Tiered Learning

“The meat and potatoes of differentiated instruction.”

Carol Ann Tomlinson (1999)
Tiered Learning

- Addresses standard, concept, or generalization
- Allows several paths to arrive at understanding
- Students work in teacher assigned groups
  - Number of groups may vary
  - Groups don’t have to be the same size
Tiered Learning Lessons

- Readiness
- Learning profile
- Student interest
Tiered by Readiness

- Teacher understands ability levels and designs tiers to meet their needs
- Most tiered lessons @3 levels
  - Below grade level
  - At grade level
  - Above grade level
- Each lesson is contained; therefore groups will change depending on the topic of each lesson
Example of Readiness Tiered Lesson

- Science lesson on magnetism
  - Low level: works on concrete level, looking at kinds of objects a magnet can attract
  - High level: works on more abstract level, investigating whether the size of the magnet affects its strength
Tiered by Learning Profile

- Students grouped according to style of learning in which they work best
- Students learn same content but the way in which it is presented differs
- Example:
  - Auditory
  - Visual
  - Kinesthetic
Tiered by Student Interest

- Teacher pre-assessment of student interest
  - Design an interest survey listing several topics to be studied with possible activities
  - Students rank choices
  - Teacher assigns students to group based on their choices
Tiered Lesson Planning

Tiered Assignment Template

Essential Understandings, Skills, Knowledge:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task One:</th>
<th>Task Two:</th>
<th>Task Three:</th>
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Criteria for evaluation:
Tiered Lesson Planning Checklist

- Identify standard
- Identify key concept or generalization
- Assess student background for prerequisite understanding
- Select \textit{what} you will tier
  - (content, process, product)
- Select \textit{how} you will tier
  - (readiness, interest, or learning style)
- Determine how many tiers you need
Assessments of Tiered Lessons

- Recorded observations
- Rubric for student self-assessment of each tiered assignment
- Formal pencil and paper test
- Folders/portfolios for teacher to monitor at any point
- Student checklist
Reflection on Tiered Lessons

- Differentiation means qualitatively different, not quantitatively different
- Lessons should differ in levels of complexity rather than amount of work
- Each tier should be challenging & developmentally appropriate