

# **Module II: A School-wide Model for Multi-Level Learning in an Inclusive School**

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## **Section 1: Overview of Module**

### ***Introduction and Description***

Today's schools are more diverse than ever before, and include students from ethnically diverse backgrounds, those with disabilities, as well as children at-risk of educational failure. To meet the changing and complex instructional needs of these students, teachers need to recognize and accommodate differing learning rates, learning styles, skill levels, and interests (Haager & Klinger, 2005; Hardman, Drew, & Egan, 2005; Kameenui, Carnine, Dixon, Simmons, & Coyne, 2002; Lenz & Deshler, 2004; Peterson & Hittie, 2003). The hallmark in the education of students with diverse needs is individualization—developing and implementing instruction based on the identified needs of each student. However, in today's schools too many classrooms remain guided by a utilitarian approach (the greatest good for the greatest number). As suggested by Hocutt (1996), undifferentiated large-group instruction is the norm:

***Individual assignments, small group work, and student pairing occur, but much less frequently than whole-class instruction. Teachers typically follow the sequence of lessons outlined in teachers' manuals and focus on content coverage. . . . When surveyed, teachers do not perceive themselves as having the skills for adapting instruction in ways that facilitate individual or small-group instruction. (p. 81)***

This traditional “one-size-fits-all” classroom in which students are expected to learn in large groups at the same rate and with the same instructional approach has not been successful in increasing academic or social learning. For students at-risk and those with disabilities, teachers must continually plan and adjust curriculum and instruction in response to the student. They must have at their disposal multiple ways to adapt curriculum, modify instructional approaches, and motivate their students to learn (Nevin, 1998; Vaughn, Bos, & Schumm, 2003). The research on evidence-based instruction strongly suggests that schools must abandon traditional approaches in favor of differentiated or multi-level instruction (Brandt, 1998; Tomlinson, 2001). Successful learning occurs when instruction is engaging, supportive, and attends to differing skill levels and styles. Inclusive, multi-level teaching challenges and supports academically diverse students to achieve within a diverse classroom and school.

This module is designed to provide school administrators with the competencies to apply the principles and framework of multi-level instruction to elementary and secondary schools. Participants begin with a review of the research literature followed by an individual or group study session using the Study Guide. The Study Guide facilitates individual reflection or group interactive discussions on the “big” ideas from the readings. Participants respond to *Essential Questions* by engaging in four activities designed to apply basic principles through the use of case studies. In order to participate successfully in the four activities, participants must complete the pre-reading assignments

prior to beginning the Participant Review Slides provided in the Study Guide (refer to Section 2).

### ***Specific Courses Where the Module Could Be Inserted***

Educational Leadership, Organizational Change, School Improvement, Curriculum, School Culture and Diverse Learners

### ***Alignment with the Four Tenets of Social Justice***

- *Developing school cultures that include all students.* The module emphasizes the importance of individualizing and differentiating instruction to meet the needs of all students in a diverse classroom and school. Ensuring that each student has the opportunity to learn based on individual needs, skill levels and learning styles is critical to the overall success of the school and communicates that individual student failure is not permissible within the organization.
- *Ensuring literacy for all learners.* Multi-level teaching and learning is a critical element in ensuring literacy for all learners. Evidenced-based practice suggests that inclusive, multi-level teaching challenges and supports students at-risk and those with disabilities to achieve within a diverse classroom and school.
- *Creating cultures of empowerment.* Multi-level teaching and learning is based on individualization-- developing and implementing instruction based on the identified student preferences and needs. The student is empowered as an active participant in decision-making.
- *Ensuring that family and community perspectives are at the heart of the culture of the school.* Opportunities for multi-level teaching and learning cannot occur within a school environment without the perspectives and involvement of the family and community in developing a culture of acceptance and belonging for all students.

### ***Essential Questions***

- What is multi-level teaching and learning (a.k.a. differentiated instruction) and why it is important in meeting the instructional needs of all students?
- What are the basic design features of instruction for differentiating learning?
- What are the key elements to differentiate (within classrooms) for growing a school-wide model for multi-level teaching and learning?
- How is a multi-level learning model in classrooms applied to school-wide teaching partnerships?

## ***Competencies***

Students who successfully complete this module will be able to:

- Define multi-level teaching and learning (a.k.a. differentiated instruction).
- Explain the rationale for and the importance of meeting the instructional needs of all students.
- Describe what a school-wide model of multilevel classrooms looks like, including (a) basic design features of instruction for differentiating learning, (b) aspects of curriculum and instruction to differentiate, and (c) framework for differentiated teaching and learning.
- Apply the framework for differentiated teaching and learning to classroom instruction and school-wide teaching partnerships.

## ***Pre-Reading Assignments (Required)***

Complete the readings below in their entirety prior to beginning the module activities. These readings provide the background information to complete individual activities and/or participate in class discussions. Information is provided on the rationale and basic elements for multi-level teaching and learning as well as how to apply these elements to classroom and school-wide models.

- Haager, D., & Klingner, J. K. (2005). *Differentiating instruction in inclusive classrooms: The special educator's guide*. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc. (pp. 6-10)
- Peterson, J. M., & Hittie, M. M. (2003). *Inclusive teaching: Creating effective schools for all learners*. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc. (pp. 42-49, 157-173, 244-253)
- Tomlinson, C. A. (1999). *The differentiated classroom: Responding to the needs of all learners*. New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc. (Chapter 2, pp. 9-16; Chapter 5, pp. 36-46; Chapter 6, pp. 47-60; Chapter 10, pp. 108-118)
- Tomlinson, C. A. (2001). *How to differentiate instruction in mixed-ability classrooms* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New Jersey: New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc. (Chapter 1, pp. 1-7; Chapters 3-4, pp. 16-26)

## ***List of Charts and Case Studies (Required for Activities 1-4)***

Activity #1: *Linking Evidence-Based Teaching and Differentiation* (Tomlinson, 2001, Figure 3.1, p. 18).

Activity #2: *A Planning Model for Academic Diversity and Talent Development* (Tomlinson, 1999, Figure A.1, pp. 120-122).

Activity #3: *Case Studies for grades 1, 3, 6, and 8* (Tomlinson, 2001, pp. 27-30).

Activity #4: *Case Studies for grades 1, 3, 6, and 8* (Tomlinson, 2001, pp. 27-30);  
Chapter 10 (Tomlinson 1999, pp. 108-118).

### ***Timed Segments for Study Guide (4 hours)***

The Study Guide provides PowerPoint slides based on the assigned readings and is intended for use throughout the module to focus participants on the key points from the readings prior to, during, and following each activity. Participants are required to complete the readings in their entirety prior to beginning the module activities. This module is designed to be completed individually or in a small discussion group. The following timed segments are provided for use with the Study Guide.

***Activity #1 Essential Questions (Total 60 minutes):*** *What is multi-level teaching and learning (a.k.a. differentiated instruction)? Why is it important in meeting the instructional needs of all students? What are the basic design features of instruction for differentiating learning?*

- *Reflect on big ideas from the readings, 30-min. reflection/discussion.*
- *Activity #1, 30-min. activity.*

***Activity #2 Essential Questions (Total 60 minutes):*** *What are the basic elements of a school-wide model for multi-level teaching and learning?*

- *Reflect on big ideas from the readings, 20-min. reflection/discussion.*
- *Activity #2, 20-min. activity.*
- *Additional Activity, 20-min. activity.*

***Activities #3 & #4 Essential Questions (Total 120 minutes):*** *How is a multi-level learning model applied to classroom instruction, and school-wide teaching partnerships?*

- *Activity #3: The Classroom, (Total Activity #3, 45-min.).*
  - *Case Studies, 20-min.*
  - *Ideal Literacy Lesson, 25-min*
- *Activity #4: School-Wide Teaching Partnerships, (Total Activity #4, 75-min.).*
  - *Reflect on big ideas from the readings, 30-min.*
  - *Activity #4, 45-min.*

### ***Materials Needed for Study Guide***

Study Outline (Activities 1-4)

Participant Review Slides (Individual or Group)

*Optional materials/equipment for group discussions:*

Computer, LCD projector, Participant Review Slides (PowerPoint slides) on disk  
Optional: Overhead projector, blank transparencies, transparency markers (If desired, each group can write ideas for activity solution on a transparency to share with the class.).

## **SECTION 2 – Study Guide**

### ***Introduction***

The Study Guide is designed to facilitate a four hour individual or group study activity after participants have completed the pre-reading assignments. The Study Guide highlights the key points from the readings and should be used reflectively (individual study) or to facilitate interactive discussions (group study). It is intended for use prior to, during, and following each activity. The four module activities provide exercises to assist the participants in answering the *Essential Questions* listed with each module segment.

***Instructional Segments and Essential Questions.*** To facilitate individual or group study, the module topics and activities are divided into three instructional segments, each addressing different *Essential Questions* that are necessary to successfully complete the this module. Each of the three instructional segments below also contains information on (a) pre-reading assignments, (b) reflecting on big ideas from the readings, and (c) individual or group activities. The recommended time allotment for each segment is also provided.

- *Pre-reading assignments.* The background reading or pre-reading that supports each instructional segment is listed below. Participants are required to complete the pre-reading assignments (refer to Section 1) in their entirety prior to beginning the activities described in the Study Guide.
- *Reflect on big ideas from the readings.* The Participant Review Slides (this section) provide a guide for participants to review the key points from the readings and to facilitate reflection or group discussion. The reflection or discussion topics are listed for each instructional segment.
- *Individual or Group Activity.* The Study Guide facilitates individual reflections or small group discussions with the activities. Participants apply information learned in the reflection or discussion to practical classroom and school scenarios or case studies. The activities assist the participants to search for the answers to the *Essential Questions*.

### ***Study Outline (Activities 1-4)***

#### ***ACTIVITY #1: (Total 60 minutes)***

***Essential Questions for Activity #1:*** *What is multi-level teaching and learning (a.k.a. differentiated instruction)? Why is it important in meeting the instructional needs of all students? What are the basic design features of instruction for differentiating learning?*

- ***Pre-reading:*** Self-study and facilitated discussions are based on the assigned readings: Peterson & Hittie, 2003 and Haager & Klinger, 2005.

- ***Reflect on big ideas from the readings (30 min.):*** Review the following Participant Review Slides to facilitate reflection and/or group discussion, (a) A Design for Diversity in Inclusive Classrooms, (b) Meeting Diverse Learner Needs in an Inclusive Classroom: Requirements for Accountability, (c) Effective Practice for Improving Student Achievement, and (d) Basic Design Features of Classroom Instruction for Differentiating Learning.
- ***Activity 30 min.): Linking Evidenced-Based Teaching and Differentiation***

*Directions: (Refer to Figure 3.1, Tomlinson, 2001, p. 18)*

- Review Figure 3.1 #1-10 in columns: (a) “Best practice: People learn best under these conditions:”, and (b) “Differentiation: We need to attend to student differences because...”
- Reflect on your own school experiences. Brainstorm and list actual student examples for 3-4 items to illustrate why differentiated instruction is necessary (right column).
- Share your ideas with the class.
- Variation for multiple groups: Designate 3-4 different items for each group. Share individual group responses with another group. Then, each large group selects a few responses to share with the class.

## ***ACTIVITY #2: (Total 60 minutes)***

**Essential Question for Activity #2:** What are the key elements to differentiate (within classrooms) for growing a school-wide model for multi-level teaching and learning?

- ***Pre-reading:*** Self-study and facilitated discussions are based on the readings: Tomlinson, 1999 and Tomlinson, 2001.
- ***Reflect on big ideas from the readings (20 min.):*** Review the following Participant Review Slides (refer to PowerPoint slides) to facilitate reflection and/or group discussion. (a) Aspects of Curriculum and Instruction to Differentiate, and (b) Framework for Differentiating Teaching and Learning.
- ***Activity #2 (20 min.): Applying the Framework for Differentiating Teaching and Learning.***

*Directions: (Refer to Figure A.1, Tomlinson, 1999, pp.121-122)*

- Briefly review Figure A.1.



- Refer to the bottom row of boxes (“Differentiation through”). List 3 classroom teaching examples that illustrate differentiated instruction (one example for each) for: content, process, and product. Apply elements of the framework for differentiating teaching and learning (multi-level learning, flexible grouping, scaffolding instruction, and performance activity options) to your examples.
- Variation for multiple groups: Share responses with another group. Then, each large group select a few responses to share with the class.
- ***Additional Activity (20 min):*** *Share examples from your own school experience of classrooms using multi-level teaching.*

### ***ACTIVITIES #3 & #4: (Total 120 minutes)***

***Essential Questions for Activities 3 & 4:*** How is a multi-level learning model in classrooms applied to school-wide teaching partnerships?

***Activity #3 (45 min. total):*** *Applying a multi-level learning model to classroom instruction*

- ***Pre-reading:*** Self-study and group activity below are based on the readings: Tomlinson, 2001, pp. 28-30.
- ***Activity: ( 20 min.)*** *Case Studies on Differentiated Instruction the Classroom*

*Directions: (Refer to Case Studies in Chapter 5, Tomlinson, 2001, pp. 27-30)*

- Select and review only one of the following classroom case studies: 1st, 3rd, 6th, or 8th grade.
- For your case study, answer the question: How does the teacher apply the four elements of the “Framework for Differentiating Teaching and Learning” (multi-level teaching, flexible grouping, scaffolding, performance activity options)? Recommend additional ways to differentiate the teaching and learning activities for this case study.
- Variation for multiple groups: Designate only one case study for each group to review and discuss. Share individual group recommendations with other groups.
- ***Additional Activity: (25 min.)*** *Ideal Literacy Lesson*

*Directions: (Refer to Peterson & Hittie, 2003, pp. 244-253)*

- Select any grade level and brainstorm an ideal literacy lesson using the Framework for Differentiating Teaching and Learning (refer to Participant Review Slides).

***Activity #4 (75 min. total): Applying a multi-level learning model to school-wide teaching partnerships?***

- ***Pre-reading:*** Self-study and group activity below are based on the readings (Tomlinson, 1999, Chapter 10, pp. 108-118).
- ***Reflect on big ideas from the readings (30 min.):*** Educational Leaders Seeking a Differentiated School, 10-minute reflection/discussion.
- ***Activity #4 (45 min): Applying Plans for School-wide Teaching Partnerships to Case Scenarios***

*Directions: (Refer to (a) Case Studies in Chapter 5, Tomlinson, 2001, pp. 27-30), and (b) Chapter 10 (Tomlinson 1999, pp. 108-118)*

- Review the steps for educational leaders on school change outlined in Chapter 10. Decide to prepare a plan from the perspective of either an “elementary administrative team” or “middle school administrative team.”
- Review the two case studies in Chapter 5 that apply to you for elementary or middle school: 1st and 3rd, or 6th and 8th grade. Use the case study information to help generate and illustrate ideas for forming the school-wide teaching partnerships described below.
- Using the steps discussed in Chapter 10, outline a plan from an administrator’s perspective to form school-wide partnerships between: general educators, special educators, speech-language pathologists (and other related service personnel), and paraprofessionals in supporting roles.
  - ☐ What are the teaching roles/responsibilities for each professional?
  - ☐ What are the beginning steps for cultivating partnerships and providing early supports?
  - ☐ What are the steps for ongoing support and maintenance of successful school-wide partnerships?
  - ☐ Check your final plan using the steps outlined in Chapter 10.
- Variation for multiple groups: Each group prepares a plan for either an elementary school or a middle school. Share individual group plans with other groups. Or, present group plans to the class.

### ***Participant Review Slides***

*(Note: Insert Powerpoint Slides Here)*

### ***Module References***

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- Kameenui, E. J., Carnine, D. W., Dixon, R. C., Simmons, D. C., & Coyne, M. D. (2002). *Effective teaching strategies that accommodate diverse learners (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)*. New Jersey: Merrill Publishing.
- Lenz, B.K., & Deshler, D.D. (2004). *Teaching content to all: Evidence-based inclusive practices in middle and secondary schools*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Nevin, A. (1998). Curricular and instructional adaptations for including students with severe disabilities in cooperative groups. In J. Putam (Eds.), *Cooperative learning and strategies for inclusion (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)* (pp. 49-65). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.
- Peterson, J. M., & Hittie, M. M. (2003). *Inclusive teaching: Creating effective schools for all learners*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Tomlinson, C. A. (1999). *The differentiated classroom: Responding to the needs of all learners*. New Jersey: Merrill Publishing.
- Tomlinson, C. A. (2001). *How to differentiate instruction in mixed-ability classrooms (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)*. New Jersey: Merrill Publishing.
- Vaughn, S., Bos, C.S., & Schumm, J.S. (2003). *Teaching exceptional, diverse, and at-risk students*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

### *Additional Suggested Readings*

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