


Indicators of Differentiation	
1. Consistent use of pretesting	
2. Decrease in the frequency of large group activities	
3. Increase in:	
a) Small group teaching activities	
b) Flexible small group learning activities	
4. Increase in individual alternatives:	
a) Centers	
b) Homework	
c) Contracts	



# Indicators of Differentiation



## Paraphrase This Information for the Participants:

- For the purposes of this presentation, we are making a distinction between differentiation and interest-based enrichment. Differentiation involves teacher-generated changes to improve the match between the regular curriculum and the needs of individual learners. Interest-based enrichment supplants the regular curriculum by offering students the opportunity to engage in interest-based activities related to their talent areas or to the curriculum.
- Unlike the individualization practices prevalent in the 1970s, we are not suggesting that teachers abandon all large group teaching and learning activities. Instead, the increased use of differentiation strategies should alter the percentage of time in which students are engaged in various large group, small group, or individual learning activities.
- Current research suggests that 90% of the activities in the "average" classroom involve large groups of students. In a classroom where the teacher regularly practices differentiation strategies, we would expect: (a) frequent use of pretesting for the expressed purpose of identifying potential differences among students, (b) a decrease, but not an elimination of, large group teaching activities, (c) large group activities to introduce or culminate a unit, or when no apparent differences influence student learning, and (d) an increase in small group teaching and an increase in small group learning activities. In addition, each teaching or learning group would be conducting different activities, for the expressed purpose of increasing student achievement.
- If students rotate between teaching and learning groups, and there are three such groups to handle the differences among the students, a third activity is necessary to implement this rotation. Many teachers find that the use of centers, homework, or contracts not only fulfills this need for a third rotation activity, these activities also encourage student independence and self-directed learning.

## Suggested Activities to Promote Audience Participation:

- Ask participants to discuss the following: the prevalence of differentiation activities in their school; the frequency with which they use various differentiation strategies; the indicators on this transparency that are of greatest interest to them; and how the use of small groups, expressly for the purpose of differentiation, might differ from the use of small groups used with cooperative learning strategies.