Differentiation: A Collection of Ideas

“Differentiation is not a set of strategies, but rather a way of thinking about teaching and learning.” – Carol-Ann Tomlinson

"Differentiation is defined as a response to the cognitive, affective, social, and physical characteristics that distinguish what and how students learn. A classroom where learners are provided with equal opportunity to learn, but are not expected to learn the same curriculum in the same way at the same time is the context that exemplifies differentiation. Respect for individual differences among and between learners is a definition of differentiation." - Sandra Kaplan, interview, "Differentiation in the Classroom", from Talent, newsletter for Northwestern's Center for Talent Development, Winter 2006.

"It is important for all educators to view differentiation as a philosophy and then to assess the manner and degree to which differentiation occurs within each classroom. It is also important to realize that teachers will vary along the lines of a continuum in their expertise in knowing how to differentiate in the teaching and learning environment. When educators have the time to study their content and to clarify what they want students to know, understand, and be able to do, I often find that the instructional tasks that they design become more meaningful and require students to think more deeply." - Jan Leppein, interview, "Differentiation in the Classroom", from Talent, newsletter for Northwestern’s Center for Talent Development, Winter 2006.

"DI is mostly about what we do ahead of time, not how we interact or conduct the lesson at the time. There are some good aspects going on in the classroom, but that facilitation can only occur with purposeful and thoughtful planning. I can make flexible decisions because I've already prepared the resources or other avenues in anticipation of student needs. Am I always prepared for everything? No way. I get better with time, however." - Rick Wormeli, MiddleWeb List Serve Response, "Getting Started with Differentiation", 2003.

"When teachers effectively differentiate instruction, there is a continuous flow in the processes of teaching, learning, and assessment. These components operate not as steps that we follow, but rather as a continuous cycle, each process informing the next." - Diane Heacox, Making Differentiation a Habit, 2009.

"What is important about differentiation? The important thing about differentiation is that it attempts to increase student achievement. The important thing about differentiation is that it is pro-active. The important thing about differentiation is that it demands the reconfiguration of various curriculum components. The important thing about differentiation is that it requires appropriate professional development, planning, classroom management, and changes in grouping arrangements. But the most important thing about curriculum differentiation is that it respects and responds to
"I would like to propose that is a way of life. It can be studied; it can be analyzed but in order to be a truly "differentiated" teacher, you have to completely jump into the role. You don’t just differentiate this lesson or this product. You live a differentiated life. I bet you have experienced one of these teachers in your career. Think about that teacher and what they did. These are the teachers that although you are one of 150 that they see during the day, you feel they designed this lesson just for you. They are talking and questioning you, and everyone else is just along for the ride. That is a teacher who is differentiating...You have to live it, give your teaching self over to it. When it happens - what a freeing thing it is! Think about it, by providing opportunities for students to make choices and show their strengths, I do not have to constantly try and figure out what is best for every student. By providing an atmosphere of risk taking, every student can work to their potential – they are willing to risk stepping out of their comfort zone, and that is how growth takes place.." - Laurie Westphal, blogger on Classroom 2.0~ What is Differentiation-Really? Classroom 2.0, February 20, 2009

“Differentiation is making sure that the right students get the right learning tasks at the right time. Once you have a sense of what each student holds as “given” or “known” and what he or she needs in order to learn, differentiation is no longer an option; it is an obvious response.” - Lorna M. Earl, Assessment as Learning: Using Classroom Assessment to Maximize Student Learning, 2003

SOURCE: Adapted from http://daretodifferentiate.wikispaces.com/file/view/DI+quotes.doc

**DEFINE: My definition of differentiation:**
GOING FURTHER: Useful Webpages

Inquiry
http://www.thirteen.org/edonline/concept2class/

http://www.exploratorium.edu/ifi/resources/classroom/connect/

http://eduscapes.com/tap/topic43.htm

http://www.cii.illinois.edu/InquiryPage/

http://www.helsinki.fi/science/networkedlearning/eng/delete.html#new

Differentiation
http://www.ascd.org/research-a-topic/differentiated-instruction-resources.aspx

http://www.glencoe.com/sec/teachingtoday/subject/di_meeting.phtml

http://www.teach-nology.com/tutorials/teaching/differentiate/

http://www.caroltomlinson.com/

http://www.edutopia.org/blogs/tag/differentiated-instruction

http://www.byrdseed.com/four-ways-to-differentiate-objectives/

Effective Questioning
http://www.cte.cornell.edu/teaching-ideas/engaging-students/using-effective-questions.html

http://teachertools.londongt.org/?page=questioningTechniques

http://www.cea-ace.ca/education-canada/article/engaging-students-through-effective-questions

https://www.nde-ed.org/TeachingResources/ClassroomTips/Effective_Questioning.htm

https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/questioning-in-the-classroom

Thinking Skills
http://www.brainboxx.co.uk/a3_aspects/pages/ThinkingSkills.htm
http://www.visiblethinkingpz.org/VisibleThinking_html_files/VisibleThinking1.html

http://www.casenex.com/casenet/pages/virtualLibrary/mlandrum/breathing/thinks_skills.htm

Backward Design / Understanding by Design
http://edglossary.org/backward-design/

http://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/understanding-by-design/