



# HETEROGENEOUS GROUPING

What Does It Mean For The Students Of North  
Haledon?



“Whatever we do will have lasting implications, not only on the lives of those students, but also on the lives of all those who they come in contact with. So then, the questions that we should ask ourselves should not be, “How can I make this work?” The question must be, “How can I afford not to make this work.”

-Wendy Kopp, *One Day, All Children*



Homogeneous  
Classes

=

Classes include  
students with  
similar abilities

Heterogeneous  
Classes

=

Classes include  
students with a  
wide range of  
instructional  
levels

# Why Heterogeneous Grouping?



- ❑ Strong body of research supports heterogeneous grouping

- A. Burris, C. & Welner, K.G. (2005)
- B. Rubin, B.C. (2006)
- C. Handout

- ❑ Decades of successful school district transitions to homogeneous grouping

A. From: Burris, C. & Welner, K.G. (2005). Closing the Achievement Gap by Detracking. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 86(8), 594-598.

	<b>South Side High School Class of 2000 Homogeneous Classes</b>	<b>South Side High School Class of 2003 Heterogeneous Classes</b>
% of African American and Hispanic Students who earned a Regents diploma	32%	82%
% of white and Asian American students who earned a Regents diploma	88%	97%

B. From Rubin, B.C. (2006). Tracking and Detracking; Debates, Evidence, and Best Practices for a Heterogeneous World. *Theory into Practice*, 45(1), 4-14.

- I. Researchers argue that the practice of tracking is inherently unfair and that it plays a crucial role in the creation of inequalities within our society (Goodland & Oakes, 1988; Mehan, 1992; Meehan et al., 1994; Oakes, 1986, 1982; Slavin, 1991, 1995).
- II. Many researchers report that students in different tracks do not receive the same quality of education (Oakes, 1985; Page, 1987).

B. From Rubin, B.C. (2006). Tracking and Detracking; Debates, Evidence, and Best Practices for a Heterogeneous World. *Theory into Practice*, 45(1), 4-14.



During the 1980s and 1990s, homogeneous grouping was formally condemned by:

1. The National Governor's Association
2. The Carnegie Council for Adolescent Development
3. The College Board
4. The National Education Association
5. The National Council of Teachers of English
6. The California Department of Education
7. The Massachusetts State legislature and others



Teaching in a **heterogeneous classroom** is most effective

when...

Instruction is **differentiated**

# Differentiation is...

...classroom practice that looks eyeball to eyeball with the reality that kids differ, and the most effective teachers do whatever it takes to hook the whole range of kids on learning.



-Tomlinson (2001)

When a teacher tries to teach something to the entire class at the same time, “chances are, one-third of the kids already know it; one-third will get it; and the remaining third won’t. So two-thirds of the children are wasting their time.”

- Lilian Katz





Reflect on this quote by completing the following phrases...

- As a student, I was in the 1/3 who...**
- As a parent, my child is in the 1/3 who...**

Adapted from Carol Tomlinson's work

Creates a personalized and responsive classroom environment

Maximizes student growth and individual success while honoring and celebrating the unique qualities of each student

**Differentiated Instruction**

Offers a variety of learning options within a student centered classroom

Blends whole group, small group, and individualized instruction utilizing a standards-based curriculum

# Key Principles of Differentiation



- The teacher attends to student differences.
- Assessment and instruction are interconnected.
- The teacher modifies content, process and product.
- All students participate in respectful work.
- The teacher balances group and individual norms.
- Students and teachers collaborate flexibly for learning.
- There are a variety of learning opportunities and working arrangements.

Adapted from the work Carol Ann Tomlinson

# Remember...

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“Fairness is when every child receives what he or she needs. Fairness is not everyone getting the same thing.”

-Rick Lavoie



# Traditional vs. Differentiated Classrooms

## Traditional Classroom

- ❑ Teacher presents lesson to whole class
- ❑ Students work individually
- ❑ All students are given the same amount of time to complete work
- ❑ All students work with the same materials
- ❑ Students are assessed with paper and pencil tests at the end of a unit of study

## Differentiated Classroom

- ❑ Teacher presents lesson to whole class, small groups, individuals
- ❑ Students work individually and in small groups
- ❑ Students spend different amount of time on tasks to learn well
- ❑ Students work with different material to learn well
- ❑ Assessment is on going and can take multiple forms.

# A change is perspective...


Adapted from Dr. Spencer Kagan: Kagan Cooperative Learning

In a traditional classroom...	In a differentiated classroom...
"A good class is a quiet class."	"Learning involves healthy noise."
"Keep your eyes on your paper."	"Help your partner to solve it."
"Sit quietly."	"Get up and look what others did."
"Talking is cheating."	"Verbalize to learn."

# What guides differentiation?

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A student's:

- 
- Readiness
  - Interest
  - Learning Style

# Readiness



**Readiness**

does NOT equal

**Ability**

# Ability vs. Readiness

## Ability

- Something we believe is more or less a fixed or inborn trait

## Readiness

- Suggests a temporary condition that will change regularly with high quality teaching

# Why Readiness?



1. To grow academically, students must work consistently with tasks that are focused on essential knowledge and skills that are a bit too difficult for their current level of readiness.
2. Students must have a support system of peers/teachers who will help them to emerge from a task at a more advanced level of readiness.

# Why Interest?



Student **interest**

is tied directly to

student **motivation** to learn.

# Why Learning Preference?



A student's preference for taking in, exploring or expressing information.

Is shaped by:

1. Learning style (e.g. visual, auditory, kinesthetic)
2. Intelligence preference (e.g. linguistic, interpersonal)
3. Gender
4. Culture

# Teachers differentiate through...



Content

“what is learned”



Process

“how it is learned”



Product

“how students show what is learned”



# To Differentiate Content...



## Adapt what is taught

- i.e. When teaching a linear progression of skills, such as spelling or math computation

## Adapt how students gain access to what is taught

- i.e. When students are at different reading levels reading the same text

# To Differentiate Process...



## According to readiness:

- Matching the complexity of a task to a student's current level of understanding

## According to interest:

- Giving students choices about facets of a topic to study


## According to learning preference:

- Encouraging students to make sense of an idea in a preferred way of learning

# To Differentiate Product...



- Teacher Choice: Teachers provide multiple options for children to express what they have learned.
- Student Choice: Students are given the opportunity to choose how they will express their knowledge.



“Even though students may learn in many ways, the essential skills and content they learn can remain steady. That is, students can take different roads to the same destination.”

-Carol Ann Tomlinson







