



Book Group in a Bag

Practical Steps to Creating Book Study Groups

Why do a book study?

A book study is about a conversation; a conversation intended to stretch thinking and influence practice. Book studies are an effective form of professional development and can be used by educators at all levels for their personal and professional growth.

What steps should be considered before planning a book study group?

According to Diane Sweeny in *Learning All the Way*, book study groups are most effective when they are:

- Are voluntary;
- Involve participants in the decision-making process regarding content and group norms;
- Reflect regularly on whether the time spent has been productive;
- Include rituals and celebrations;
- Determine norms and procedures as a group;
- Avoid assuming certain participants are experts (all are here to learn); and
- Consider the book study group a time for learning and reflective participation.

How should the group set up the book study?

- Establish a good physical environment
- Select a facilitator for each meeting
- Use questions in the facilitator's guide to start the discussion
- Create a schedule with timelines.
- Determine goal and objectives. It might be helpful to have some initial goals and objectives and present them to the group. Asking the participants for goals and objectives, again, will draw them into the process.
- Relax, keep it positive
- Snacks and other incentives are always helpful and set the tone for an enjoyable experience.

Other questions to consider:

- Who will facilitate the meetings? Will the facilitator role be rotated between participants?
- How will the group respect and gain input from people with differing opinions or people who are not actively participating?
- How will PDC points be awarded for this process? The group should keep in mind that participants could work on application and impact level by keeping journals of the process, redesigning data systems, etc.



Book Group in a Bag: Facilitator's Guide

Available for Checkout

Nunley, Kathie F. *Differentiating the High School Classroom*. (2006). Corwin Press, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Book Description

This is a practical, step-by-step guide to differentiating instruction in the high school classroom. After a quick explanation for the need for differentiation, the author presents common obstacles and realistic, usable solutions to those obstacles. Best of all, she offers a set of practice assignments from which high school teachers can choose to actually get a head start on making their classroom instruction fit the needs of more and more students.

Helpful Hints

In order to facilitate the study group most effectively, a team may want to consider doing the following:

- Using technology to support the book study group. Buildings and districts across Kansas have utilized technology including hot links to make the materials more accessible for teachers. Technology will also allow greater participation to time-strapped staff.
- The text contains short, easy to read chapters that can be used during faculty meetings to engage all staff in discourse about RtI.
- Rotate facilitation of the group. In this way, more people will take ownership of the process. *(Please see the Practical Steps to Creating Book Study Groups" document enclosed in this packet.)*

Framing the Context of a Book Study: Powerful Tools for Learning

Two powerful venues for deepening understanding, impacting student outcomes and contributing to the growth of learning organizations are professional learning communities and communities of practice. One of the most effective ways to make your school a learning organization is to create a professional learning community or a community of practice. The concept of a professional learning community is a powerful influence around the work of restructuring schools. According to Rick Dufour in *Whatever It Takes: How Professional Learning Communities Respond When Kids Don't Learn*, the fundamental role of schools is "learning, not teaching."

While Dufour acknowledges that this is “an enormous distinction,” he notes that the emphasis on learning leads those within the school to place their focus and energy on three important questions:

1. What is it we want all students to learn?
2. How will we know when each student has acquired the intended knowledge and skills?
3. How will we respond when students experience difficulty?

Another option for helping schools and districts is to create a community of practice. Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly. A community of practice (CoP) makes connections from person to person for mutual inquiry and learning about a practice or issue. Everyone’s voice is needed. Participants develop a shared identity and share a repertoire of knowledge and experiences (Wenger, 2003). Both professional learning communities and communities of practice move system stakeholders from knowing to doing.

A book study becomes a powerful tool that these communities can use to engage in powerful, professional discourse. A building or existing PLC or CoP may want to add a book study as another tool to aid in professional development. When your school or team begins planning their book study, keep the above questions in mind as a way to frame all discussions around student learning and school improvement.

Framing the Context of Discussion within the Kansas Multi-tiered System of Support

These book studies were created from information and resources gathered by pilot sites who served as early implementers of a Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) in Kansas. These schools and districts recommended several books that pertain to the practices embodied by MTSS. In response to the growing demand for more information about MTSS and what it looks like in Kansas, Project SPOT has developed a series of Book Groups in a Bag. Each book bag can be checked out or purchased. For a list of facilitated Book Group in a Bag titles, please see www.Projectspot.org.

The facilitator’s guide has been created to frame learning and discussions specifically within a MTSS framework. MTSS is a coherent continuum of evidence based, system-wide practices to support a rapid response to academic and behavioral needs, with frequent data-based monitoring for instructional decision-making to empower each Kansas student to achieve high standards.

Graphically, MTSS looks like this:



The core beliefs underpinning MTSS include:

- Responsibility and leadership are critical at all levels for planning, implementing, and evaluating
- Change at all levels must be intentional, coherent, and dynamic
- Intentional design and redesign of resources are matched to student needs
- An empowering culture creates collective responsibility for student success
- Academic and behavioral performance data are used to inform instructional decisions
- Intervening at the earliest identification of need is necessary for student success (PreK-12)
- Reciprocity between policy and practice is based on research and outcomes
- Collaboration among educators, families and community members is the foundation to effective problem-solving and instructional decision making.

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The following section contains discussion questions broken out by chapter. These questions are designed to facilitate thinking and discussion around *Differentiating the High School Classroom: Solution Strategies for 18 Common Obstacles*.

Chapters follow a general format: first, a description of the issue (a particular obstacle to differentiation) and then, solution suggestions, often with practice assignments. If your group intends to study the entire book together and meets on a regular basis, an excellent start to each session would be to discuss:

- Were you able to carry out the suggested solutions and/or practice assignments?
- What did you observe regarding student achievement?
- What difficulties did you encounter, and how might you overcome them?

At that point, you'll be ready to start reading and discussing a new chapter together. By the end of the book, you'll have practiced and applied many strategies for differentiation instruction.

Chapter 1: I Long to Return to the Good Old Days

Overview

This chapter reviews the history of the institution of the U. S. high school and shares statistics that should make readers realize that today's high school teachers are heroes. Read to find out what makes our work today different from that of teachers earlier in history—and yet, how schools have always faced much the same problem.

Helpful Hints

If your team has not read the introduction, it would be worth your time to stop here and read it as a team. These pages explain the author's interest in differentiation and her qualifications for writing this book. You'll appreciate her personal tone and story.

Have one group member time-line the changes in high school education on butcher paper while others take turn reading aloud each major movement. For each entry on your time line, list the percentage of students who were attending high school then.

You can find more sources of information about the history of the U.S. educational system on p. 138.

Discussion Questions

1. Individually, list the “Lukes” in your classes just this year. How do teachers talk and feel about the “Lukes”?
2. Based on Nunley's section “A Description of the Issue,” for how long has differentiation been a concern in the U.S.? Why?
3. Which statistics from this section most catch your attention? Discuss why you find them significant.
4. Compare the original purpose of the current three-tiered education system to what you know about the purpose of today's three-tiered education system. What conclusions come to mind?
5. What does Nunley mean when she says the “good old days” are now?
6. How does this review of American education change your understanding of your own work?

Chapter 2: I Thought I *Was* Differentiating

Overview

This chapter clarifies what differentiated instruction (DI) is and is not. It discusses three ways to accomplish DI.

Helpful Hints

This chapter is brief but essential. Don't treat it lightly. Have one group member list what DI is and another what it is not as other members take turns reading the description of the issue.

Discussion Questions

1. What sets the two lists apart? What distinguishes true DI from what many of mistakenly call differentiation? If you walked into a classroom, how would you be able to tell if DI was happening?

2. Jigsaw the "Solution Strategies" section. It has logical section breaks:

- The first two paragraphs discuss differentiation of content.
- The rest of p. 12 and all of p. 13 discuss differentiating process.
- The final two paragraphs of the section explain differentiating product.

Number off by 1, 2, 3. 1's read and discuss content. 2's read and discuss process. 3's read and discuss product. Then form groups so that each group contains one 1, one 2, and one 3. Explain to each other your particular kind of DI.

3. Practice Assignments also break into the three categories: content, process, product. Using Nunley's examples as guides, brainstorm more samples within each category. For example, what might be a "running assignment" for your own content area?

4. Share with a partner which practice assignment(s) you'll apply between now and the next group meeting. What problems do you anticipate might occur? How could you handle them?

Chapter 3: I Teach the Way I Was Taught

Overview

Chapter 3 explains why high school instruction has not changed much over the years, and then provides beginning steps for starting that change.

Helpful Hints

Most of us who teach are rather comfortable with school the way it is. How can you prepare yourself to look at school through a perspective other than your own? (It's hard to do!)

Discussion Questions

1. From “A Description of the Issue,” individually pick out the idea that most strongly speaks to you. Share it with your group.
2. The “Solution Strategies” section suggests building a stockpile of instructional strategies. How could you do that in a way that all the members of your group could have access to them? Next, how could you use that stockpile to expand your instructional practice?
3. After reading the Practice Assignments, make a commitment to doing at least one, either individually or in teams. Discuss now how you can share results at your next group meeting. Discuss also how it will feel to teach in a way you have not previously taught: What should you be prepared for?
4. To prepare for the follow-up discussion of #3, plan to observe your students' responses to the practice assignment. Whose reaction surprises you? Why?

Chapter 4: I Don't Know How

Overview

Many of us say, “If I could only see how to do it, I could do it, too.” Be watching! Chapter 4 shows you a new view of instruction, lesson design, and grading—what Nunley calls The Layered Curriculum. If you did nothing more than this chapter, you would have differentiated your instruction in new and exciting ways.

Helpful Hints

This chapter is BIG, not in number of pages but in ideas to apply. Don't worry if its ideas feel like too much to handle all at once. Later chapters will give you a chance to make similar changes more slowly, bite by bite.

A second helpful hint: If the ideas in this chapter fascinate you, see the “Suggestions for Further Reading.”

Discussion Questions

1. The opening paragraph of Chapter 4 says, “It was apparent that much of what was going on in my public high school, and more specifically in my classroom, wasn't working for a significant number of students.” Stop right here and list on butcher paper the indications that some things going on in your high school's classrooms are not working for some students. Record a list of the behaviors and indicators. Then read on to see if your list matches Nunley's.
2. Read “The Easiest Road to Differentiation Is Student Choice.” Share with the group a recent lesson that involved independent seatwork. With the group, brainstorm ways to have offered students choices for accomplishing that assignment. The point is just to begin thinking of workable ways to offer choice.
3. Read the section on accountability, the second solution strategy. Gauge your emotional reaction: Does her proposal that many of us give grade points for completing work instead of learning upset you? Why or why not?
4. Once your first emotional reaction has passed, discuss: How much actual learning truly is reflected in our grades? Would it be fair to give grade points only for the degree of learning? Argue both sides, without taking either, accumulating as many perspectives as you can.
5. Brainstorm some practical, quick ways teachers could check to see if *learning occurred*. It might be helpful to think back to the actual class lesson you mentioned in #2 and think of ways you could have checked for learning.

6. It would be helpful before you read “The Final Piece: Encourage Higher-Level Thinking” to make a chart on butcher paper:

Layer:	What student does with information at this layer:	Relationship to Bloom’s Taxonomy:	Nunley’s nickname and why it fits:
C			
B			
A			

As you read, stop to fill out appropriate parts of the chart.

7. BEFORE you read the Practice Assignments, study pp. 32-33. They provide a sample science lesson, developed as a Layered Curriculum. How does this lesson offer students choice? How does Nunley ensure that all students work at all three levels? Pick out which activities you would choose and compare with others’ choices.
8. Now go back to the Practice Assignments and work your way through, individually or with a partner from a similar content area. Try to choose a unit you will be implementing soon. An easy way to record your thoughts would be a chart like the one on page 31.

Chapter 5: I Have Too Much Content to Cover

Overview

Every year, we feel pressure to cover more and more, with apparently less and less time. This chapter helps overcome the pressure teachers experience from content-heavy classes and shows how to reach more students at the same time.

Helpful Hints

This chapter goes fast. Focus on actual application and not just discussion.

Discussion Questions

1. Read the “Description of the Issue” and then discuss what “teaching the process of learning” would look like in an everyday application. What would the teacher do? Say? Spend time on?
2. From “Realize You Can’t Lecture Fast Enough,” list the advantages Nunley’s claims for a student-centered class. How would having these advantages at work in your classroom change your daily life? Which student might you be able to better reach? See their faces.
3. Read all three practice assignments and pick at least one that you plan for right now. Decide when you’ll put it into practice. Once you do, log evidence of the advantages Nunley described. Also log your reactions to this kind of classroom activity. Bring your log to the next group session and be prepared to share.

Chapter 6: I'm Good at Lecturing

Overview

For a variety of reasons, many high school teachers enjoy teaching with lectures. This chapter shows how to continue lecturing—but with a small change that will eliminate the discipline issues and lack of attention lectures sometimes create.

Helpful Hints

Chapter 6 tells you how to have your lecture and provide student choice, too. Students will think they are choosing what to do, but you're really the one in control.

Discussion Questions

1. BEFORE you read, list the reasons you choose to teach with lectures. Share with the group. Make a list of the pros and cons of lecturing. Afterwards, read “A Description of the Issue” and add to your list. Do the same for “Classrooms May Result in a Power Struggle.”
2. Individually, list the three categories of students Nunley describes in “Solution Strategies.” Mentally think of one your classes; list students in whichever of the three categories you think they fall.
3. Next, read “Perception Is Everything” and “Gain Control by Giving Up Some of It.” Pick a sentence or two or think your group should hear more than once. Then go around the group, each person reading his or her selected passage.
4. Think of a recent situation where you exerted control as punishment or consequence. Talk with a partner about how you could rework that situation into a win-win circumstance where students perceive that they still have some control.
5. Talk with others who teach the same or similar content area about the three practice assignments. Brainstorm alternate assignments students can do instead of listening to the lecture for an upcoming lesson. Next, brainstorm some “structured doodling” activities for the same lesson. Plan for a particular implementation date; keep track of student responses in a written log you can bring back to share with the group.

Chapter 7: I Can't See How I Would Grade All Those Different Assignments

Overview

What does a grade of F mean? Does it mean the student did not work hard? Did not persevere? Does it mean the student lacked reasonable aptitude? Or that the student failed to turn in enough assignments to rescue the grade in the end? This chapter asks you to think about grades and what they really mean. It is also an answer to a question you've probably already developed: How do I grade all those different assignments in a Layered Curriculum? Nunley offers several answers—and leaves the choice to you!

Helpful Hints

Bring your planned unit from chapter 4 with you to this discussion. You can use those activities as you plan a grading system.

Discussion Questions

1. What two components to the issue of grading does Nunley present in “A Discussion of the Issue”?
2. “Solution Strategies” offers four different ways to set up a grade book when you teach a Layered Curriculum that offers students choices of assignments to do. Read each one and stop to show how that system would work with someone's actual unit plan. This will have covered Nunley's answers to the first component of the grading issue.
3. Most of us have unspoken, perhaps even unrecognized, dissatisfactions with our grading scale, even though we continue to use it out of custom. Read “Design a Grade Scale by Considering ‘What's an A Worth?’” and “Design a Grade Scale by Considering ‘What's an F Worth?’”
 - a. Discuss students who mistake doing an assignment for learning.
 - b. Summarize and evaluate Nunley's contention that schools should encourage “good” failure. Brainstorm assignments suggested by Practical Solution Idea 7.2, where failure is required.
4. Before you leave the group, make a commitment to practice at least one of the three Practical Solution Ideas offered in this chapter. Log your experiences to share next time.

Chapter 8: **I Thought Differentiated Instruction Was for Elementary Schools**

Overview

Chapter 8 suggests that some elementary classes allow more student choice and responsibility than secondary classes do. Watch for ideas you can borrow.

Helpful Hints

Most of the ideas in this chapter are easy to implement. Approach them with an open mind and a willingness to try.

General Discussion Questions

1. Read the introduction, before “A Description of the Issue.” Think of times as an adult that you’ve been treated like the students in the scenario. How did you feel? How did you act as a result of your feelings? Are there similarities to the behaviors you see in your high school students?
2. Read “A Description of the Issue” and explain to each other how “diffusion of responsibility” causes secondary teachers to lose effectiveness. Mentally picture one student for whom you have diffused responsibility. How would your behavior change if you decided that you were the only person responsible for that young person?
3. Brainstorm ways secondary teachers could become better acquainted with the individual strengths, weaknesses, and interests of their students sooner in the academic year.
4. Read “Solution Strategies” and share stories of how you’ve incorporated your subject into students’ natural world.
5. Read “Practical Solution Idea 8.1.” Discuss with a content-similar teacher what various resource centers would make sense for your classrooms.
6. Read the remaining practical solution ideas and share ideas.

Chapter 9: I Subscribe to Ability Grouping

Overview

Many secondary teachers struggle with how to manage students with disabilities. Nunley reminds readers that ALL students need higher-thinking assignments to be prepared to handle the real world without an “IEP for life.” She also provides practical ways to accomplish those goals.

Helpful Hints

Nunley’s Chapter 9 lays out some hard truths about what our students with disabilities need from us. Remember that Nunley is speaking as the mother of several children with a variety of disabilities.

Discussion Questions

1. Before you read, privately write a name beside each descriptor below:
 - a. Your most gifted student
 - b. Your most dysfunctional student
 - c. Your personal favorite
 - d. The student who frightens you
 - e. The student who makes you laugh
 - f. The student from the most unstable family background
 - g. The most intellectually challenged student

Nunley will ask you “What do all these students have in common?” Read the chapter up to “Solution Strategies” to find out. Do you agree? Does this give you a different perspective on your daily interactions with all these students? If these seven students were your biological sons and daughters, what would you want for them?

2. Create a butcher-paper chart called Debunking the Myths. Make two columns, one for myths and one for realities. Re-read pages 66 through 68 to add to both columns. Add to the list as you read “Solution Strategies.”
3. In the “Practice Assignments for Overcoming This Obstacle,” Nunley says teachers should not try to make things EASY for students with disabilities, but that they should remove as many obstacles as they can for those students. Some people might not see any difference. Discuss amongst your group: How can you remove obstacles without just making things easy?
4. As you consider the first Solution Idea, talk about particular modifications you may use for students officially designated as ELL or special education. Which other students in your classes would benefit from that same modification? Why?
5. Make Practical Solution Idea 9.2 a mini-research project. Pick one student you have not felt successful in reaching so far this year. Talk now with others about ways you all can exhibit the four key factors associated with holding favorable expectations: warmth, climate, response opportunity, and input. Put those ideas

into practice and log the reactions you get from your chosen student. Come prepared to share your findings at the next group meeting.

Chapter 10: I Have Real Logistic Issues

Overview

Don't have a classroom of your own? Have one, but it's too small? Worried about student safety? This chapter provides solutions to those obstacles.

Helpful Hints

You may want to use the headings to read only the logistical issues that apply to you.

Discussion Questions

1. Do you have logistical issues not mentioned specifically in this chapter? Brainstorm with your group to arrive at creative solutions; use Nunley's suggestions as starting points, and refuse to see the obstacle as insurmountable.
2. How does your classroom design match your teaching style? Or the teaching style you aspire to? If you asked students how well the classroom design matches their learning style, what might they say?

Chapter 11: I Want My Classroom under Control

Overview

Classroom management is important to all of us. Nunley raises some important perspectives on what conditions result in effective classroom management.

Helpful Hints

Be prepared to redefine your idea of “control.” And if you want to read more, check out the sources Nunley lists under “Control Theory and Self-Efficacy,” pp. 135-7.

Discussion Questions

1. Pick one of the following statements from the chapter and explain it and its implications for teaching in your own words to the rest of your group:
 - a. The more we control others, the more their behavior needs to be controlled.
 - b. Perception of control trumps all.
 - c. All of Earth’s creatures want control. Teachers and students fit into this category.
 - d. Classroom management courses should be replaced with classroom leadership courses.
2. Read Practical Solution Idea 11.2. What are the obstacles students face? Do we know them? Do we see them as obstacles—or as misbehaviors or lack of effort?
3. Read Practical Solution Idea 11.3. Which of the bulleted statements do you most agree with? Which calls for a change in your attitudes and practices?

Chapter 12: I Don't Know How to Measure My Students' Learning Style

Overview

Teachers have heard that differentiating instruction means that you have to individualize instruction for every student in the room. This doesn't mean you have to predetermine students' learning styles for them and then tailor instruction just for them. Nunley's chapter 12 makes differentiating by learning styles easy to accomplish.

Helpful Hints

You might want to bring your students IEP sheets to this discussion group.

Discussion Questions

1. Nunley cites David Goslin's (2003) astounding statement that U.S. public schools adequately serve only about one-fourth of their students. After reading "A Description of the Issue," talk with your group about ways we might recognize the students we are not adequately reaching.
2. After reading "Solution Strategies," talk with a partner about a recent assignment you've given.
 - a. Analyze how much you measured process in comparison to product. Did your assessment show how much students had learned—or only that they had completed the work?
 - b. How could you improve your grading for learning?
 - c. Are there situations when granting points for process is appropriate? Argue both sides of this issue before forming your own conclusion.
3. Read "Take a Cue from Your IEPs." How does differentiation for learning styles relate to students' sense of efficacy? How important is that?
4. After reading that same section, look over your own students' IEPs and make a group list of other modifications listed there, ones that Nunley didn't use already for examples.
 - a. As a group, talk about how you could offer the modification as a choice to any interested students.
 - b. Read the boxed material on p. 94. Are there any of the items in your response to 4a that you fear students might take advantage of? If so, brainstorm ways Nunley might respond to your fears.
5. After reading "Provide a Home Base," ask any traveling teachers in the group to share their feelings about not having space of their own. Talk also about times you've lived out of a suitcase for an extended period and how that made you feel.

- a. Discuss Nunley’s remark that “a personalized space of your own is an important factor in the formation of one’s identity and sense of self-worth.”
 - b. High schoolers who are not happy in school often state that they feel isolated and not a part of the group. School is an alien place for them. Brainstorm ways beyond Nunley’s that teachers could provide high schoolers with personalized space that will make them feel more included.
 - c. Consider how seating arrangements might also contribute to students’ sense of belonging or not belonging.
6. Read the Practice Assignments. Note that Practical Solution Idea 12.4 suggests offering the option of full-spectrum lighting rather than just fluorescent lights. If this is not possible in your classroom, discuss other ways you could vary the lighting. (Note: Many struggling readers prefer low light to reduce the contrast between the black print and the white page.)

Chapter 13: I Have Neither the Time nor the Funding for All That

Overview

Most teachers struggle already to find enough time for all their school activities. Nunley shows how to accommodate planning for differentiation in your already overloaded schedule.

Discussion Questions

1. Read “A Description of the Time Issue” and talk with a partner about how much you think your own teaching style relates to your personal learning style. If it seems uncomfortable or inefficient for you to switch to a different style, what might students feel when we ask them to learn using a style that doesn’t fit them?
2. After reading “I Don’t Have the Time to Plan for All That” and “Solution Strategies,” discuss ways your use of time has already changed as you have been working to differentiate your activities. If you aren’t lecturing as much, what do you now spend your time doing?
3. Read the Practice Assignments on pp. 98 and 99. Share with each other which one seems most applicable and why.
4. Read the remainder of the chapter, about funding. List items you think you would need in order to better differentiate. Then brainstorm with your group about how you might be able to procure those items.

Chapter 14: I've Been Teaching This Way for Years and It Works

Overview

This chapter is a brief introduction to what brain research tells us about learning.

Helpful Hints

You might want to bring an Internet or paper poster of the main areas of the brain to use as a reference.

Further sources on neuroscience and learning appear on pp. 134-5.

Discussion Questions

1. Go through the chapter and look for areas of the brain or ways of learning that Nunley discusses. Complete this chart as thoroughly as possible:

Area of the brain/Way of learning	Its function	Its role in learning/How to teach to it
Hippocampus		
Neocortex		
Episodic memory		
Semantic memory		
Hypothalamus		

2. What is the difference between learning something and memorizing it? Why have we learned some material that we initially just memorized? When would it be appropriate to have students merely memorize?
3. How can we help students to move beyond memorization and into learning? Make a list, and explain why each item encourages learning.
4. Ask each person in the group to contribute a lesson from past experience that created learning, as opposed to memorization. As a group, relate the lesson to the suggestions Nunley gives about how to enhance learning.

Chapter 15: There's No Support for It at My School

Overview

This chapter may not apply to you if you're already part of a discussion group working with this book! You have a built-in support group! If, however, your group has encountered criticism about your changing classroom structure, you still may want to read chapter 15.

Discussion Questions

1. Evaluate how well your current group includes the “essential elements” Nunley describes on pp. 113-114.
2. Are there some that stand out as especially predominant?
3. Is there one you want to work toward as a team goal?

Helpful Hints

Brainstorm a list of the positive results you are seeing as you work to differentiate your instruction. Keep these as responses you can share with anyone who questions what you're doing.

Chapter 16: My District Requires Me to Follow a Prescribed Text

Overview

This chapter provides excellent reasons and methods for differentiating reading assignments. If you've wanted to do that but felt unsure how to begin, here come solutions!

Helpful Hints

Before you ever come to the group session on chapter 16, do the CLOZE activity Nunley describes in the top half of the boxed material on p. 118. It requires a little preparation on your part and a few minutes of time on your students' parts.

Discussion Questions

1. Many people mistakenly believe that reading is decoding words. After reading pp. 115 – 116, (down to “A Variety of Reading Materials Keeps Information Updated”), discuss how you would explain to those people what “teaching reading” at the secondary level involves.
2. Nunley lists five “keys to motivating students for effective textbook reading.” Share with the group the one you perform most successfully. Talk about how you accomplish it.
3. Nunley’s third reason for using a variety of texts is that doing so makes information available to more students. She refers primarily to readability levels. Read aloud her explanation for what it means if a textbook is written at a 10th grade readability level. React and respond.
4. How many students in your classes read at their grade level? How could you find out? Discuss the results of the CLOZE tests your students completed on your textbooks. What do these results indicate?
5. After reading “Solution Strategies” and “Practice Assignments,” think back to your most recent reading assignment. If you gave your students a goal for reading, share it with the group. If you did not, share the goal you could have given your students. Listen to each other’s goals to gather more ideas for your own.
6. Brainstorm a list of accountability strategies (Practical Solution Idea 16.2). What are ways you can help students know what they should learn from a given text and then be accountable for that learning? Try to move beyond just giving a quiz. You may also want to search online for during-reading strategies.
7. After reading the remaining Practical Solution Ideas, work with a like-content partner to differentiate one lesson’s reading. Talk about where you can find additional reading materials and how you can involve students with a mix of

materials. Decide on the reading goal you'll give the students and on a way to hold them accountable for learning from the materials.

Chapter 17: Parents Expect Lecture Format in High School for College Prep

Overview

What really separates college learning from secondary learning is that college professors often expect students to be in charge of their own learning. Yes, they often do present information through assigned readings and lectures. The critical issue is what students do with that presented information. Differentiated secondary learning can make the difference.

Helpful Hints

Think back over your college classes. In which ones did you learn the most? What made your learning happen? Was it what the professor did, or what you did?

Discussion Questions

1. Nunley asserts that most learning and preparation for exams in colleges happens outside the classroom, when students pull the information “off the page, and manipulate it in [their minds] in such a fashion that it made sense. [They] made relationships out of the information so that [they] could store it, apply it, or later demonstrate it.” Share amongst group members the methods you used to manipulate, make sense, store, and apply information. Your facilitator may want to list people’s methods, so that you can see at a glance the variety of ways you used to learn.
2. How did you know how to do that particular learning strategy? How can you help your students to know a variety of learning strategies?
3. Why, in modern society, is knowing effective ways to learn probably more valuable than just learning a standard set of information? Nunley switches focus, from taking lecture notes to reading them, as a vital part of college learning. Debate her statement that “if your goal is to function as a college preparatory school, one of the key things you should be focusing on is helping your students improve their ability to gain a deep understanding of concepts through reading.”
4. In “Solution Strategies,” Nunley emphasizes that if we’re going to teach students to take notes, we should also teach them what to do with those notes. How much time do you spend doing that? Discuss how you could do it, and how you could incorporate the note-taking formats on p. 125. What other kinds of choices and variety (differentiation) could you provide as you teach note-taking?
5. List on butcher paper or via projector the five suggestions Nunley makes for increasing student engagement in reading. Then talk as a group about WHY these methods increase engagement.

6. Do the same for her five methods of increasing reading motivation.
7. Share with the group which of the Practice Assignments you can most readily begin to use in your classes. Share specific details about the lesson.
8. Which of the Practice Assignments leave you with questions about how to implement them? What answers can your group members provide?

Chapter 18: The Bottom Line—If They Are Learning, You Are Teaching

Overview

This powerful closing chapter summarizes all the reasons to differentiate our instruction.

Discussion Questions

1. Re-read Nunley's explanation of learning at the beginning of "A Description of the Issue." She says her explanation applies to "school purposes." How are out-of-school purposes different? What words might replace "Teaching, Studying, Testing" in out-of-school situations? Do those words give us some ideas about how to change and differentiate our instruction?
2. Explain to a partner what Nunley means when she says that few students are learning disabled, but that instead it is the traditional educational system that is disabled.
3. Share examples of actual students (without their names) who struggled with input and output but not with learning. How did you discover how to alter the input/output procedures to help them learn? Share your success stories, and relate them to the chapter.
4. The "Practice Assignment for Overcoming This Obstacle" is simple in its wording and complex in its enactment: Be a part of the solution. You already are, since you are participating in this study group. The point now is how to continue being part of the solution once you're at the end of the book. Pick one of the lines in the "Practice Assignment" section that especially speaks to you, that resonates with the experiences you've had as you worked to differentiate, that calls you to continue being part of the solution. Once everyone has chosen a line, go around the group, speaking the lines aloud, in celebration. Listen to each other, and affirm each other.

Book Study Group in a Bag

Feedback Form

Please provide feedback upon completion of the book study. Return this form in the facilitator guide folder.

1. Was the facilitator's guide useful in leading your discussion of *Differentiating the High School Classroom: Solution Strategies for 18 Common Obstacles*. Why or why not?
2. How can we improve this experience?
3. Would you recommend this to other groups?

