Steps in Differentiated Instruction for Teachers

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Differentiation is a modified instruction that assists students with varied academic needs and learning styles. The method helps students master the academic content despite its challenges. Many teachers are somewhat hesitant to utilize this task because it seems complicated. However, designing and applying a varied strategies within one classroom can be done at different levels.

With each individual student, a teacher can vary instruction. The same holds true for a small group or an entire class. Good (2006) states that it is crucial to understand that differentiating does not follow giving separate, unrelated activities for each student but giving interrelated activities designed on student needs to ensure that all students arrive at a similar level of grasping a skill or idea.

In beginning an effective differentiated instruction, teachers must have a deep understanding of the knowledge or skill they want their students to learn. As a teacher, it is not enough to just teach a specific skill without considering what your learners need and require. Second, teachers must assess how much their students already know and do not know about a specific knowledge. From here, they must carefully choose which instructional methods and materials will most successfully meet their students' needs. Lastly, teachers should design ways to sufficiently identify student mastery of what is taught. Remember that having a baseline data of student knowledge and understanding is the first vital ingredient to successful differentiation.

The best assessment tools teachers should have are the regularly used classroom-based assessments instead of just the end of the year testing. This method will greatly help in differentiated instruction. These kinds of assessments help teachers measure their students’ academic strengths and weaknesses more profoundly. Also, this provides both teacher and students a guide for next steps in instruction. At the beginning of the school year, an initial skills assessment can be done. From here, teachers can gauge their students’ knowledge and needs to have a guide on which instruction to start with. Conceptualizing lessons would then be much easier and teachers
will also know that they are in the right track. As the classes progress, teachers will also be able to start new units, develop lessons to review or widen topics already discussed. Assessments can be done in a formal manner or not as long as the assessment is done crucially. Diagnostic tests or writing samples can be used to facilitate the test.

References: