



**In Roseville Area Schools, teachers differentiate instruction
to meet the needs of the gifted students.**

❖ *What Is Differentiated Instruction?*

According to Carol Ann Tomlinson, “At its most basic level, differentiation consists of the efforts of teachers to respond to variance among learners in the classroom. Whenever a teacher reaches out to an individual or small group to vary his or her teaching in order to create the best learning experience possible, that teacher is differentiating instruction.” Differentiation allows teachers to focus on essential skills in each content area, be responsive to individual differences, incorporate assessment into instruction, and provide students with multiple avenues to learning. The result is a classroom where specialized instruction is the norm for all students. Some of the practices that are central to differentiated instruction include formative assessment, flexible grouping, and an understanding of each student’s readiness, interests, and preferred learning processes.

There are typically four areas where differentiation can occur:

<i>Area of Differentiation</i>	<i>Differentiation for All Students</i>	<i>Differentiation for Gifted Students</i>
<i>Content:</i> What the student needs to learn or how the student will get access to the information	Using reading materials at varying readability levels	Content must be enhanced through depth, complexity, novelty and acceleration.
<i>Process:</i> Activities in which the student engages in order to make sense of or master the content	Using tiered activities through which all learners work with the same important concepts or skills but proceed with different levels of support, challenge or complexity	Learning processes must include high level cognitive and affective thinking skills, metacognitive skills, research skills and communication skills.
<i>Product:</i> Culminating projects that ask the student to rehearse, apply, and extend what he or she has learned in a unit	Encouraging students to create their own product assignments as long as the assignments contain required elements	Products should address real problems, audiences and concerns and should synthesize information rather than just summarize.
<i>Environment:</i> The way the classroom works and feels	Making sure there are places in the room to work quietly and without distraction, as well as places that invite student collaboration	The classroom environment should encourage inquiry and independence, as well as a climate that is conducive to questioning and creativity.

Differentiated Instruction for Gifted Students



❖ *How does differentiation for gifted learners build from differentiation for all students?*

For All Students	For Gifted Learners
Applies state academic standards	Extends academic standards into “next levels” of the curriculum area
Provides activities that reflect rigor and variety	Incorporates advanced, in-depth and complex content and processes
Provides modeling, guided practice and scaffolding as appropriate	Provides cognitively complex learning
Uses appropriate pacing; may remediate or accelerate	Accelerates learning as appropriate to the student’s talents
Uses assessment tools to identify and plan for learning preferences, readiness and interests	Uses assessment tools to identify mastery and then eliminates, replaces or extends learning tasks
Uses multiple assessment methods to monitor learning progress	Uses assessment data to identify exceptional learning needs and prescribe appropriate academic interventions

From Making Differentiation a Habit: How to Ensure Success in Academically Diverse Classrooms by Diane Heacox (2009)

❖ *What are some indicators of differentiation in action?*

All schools, teachers and students differ, and teachers and students have preferences, strengths and challenges as individuals, therefore there is not a one-size-fits-all differentiation plan for meeting the needs of all gifted students. So, how do you know learning is regularly and intentionally differentiated for students? Here are several indicators of differentiation in a classroom:

- ✓ Teacher uses a variety of instructional strategies to engage students in learning
- ✓ Some students are engaged in tasks that have been modified or adapted for their needs
- ✓ Student activities reflect differences in readiness, interest, or learning preference
- ✓ Teacher regularly gathers assessment data and adjusts instruction accordingly
- ✓ Students are purposefully grouped for activities
- ✓ Resources within the classroom reflect differences in depth or sophistication of content
- ✓ Students are able to move to independent work when they are ready

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