

## **Differentiated Instruction: Providing Additional Opportunities for Our Students**

### **For Your Consideration:**

- Once we have identified an individual or a small group in need of differentiated instruction (to preteach, reteach, provide additional practice, or to accelerate/extend learning), we need to find the time to provide the additional instruction.
- Finding the time to differentiate instruction often requires us to make difficult decisions related to planning for individual students. We must prioritize students' assessed needs and decide how their needs/strengths are best addressed. For example, will this student benefit most from an opportunity for a few minutes of differentiated instruction, or is his/her time best spent engaging in center activities, exploring his learning environment, participating in calendar, etc.?
- Teachers who have been discouraged in their efforts to differentiate instruction might consider "easing" into it. Find opportunities to meet with individuals or small groups for short periods of focused, intentional instruction. Monitor these less formal interventions with frequent, brief, and focused classroom assessments (see reverse).
- Those teachers who have developed strategies for effective differentiation should be provided with opportunities to share, and hopefully model, those strategies.

### **Differentiated Instruction: Classroom Snapshots**

Note: The following snapshots assume only one adult is present. If two adults are present, the challenges of providing differentiation are eased somewhat.

1. Based on classroom assessment, the teacher decides that several of his students would benefit from preteaching related to the vocabulary and concepts to be introduced in an upcoming anchor text. He decides to meet with those students for a few minutes during the free exploration period for the three days preceding the introduction of the new book.
2. During recess, the teacher gathers four leaves/twigs/pebbles and calls together several students who are struggling with one-to-one correspondence. She spends a few minutes counting and recounting the items, then asks each of them to find five more for her.
3. The teacher has identified four students who are strong decoders, and are ready to read more challenging decodable text. To build fluency, the teacher calls them from their center assignments and reads with them for a few minutes several times a week.
4. An embedded assessment focusing on an instructional dialogue about subtraction reveals serious misunderstandings. During center time, teacher calls the students together for additional instruction to clarify misconceptions about subtraction and build conceptual understanding.
5. Several students are struggling with oral blending. The teacher decides to work with them during a few minutes of their exploration time. To engage the students, she carefully selects engaging words related to their interests for blending practice and then sends them back to continue their independent exploration.