

TIERED INSTRUCTION

Tiered instruction is a differentiation strategy that allows all students to focus on essential concepts and skills yet still be challenged at the different levels on which they are individually capable of working.

Start tiering by expecting every student to demonstrate full proficiency with the standard, not something less. Second, realize that most of the material taught has a subset of skills and content that can be broken down for students and explored at length. There won't always be high, medium and low tiers. Lastly, when first beginning to tier assignments, stay focused on one concept or task to tier.

Tiered assignments should be:

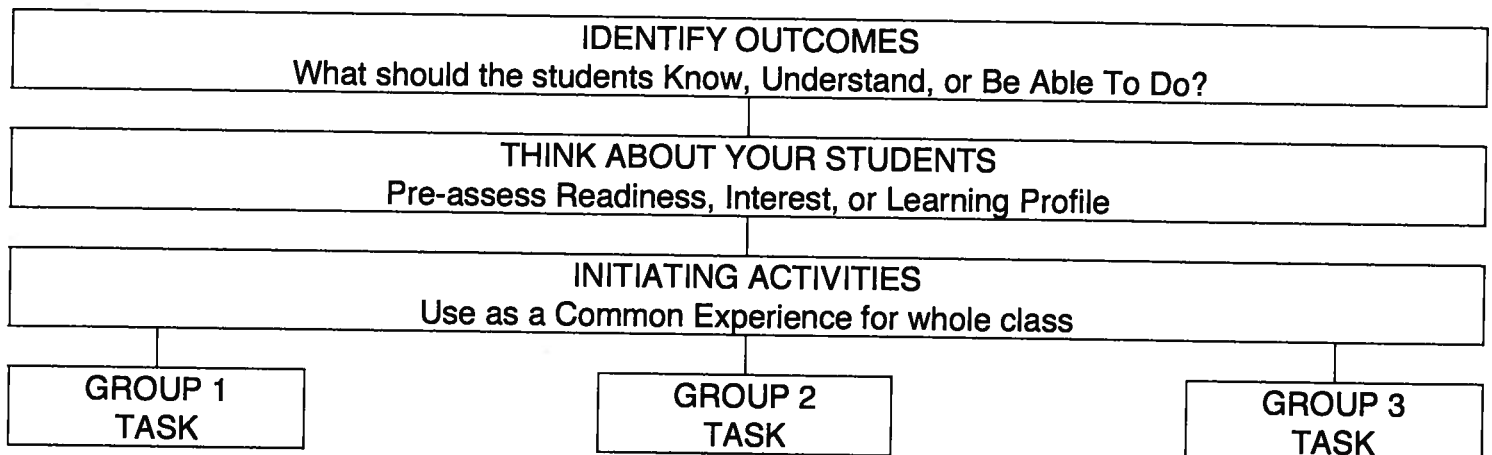
- Different work, not simply more or less work
- Equally active
- Equally interesting and engaging
- Fair in terms of work expectations and time needed
- Requiring the use of key concepts, skills, or ideas

Why Tier?

- Encourages students to begin learning from where they currently are
- Allows students to work with appropriately challenging tasks
- Avoids work that is anxiety producing or boring
- Promotes success and is therefore **MOTIVATING**
- Blends assessment and instruction

Adjust:

- Level of Complexity
- Amount of Structure
- Materials
- Form of Expression
- Number of Steps
- Level of Dependence
- Time/Pace



Tiered Assignments

Tiering a lesson is one way to differentiate the curriculum for mixed ability classrooms. Students will continue to learn the same objectives and content, but they will process the information and gain understanding at their ability/challenge level. Below are several strategies to tier a lesson or unit. See website below.

Six Ways to Structure*:

- By Challenge Level – Bloom’s Taxonomy
From knowledge, comprehension, application, to analysis, evaluation, and synthesis (from placing information learned on a chart...to...comparing and contrasting...to using the information learned to create something new)
- By Complexity
From simple to complex (reporting information on an issue/topic ... to... reporting different points of view on an issue/topic...to... determining a position on an issue and presenting a convincing argument to defend that position)
- By Resources
Choose materials at various reading levels and complexity of content
- By Outcome
From basic tasks to advanced tasks (presenting what was learned on a topic studied...to...presentation comparing same topic to today’s similar issues and looking at impact, concerns, changes, etc.)
- By Process
From basic tasks to advanced tasks (Research consumer information about a product and report findings ... to ... establish criteria for purchasing a product based on information learned about the product...to...interview 3 people who have purchased the product and identify the criteria they used in making a decision when purchasing this product and drawing conclusions)
- By Product
Ex. Verbal/linguistic; visual/spatial; logical/mathematical; bodily kinesthetic; musical (student products reflect their learning preferences and interests)

*From: *Differentiating Instruction in the Regular Classroom: How to Reach and Teach All Learners, Grades 3-12*, Diane Heacox, EdD, Free Spirit Publishing,

Check out the web site below. There are tiered lessons in math, science, and language arts from kindergarten to 12th grade. Lessons are leveled by readiness (ability), by interest, and by learning styles. The site is the Tiered Curriculum Project through the Indiana Department of Education. Place the cursor on the web address below and then hold down “Ctrl” key on your keyboard. When the hand appears, click on the address.

http://www.doe.state.in.us/exceptional/gt/tiered_curriculum/welcome.html

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: Third

Standard: #3 Fractions and Decimals

Key Concept: Students develop an understanding of fractions.

Generalization: Students show equivalent fractions using equal parts or sets.

Background:

This lesson is adapted from Constructing Ideas About Fractions, Exploration 2, Fraction Books, pages 8-13 (ISBN# 1-56107-810-7). Students should be familiar with a manipulative used to model fractions, such as Fraction Circles PLUS, Fraction Builder, or Fraction Islands. These manipulatives are available from a variety of sources including Creative Publications and Nasco. It would also be possible to use “homemade” manipulatives or a set constructed by the students themselves in a previous lesson.

Students who have a minimal understanding of fractions should be placed in the **Basic** tier. Those who show an understanding of halves, thirds, fourths, sixths, and eighths should be placed in the **Grade Level** tier. Students who have demonstrated an understanding of halves, thirds, fourths, fifths, sixths, sevenths, eighths, ninths, and tenths should be placed in the **Advanced** tier.

Each tier will produce the same product.

This lesson is tiered in **content** according to **readiness**.

Tier I: Basic Learners

Students work with a partner and a commercially prepared fraction model with a limited number of parts. For instance, the Fraction Circles PLUS set contains wholes, halves, thirds, fourths, fifths, sixths, eighths, tenths, and twelfths and you would limit the set to just the wholes, halves, thirds, fourths, sixths, and eighths.

Tier II: *Grade Level Learners*

Students work with a partner and a commercially prepared fraction model. For instance, the Fraction Circles PLUS set contains wholes, halves, thirds, fourths, fifths, sixths, eighths, tenths, and twelfths and students would work with the entire set.

Tier III: *Advanced Learners*

Students work with a partner and a commercially prepared fraction model. For instance, the Fraction Circles PLUS set contains wholes, halves, thirds, fourths, fifths, sixths, eighths, tenths, and twelfths. Students would construct additional pieces to represent ninths, fifteenths, eighteenths, and twenty-fourths or have students prepare their own model of all these fractions from a rectangle.

Each tier will complete the following activities with respect to their content.

General directions for making the pages of a “Fraction Book”:

Pick a fraction and make it with your fraction manipulatives.

Find equivalent fractions using your manipulatives.

Illustrate your findings on half sheets of paper using pictures, numbers, and symbols.

Creating the fraction books:

Each tier will create the cover and chapter dividers for the book.

Pairs of students will contribute pages of equivalent fractions.

Each tier will sort the illustrations and verify that they are correct.

On the final day, each tier will bind their book.

Each tier will share the completed book with the class.

This lesson should be done over several days and could be extended beyond a week.

Assessment:

After sharing the results of the fraction books and a whole class discussion, all students should answer in writing a series of questions about the relationships among the fractions for their tier. Students should be encouraged to read each other’s fraction books.

Subject: Language Arts

Grade: Three

Standard: #3 Reading : Application

Key Concept: Comparing and contrasting new information in reading with what is already known helps with application.

Generalization: Different forms of literature often address the same ideas in different ways. The main idea of helping others is understood by looking at a variety of information. Today, students will compare and contrast the idea of helping others in "Music, Music for Everyone" by Vera Williams, with fantasy literature (e.g. *Harry Potter*, *One of the Chronicles of Narnia*, *the Hobbit*, *one of the Prydain Chronicles*, or any other piece of fantasy literature they have read). Students will be placed in tiers according to learning preference. They will use different processes to understand the concept of helping others as they compare fantasy with reality portrayals of this theme.

This lesson is tiered in **process** according to **learning style**.

Tier I: Visual/Spatial Learners

Create a visual representation of the idea of helping others as depicted in a fantasy piece as compared to the idea represented in a real story such as "Music, Music for Everyone." Students may choose to web this or they may choose to draw a picture that clearly shows the main idea of helping others but the different ways of providing the help. An example from *Harry Potter* would be Harry's, Hermione's, and Ron's actual care and help of Hagrid in Book #3 when Hagrid was in trouble for what happened with Buckbeak. Compare how they used their talents to help with how the girls used their talents to help in "Music, Music for Everyone." Students can discuss their pictures with their own group and then with the whole class (or display the pictures in the class).

Tier II: Auditory Learners

Listen to an excerpt of a fantasy story on CD that has an example of helping others on it. Compare and contrast the way the helping incident happened by telling the main idea first and then how a real-life depiction deals with helping as compared with the fantasy story. Orally describe this to the rest of the group in a shared discussion. Everyone should share. Audiotape the sharing session and play it back to the students.

Tier III: Kinesthetic Learners

Choose a fantasy story and act out a scene that particularly shows helping another person. Do the same for the real life depiction found in "Music, Music for Everyone." In acting out the two different scenes, show the ways the subject of helping is treated in the different stories. Use everyone in the group to act out these two different scenes.

Tier IV: Interpersonal Learners

Divide in twos. Think of interview questions that focus on the theme of helping others. Do two interviews: one with a character from a fantasy story; one from a character from "Music, Music for Everyone." As you do this, perhaps one interview partner can be a

character in one type of story and then in the second interview, the other person can be a character from the second type of story.
The main idea is helping others. Share your interviews with other people in your group.

Assessment:

Each group is doing a task according to their preferred learning profile (in this case Multiple Intelligences helped with determining the profiles). The teacher should be an active observer during the group process. Use a rubric for each group to help them keep on task. Since there are so many activities happening, perhaps sharing within individual groups (with like learning profiles) will inspire group discussions that you can also observe and assess.

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HANDOUT 37

You have about an hour to make plans for a tiered assignment you and your students can use. Below is an explanation of a tiered assignment. Also included is a planning guide you may want to complete. There is also paper available for you in the room if you need it. Be sure to build on the work you began with Handout 31.

Developing a Tiered Assignment

Tiered Assignment: A tiered assignment is an instructional strategy designed to ensure that all learners work with the critical knowledge, understanding, and skill specified as central to the assignment but at a degree of difficulty that is appropriately challenging to particular learners. The goal of a tiered assignment is to ensure that each student has to stretch a bit to complete the work but is able to do so with appropriate effort and support. Like most good assignments, a tiered assignment requires every student to think at a high level. Thus it is *not appropriate to tier tasks by requiring some students to think at high levels and others to work at low levels*. Virtually any sort of school task can be tiered, such as a learning center, a writing prompt, a lab report, homework, a test, a product assignment, and so on. The goal of tiering is to address student readiness needs. However, it is possible to incorporate student interest and learning preferences into tiered assignments as well.

Planning Guide

Topic for the Tiered Assignment:

Duration of the Assignment:

Learning Goals to Be Achieved with the Tiered Assignment:

Specific Personalized Goals for Specific Students

Preassessment Plans:

Handout 37—Continued

The Tiers of the Assignment:	
Matching Students to Tiers:	Working Guidelines for Students:
Time Line Requirements:	Introducing Tiered Assignments to Students:
Giving Directions for the Tiered Assignments:	
How Work Will Be Graded:	Monitoring Student Work and Progress:
Checking Work for Accuracy, Understanding, and Quality:	Bringing Closure to the Lesson for the Whole Class:

Tiered Activity Template

Subject:	Grade:	Standard:
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Key Concept:	Pre-assessment (observation, exit card, interest survey, etc.):
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Engaging Whole Group/Hook:	All Students Will:	Tiered by:
		<input type="checkbox"/> Readiness <input type="checkbox"/> Interest <input type="checkbox"/> Learning Style <input type="checkbox"/> or Preference <input type="checkbox"/> Content <input type="checkbox"/> Product <input type="checkbox"/> Process

	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Additional accommodations/modifications			
Additional accommodations/modifications			
Assessment			
Assessment			
Assessment			

Closure (How will students come back together to discuss/share their learning?):
