

<b>How to use this workbook</b>	9
<b>What is differentiated Instruction?</b>	11
<b>Step One:</b> Diagnose Your Students	14
• Diagnosing your students	
• Differentiating for the four types of students	
<b>Step Two:</b> Define mastery	21
• Need-to-knows versus Nice-to-knows	23
• Evidence of Mastery	25
• Mastery worksheet	27
<b>Step Three:</b> Move students towards mastery	28
• Activation	29
• Activation and Differentiation	30
• Activation Planning Sheet	32
• Acquisition	33
• direct instruction	33
• direct instruction and differentiation	34
• guided practice	35
• guided practice and differentiation	
• independent practice	36
• independent practice and differentiation	37
• Differentiation and the four types of students	39
• Acquisition learning planning worksheet	40
<b>Step Four:</b> Adjust instruction based on students' needs	41
• Formative assessment	42
• Formative assessment planning sheet	44
• Acceleration	45
• Acceleration planning sheet	47
• Remediation	48
• Remediation strategy planning sheet	50
<b>Step Five:</b> Evaluate mastery	52
• Summative assessments	53
• Summative assessments and differentiation	
<b>Step Six:</b> Putting it all together	54
• Differentiated Unit Planning Sheet	56
Conclusion	59
References	62
About CORE	64
About the author	65
Order Form	67

# How to use this book

**Everyone**, it seems, is talking about differentiated instruction these days; but, few people are actually differentiating in their classrooms. It's not that we don't believe that differentiation is important; it's just that many of us have not been given proper guidance on how to effectively differentiate for our students.

Some teachers attempt to differentiate by creating three different levels of goals and assignments—high, medium, and low. While their hearts are often in the right place, these attempts at differentiation can often result in lowered expectations for struggling students and extra work for advanced students. Other teachers try tiered assignments, or cubing, or one of the other strategies touted in the differentiation literature without fully understanding how and why these strategies work and how they might work for different types of students. Again, their hearts are in the right place; but, unless differentiation is integrated into the core of the lesson, these attempts at differentiation result in hit-or-miss strategies rather than a comprehensive approach to instruction.

Books on the subject typically fall into one of two categories: those that explain the theory of differentiation and those that catalog the various strategies one could use to differentiate a lesson. While both types of books have their place, neither of these types of books give teachers step-by-step practical guidance about how to integrate differentiation into their classroom practice.

This workbook takes a different approach. It helps you translate theory into practice and shows you how to use the various strategies available. It serves as a guide, a planning tool you can use to comprehensively integrate differentiation into your classroom.

You will notice that this book focuses mostly on effectively planning a unit. Rather than show you how to apply the various differentiation strategies in a random fashion, this book focuses on how you can be more intentional by incorporating differentiation at each stage of lesson planning and delivery. The goal is to help you think about differentiation at each stage of the process and to show you how to integrate differentiation into the very core of your practice.

This workbook can be used in several ways. For one, you could use this workbook individually to guide your own thinking about differentiated instruction and to shape your lesson plans for the year. The best way to start is by deciding what it is you want to learn from this workbook. Perhaps you simply want a better understanding of how differentiation works or maybe you want to begin a comprehensive integration of differentiation into your practice. Just as it is important to first determine what your goals are for students, it is also important to set your own learning goals. Before you

begin, take some time to understand the general framework of this workbook. Preview the material and read the text before deciding how you will proceed. Then, follow the steps in this guide and use the worksheets included to diagnose your students, develop an action plan, and evaluate your progress.

You could also use this workbook with a small group of other teachers. In this setting, it is a good idea to first read and discuss the book as a group. Overview the various steps in the process and discuss which steps might give each group member the most trouble. Additionally, you can see in which steps members of your group might have some expertise. You will also want to make some commitments as a group about how you will work through the steps in this workbook. Then, you can either meet and work through the steps together, or you can work through the steps individually and meet weekly or bi-weekly as a group to discuss your progress, share your triumphs, and brainstorm ways around your challenges. It is also a good idea to designate a group facilitator or rotate the duty in order to keep everyone focused and on track.

If you are an administrator, this book provides a wonderful snapshot of the kinds of activities and thinking that should be happening in a truly differentiated classroom.

It will help you recognize effective differentiation in your observations and provide you with useful tools you can offer to teachers as you conference with them and support their professional development.

If you are using this workbook as a part of an CORE workshop, much of what you do will be directed by the workshop facilitator. However, once the workshop is over, this workbook will serve as a handy reminder of the things you learned in the workshop as well as a reference tool to guide your future lesson planning.

However you decide to use this workbook, it will help you develop lessons that will meet the needs of all of your students while saving you from wasted time and effort.

As always, we want to hear from you. After you've tried the strategies in this book, do drop us a line at [info@coreeducationalconsulting.com](mailto:info@coreeducationalconsulting.com) to let us know how you used the book, what parts you found most helpful, and what parts you found most difficult. We also want to hear your success stories so tell us how you used the strategies in this book and how they made a difference in your teaching and in the lives of your students.

And, if you would like an CORE facilitator to come to your school and work with your staff on these strategies, give us a call at 202-248-6556 or send us an email. We would love to help.

The chart on the next page summarizes the various ways you can differentiate for each type of student. Following it is a worksheet you can use to plan for independent practice.

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# Differentiation and the Four Types of Students

	<b>Content</b>	<b>Process</b>	<b>Product</b>	<b>Environment</b>
<b>HCHP</b>	Increase complexity Introduce ambiguity Introduce Nice-to-knows Higher level questions during discussions	Apply knowledge to complex unknowns Extra steps and extensions Compacting the curriculum	Tiered assignments Learning contracts	Anchoring activities Computer labs Media Center Learning centers
<b>HCLP</b>	Increase complexity Introduce ambiguity Introduce Nice-to-knows	Acceleration Adjusted Pace Flexible learning modalities	Oral or visual versus written Focus on content versus process Allow flexible deadlines	Large group discussions Learning centers
<b>LCHP</b>	Acceleration	Extra steps or extensions Increase complexity of process	Allow retakes and do-over's Variety of processes	Large group discussions Learning centers
<b>LCLP</b>	Remediation Need-to-knows Only	Remediation Simplified Process Fewer Steps or questions Adjusted Pace	Range of options Retakes and do-over's	Small groups Computer Labs Learning centers



## About Core

Core is an educational consulting firm that helps teachers, administrators, and school systems figure out how to make sure that the methods they are using to improve student achievement produce the desired results. We use a few core principles to help our clients get to the root of what's not working and to develop more effective ways to help ALL their students achieve.

Core has helped hundreds of teachers and administrators improve student achievement through its workshops, seminars, free materials, books, and consulting services. We use a simple set of timeless principles to help educators diagnose their challenges and develop an action plan to resolve them. We won't suggest a solution until we are clear about who you are and what it is you are facing. If you'd like our help, give us a call at 202-248-6556 or email us at [info@coreeducationalconsulting.com](mailto:info@coreeducationalconsulting.com). The first consultation is free.

## About Core Concepts

Core Concepts is a workbook series designed to give teachers and school leaders practical, step-by-step guidance to develop those skills most essential to good teaching. For more information or to view other titles in the series, visit our website at <http://www.coreeducationalconsulting.com>. If you would like a Core Coach to work with your school or district on one of the Core Concepts, please give us a call at 202-248-6556.



## About the Author

Robyn R. Jackson, PhD has been an educator for more than a decade. As a National Board Certified English teacher, she increased the enrollment of minority and non-traditional students in her AP Language and Composition classes and tripled her overall course enrollment within one year without a decrease in her students' test scores. As a middle school administrator in Montgomery County Maryland, she has worked to revise the district's Gifted and Talented program to be more inclusive of all students and better prepare students for rigorous high school work. She also helped lead one of the largest middle schools in the district to state and national Blue Ribbon status. As an educator, she has served as an adjunct professor and presented her own research at several national conferences

Because of her practical approach to instruction, Dr. Jackson has become a nationally recognized presenter and consultant who has been featured in The Washington Post, on several radio programs, a PBS/Annenberg television series, and Lifetime Television's Lifetime Live. She works regularly with schools throughout the United States, helping them build their capacity to meet the diverse needs of their students and to remove the institutional barriers to student success. Most recently, she has worked with school districts in the District of Columbia, Delaware, Maryland, Florida, Massachusetts, Illinois, and Ohio on everything from improving the planning and delivery of instruction to developing the leadership capacity of the school leadership team. Recently, Dr. Jackson was named a fellow with the Phelps Stokes Fund to research ways to improve teacher preparation and she is currently finishing her next book, *What They Didn't Teach You About Teaching*.

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## The Differentiation Workbook

**Everyone** agrees that differentiated instruction is important, but few know how to differentiate effectively.

How do I meet the needs of ALL of my students, especially when their needs are so diverse? Does differentiation mean that I have to make up three different assignments every time I give an assignment? Where will I find time to differentiate?

If you have ever wanted the answers to any of these questions, then this is the book for you. Designed to provide teachers with a practical approach to differentiated instruction, The Differentiation Workbook provides a step-by-step guide to:

- quickly and easily diagnose your students' abilities
- design lessons that meet your students where they are
- identify strategies that work with each type of student
- anticipate confusion before the lesson
- develop a plan for students who fall behind
- keep all students engaged and challenged
- reduce the amount of time you spend on remediation
- ensure that all students achieve mastery

With practical worksheets and easy-to-use tools, The Differentiation Workbook helps you easily and effectively integrate differentiation into every aspect of your instructional practice.

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ISBN-13: 978-0-9789772-0-7

ISBN-10: 0-9789772-0-3



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