

Differentiated Instruction for English Language Arts

Instructions and activities for the diverse classroom

Gail Blasser Riley



Table of Contents

Introduction to Differentiated Instruction v
Standards for the English Language Arts viii

Chapter 1: Kicking Off Differentiated Instruction—Personal Style in Utilizing Content

Lesson 1: Personal Interests, Traits, and Goals 1
Lesson 2: Personal Learning Styles 6
Lesson 3: Also Known As (A.K.A.) 11
Lesson 4: Writing Log Sparks 14

Chapter 2: Analyzing and Evaluating Content

Lesson 5: Ads—How Do They Grab You? 17
Lesson 6: Power Quotes 22
Lesson 7: Shakespeare’s Comedies, Tragedies, and Histories 27
Lesson 8: Picture This—Editorial Cartoons 33

Chapter 3: Exercising Creativity with Content

Lesson 9: Today’s Frankenstein 41
Lesson 10: Music, Please 45
Lesson 11: Memorial 50

Chapter 4: Making Content Work—Technical, Workplace, and Functional Writing

Lesson 12: Build Your Résumé 54
Lesson 13: Winning the Job! Job Application and Interview 58
Lesson 14: When You Mean Business—Business Letter 64
Lesson 15: Traveling—Itinerary 70

Chapter 5: Connections Through Content—Speaking, Listening, and Demonstrating

Lesson 16: You Have the Right—Debate 77
Lesson 17: Step Up to the Plate! 85
Lesson 18: Ride On! 89

Chapter 6: Content with Conscience

Lesson 19: Community Supported Agriculture Brochure 94
Lesson 20: Learning from the Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina 101

Introduction to Differentiated Instruction

Differentiated Instruction for English Language Arts contains twenty language arts activities that will engage students of varying ability levels, learning styles, and areas of interest. All of the activities meet language arts standards and encompass several of the multiple intelligences. The lessons are designed to provide you with models of differentiated instruction to meet the diverse learning needs of your students.

Carol Ann Tomlinson in *The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of All Learners* encourages educators to look at teaching and learning in a new way. Using the phrase “One size doesn’t fit all,” she presents a philosophy of educational beliefs:

- Students must be seen as individuals. While students are assigned grade levels by age, they differ in their readiness to learn, their interests, and their style of learning.
- These differences are significant enough to require teachers to make accommodations and differentiate by content, process, and student products. Curriculum tells us what to teach; differentiation gives us strategies to make teaching more successful.
- Students learn best when connections are made between the curriculum, student interests, and students’ previous learning experiences.
- Students should be given the opportunity to work in flexible groups. Different lessons point toward grouping students in different ways: individually, heterogeneously, homogeneously, in a whole group, by student interests, and so forth.
- There should be ongoing assessment to help plan effective instruction.
- To address the diverse ways that students learn and their learning styles, we can look to Howard Gardner’s eight intelligences to provide a framework. Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences encourages us to scrutinize our attitudes toward learning so that each student can learn in a more relaxed environment.

Let’s explore what multiple intelligences look like in the language arts classroom.



Visual/Spatial

Perceives the visual world with accuracy; can transform and visualize three dimensions in a two-dimensional space. Encourage this intelligence by using graphs and making sketches, exploring spatial visualization problems, and using mapping activities.



Verbal/Linguistic

Appreciates and understands the structure, meaning, and function of language. These students can communicate effectively in both written and verbal form. Encourage this intelligence by using class to discuss ideas, making written and oral presentations, and doing research projects.



Logical/Mathematical

Ability to recognize logical or numerical patterns and observe patterns in symbolic form. Enjoys problems requiring the use of deductive or inductive reasoning and is able to follow a chain of reasoning. Encourage this intelligence by organizing and analyzing data, designing and working with spreadsheets, working on critical-thinking and estimation problems, and helping students make predictions based on the analysis of numerical data.



Musical/Rhythmic

The ability to produce and/or appreciate rhythm and music. Students may enjoy listening to music, playing an instrument, writing music or lyrics, or moving to the rhythms associated with music. Activities related to this intelligence include using songs to illustrate skills and/or concepts.



Bodily/Kinesthetic

The ability to handle one's body with skill and control, such as dancers, sports stars, and craftspeople. Students who excel in this intelligence are often hands-on learners. Activities related to this intelligence include the use of manipulatives, involvement with hands-on activities, and permitting students to participate in activities that require movement or relate physical movements to concepts.



Interpersonal

The ability to pick up on the feelings of others. Students who excel in this intelligence like to communicate, empathize, and socialize. Activities related to this intelligence include using cooperative-learning groups, brainstorming ideas, employing a creative use of grouping (including heterogeneous, homogeneous, self-directed, and so forth), and using long-range group projects.



Intrapersonal

Understanding and being in touch with one's feelings is at the center of this intelligence. Activities related to this intelligence include encouraging students to be self-reflective and explain their reasoning, using journal questions to support metacognition, and giving students quiet time to work independently.



Naturalist

Naturalist intelligence deals with sensing patterns in and making connections to elements in nature. These students often like to collect, classify, or read about things from nature—rocks, fossils, butterflies, feathers, shells, and the like. Activities related to this intelligence include classifying objects based upon their commonalities, searching for patterns, and using Venn diagrams to help organize data.

Format of the Book

The twenty reproducible lessons in this book have been developed to take advantage of a number of differentiation strategies. These include:

- Student-centered activities in which the teacher acts as a guide to foster students' self-reliance as learners
- A variety of instructional materials
- Varying approaches to assessment, including nontraditional assessment and assessment by multiple means
- Flexibility in how the teacher presents the material
- Flexible grouping options, with suggestions regarding activities that work best as individual projects, for pairs, and for small groups
- Flexible time to complete projects according to student levels and needs
- Multiple-option assignments in which students are given a choice of ways to pursue a topic and present concepts
- Multiple perspectives on ideas are encouraged.
- Students are encouraged to problem-solve independently, to use their background knowledge, and to use their individual talents and skills.
- Students are encouraged to make interest-based learning choices.
- Multiple intelligences are addressed in each activity, and are listed on the teacher pages.

You can either use these lessons as they are presented, or adapt them to your own curriculum. Lessons are based on the NCTE/IRA Standards for the English Language Arts. It is hoped that these lessons will further serve as a springboard for you to use your own ingenuity to rework lessons to meet the unique abilities of all students.

Standards for the English Language Arts

SPONSORED BY NCTE AND IRA

The vision guiding these standards is that all students must have the opportunities and resources to develop the language skills they need to pursue life's goals and to participate fully as informed, productive members of society. These standards assume that literacy growth begins before children enter school as they experience and experiment with literacy activities—reading and writing, and associating spoken words with their graphic representations. Recognizing this fact, these standards encourage the development of curriculum and instruction that make productive use of the emerging literacy abilities that children bring to school. Furthermore, the standards provide ample room for the innovation and creativity essential to teaching and learning. They are not prescriptions for particular curriculum or instruction. Although we present these standards as a list, we want to emphasize that they are not distinct and separable; they are, in fact, interrelated and should be considered as a whole.

1. Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.
2. Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.
3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).
4. Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.
5. Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.
6. Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts.

7. Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.
8. Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.
9. Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.
10. Students whose first language is not English make use of their first language to develop competency in the English language arts and to develop understanding of content across the curriculum.
11. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.
12. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

© 1998–2006 National Council of Teachers of English. All rights reserved in all media. 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801-1096. Phone: 217-328-3870 or 877-369-6283

Today's Frankenstein

OVERVIEW

Students will discuss Frankenstein and his monster from Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's *Frankenstein* and develop a diagram of a modern-day Frankenstein monster, taking into consideration scientific advances since the time of Shelley's novel.

MATERIALS/RESOURCES

Synopsis of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's *Frankenstein*

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS

1, 2, 3, 12

MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES

Visual/spatial, verbal/linguistic

SKILLS

Using graphic organizers; researching; drawing on novel synopsis to create an updated version of a character; drawing on personal knowledge to create a diagram with call-outs

DIFFERENTIATION STRATEGIES

- Allow students who are strong in bodily/kinesthetic facility to act out the monster's movements as they think about the diagram for their monsters.
- Encourage students who are not strong in visual/spatial facility to draw their diagrams to get the ideas across, but not to spend an inordinate amount of time trying to make the drawing of the monster "perfect."
- For struggling readers, provide diagrams with call-outs as you identify and explain the purpose of each type of feature.

WHAT TO DO

1. **Assignment discussion.** Tell students they will read a synopsis of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Explain that the class will then come together to discuss what they have read. Afterward, students will develop a diagram of a modern-day Frankenstein monster, taking into consideration scientific advances since the time of Shelley's novel. Explain that students need not do scientific research, but will draw on their personal knowledge regarding



scientific advances. Tell students to keep notes during the discussion. Point out that Shelley had completed this novel by the time she reached her nineteenth birthday. Ask students to imagine they are modern-day “Victor Frankensteins” who will be creating modernized versions of the Frankenstein monster.

2. **Flowchart.** Have students use the flowchart to list monster features, the purpose of each, the appearance of each, and the placement of each.
3. **Diagram.** Tell students to use their flowcharts to develop their diagrams.

ASSESSMENT

While discussing Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, listen for students to describe the character traits and figurative language Shelly uses in her writing about the monster.

In order to encourage creativity, assess each student’s creativity and clarity in conveying the information about the monster by writing a note to praise specifics of creativity and clarity and/or offering suggestions as to ways of offering greater creativity and clarity.

Today's Frankenstein

Creature Features

Directions: List a variety of potential features for your monster. Describe the feature's purpose, appearance, and placement. If needed, use another sheet of paper to describe more of your monster's features.

Feature 1: _____ Purpose: _____ Appearance: _____ Placement: _____
--

Feature 2: _____ Purpose: _____ Appearance: _____ Placement: _____
--

Feature 3: _____ Purpose: _____ Appearance: _____ Placement: _____
--

Feature 4: _____ Purpose: _____ Appearance: _____ Placement: _____
--

Today's Frankenstein

Creating Your Monster

Directions: Examine the flowchart. Develop the features you will include for your monster. Draw a diagram of your modern-day Frankenstein monster. Use call-out lines and label each feature. Provide a name for the monster.

My monster's name: _____