Differentiation Strategy: Student Choice Resource Bundle

I. Differentiation Strategy: Student Choice Resource

II. Designing Student Choices Supplement

III. Elementary Example Supplement

IV. Secondary Example Supplement

V. Decision Making Process Supplement

VI. The Basics of Differentiation Supplement

VII. References
## 1. Connect Learning to Interests

*Use your lesson objective(s) and identified student interests to complete this section.*

List connections between your lesson objective(s) and your students’ interests.

- 
- 
- 

**Decide whether to infuse choice by content or product.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students may choose to learn by <strong>content</strong>.</th>
<th>Students can show mastery through different <strong>products</strong>.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Different materials (texts, videos, manipulatives, websites, etc.).</td>
<td>• A form of the arts (dance, music, drawings, sculpture, performance, etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A variety of real-world problems or scenarios directly related to their interests.</td>
<td>• Written or spoken word (narratives, poetry, speech, poetry slam, etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Information related to a range of famous individuals, world figures, athletes, or even local community members.</td>
<td>• Construction of an object or structure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Independent study on a different interest area as it relates to a larger topic or theme.</td>
<td>• Integration of technology (create a multi-media project, coding a game or app, etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Physical movement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A form of social action (grassroots or larger mobilization of people, awareness campaign, etc.).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 2. Design Choices

*Use the space below to brainstorm the choices you will give your students. Choices should still align to lesson objective(s).*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choices</th>
<th>Brief Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3. Evaluate Choices

*Use the criteria to evaluate the quality of the choices you've designed.*

- [ ] All students can master or demonstrate mastery of the objective regardless of which choice they select.
- [ ] The workload for each option is appropriate for the objective.\(^1\)
- [ ] There are a suitable number of choices for the age of the students (younger students - fewer choices).
- [ ] The choices are diverse enough to be personally meaningful to all students.\(^2\)

---

### 4. Check Readiness

*Check off all items below to make sure you and your students are ready for the choices you’ve designed.*

- [ ] Model for students how to make informed decisions and provide them with the information needed to make a choice.\(^3\)
- [ ] Plan to evaluate students’ mastery for every choice offered (e.g. scoring rubrics).
- [ ] Gather all of the resources students will need for any given choice.
- [ ] Modify the physical layout of the room and clarify any classroom rules in relation to the choices offered, if necessary.
- [ ] Allot enough time for students to evaluate the options, make a decision, and complete the choice.

---

\(^1\) Some choices can have heavier workloads if the teacher has intentionally designed them that way. Teachers should consider the consequences of such a decision (i.e. effect on time to complete the task, concern about student readiness and ability, etc.).

\(^2\) One option can always be for students to suggest a choice for teacher approval.

\(^3\) See the supplement *Decision Making Process* for an example.
This guide contains examples and guiding questions to help you select to offer choice to your students by content or product.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guiding Questions:</th>
<th>Example 1</th>
<th>Example 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Content:** What students will learn and/or how students will learn it. | - How can I present this information to students in different ways?  
- How can I integrate students’ interests into the learning experience?  
- Can students use different texts or resources to learn the targeted skill or knowledge? | Students select the topic for a research paper based on a topic that they already find interesting. | Offer a range of ways for students to learn about the periodic table via online videos, games, or written text. |
| **Product:** How students demonstrate and extend what they have learned. | - What personal strengths or unique skills do my students possess?  
- How can students’ interests be integrated to their demonstration of learning?  
- Are there multiple real world applications of this learning goal? | Students demonstrate what they’ve learned about a historical time period using music, writing, speeches, community project, artistic representations, etc. | Students design nutrition plans for their family members (toddler, grandparents, athletes, family member with an illness, etc.). |

### Different Ways to Offer Choice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choice Cards</th>
<th>Choice menus can be set up like restaurant menus- entée, sides, and desserts. You may direct students to choose one or more from each section. There may also only be one choice in a category, which you want all students to do. You may have a longer list of “sides” which you direct students to select two or more of. Desserts may be a category that is completely optional all together.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Within a Larger Assignment</strong></td>
<td>If the choices offered are a part of a larger assignment, you can just list a diverse set of options within the assignment description. Depending on whether there are limited or unlimited options for students to choose from, teachers may need to conference with students to solidify their final selection.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 1. Connect Learning to Interests

**Objective(s):**
Students will be able to identify and explain the meaning of figurative language used in a variety of texts.

**Pertinent student interests:**
- All of the students listed current, popular musical artists in rap, hip hop, and pop.
- Half of the students preferred non-fiction texts, and the other preferred fiction texts.
- A few students specifically mentioned an interest in fashion.
- Some students are concerned with environmental issues.
- Half of the students identified playing video or online games as an important pastime.
- Half of the students enjoy using technology and being online.
- Some students spoke about hiking, camping, and being outdoors.
- Half of the students play sports.
- Some students are interested in art in general.

**List connections between your lesson objective(s) and your students’ interests.**
- Many of the students’ interests are connected to texts: poetry, lyrics, expository and fictional texts.
- Students could write examples of figurative language using topics of interest—describing the colors in a fashion line, athletes playing sports, parts of nature, etc.
- All of my students identified some interest in different musical artists. I know that most of those musicians use figurative language in their lyrics.

### 2. Design Choices

**Use the space below to brainstorm the choices you will give your students. Choices should still align to lesson objective(s).**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choices</th>
<th>Brief Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fictional text</strong></td>
<td>The short passages from those texts will be on four different cards at the fictional text station. Students will choose 1 card, read it, copy down one example of figurative language on a worksheet, and explain what that example was describing (on the worksheet).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 cards have passages from a book read as a class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 card asks students to find an example of figurative language from their own independent reading book</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Poems</strong></td>
<td>Short passages from those poems will be on three different cards at the poetry station. Students will choose 1 card, read it, copy down one example of figurative language on a worksheet, and explain what that example was describing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The New Colossus”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Fog”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Casey at Bat”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Song lyrics</strong></td>
<td>Short passages from those lyrics will be on three different cards at the song lyrics station. Students will choose 1 card, read it, copy down one example of figurative language on a worksheet, and explain what that example was describing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macklemore lyrics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selena Gomez lyrics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Magazines</strong></td>
<td>Short passages from those articles will be on three different cards at the magazine station. Students will choose 1 card, read it, copy down one example of figurative language on a worksheet, and explain what that example was describing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short section of a gaming article</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short section of an article about Fashion Week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short section of an article about global warming</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Newspapers</strong></td>
<td>Short passages from those articles will be on three different cards at the newspaper station. Students will choose 1 card, read it, copy down one example of figurative language on a worksheet, and explain what that example was describing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short section of a sports article about local team</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short section of an article about local art exhibition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short section of an article about a local community center</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 1. Connect Learning to Interests
**Objective(s):**
Students will be able to describe each of the identified constitutional amendments and its importance.

**Pertinent student interests:**
- Generally, students have great pride in their culture and community.
- Generally, students are interested in greater independence and freedom.
- Half of the class is interested in foreign cars.
- Half of the class enjoys going to hip hop or rock concerts.
- Some of the students are in the school’s band or their own independent band.
- A third of the class enjoys writing in their personal time - journaling and/or online blogs.
- Some students are heavily involved in multiple performance arts through the school.
- Some students are involved in the school’s art club.
- Half of the students are involved in sports throughout the year.

**List connections between your lesson objective(s) and your students’ interests.**
- Students have a large range of interests.
- Some interests directly relate to the rights of US citizens and the first amendment - freedom of speech, press and peaceful assembly. Specifically some students are interested in music, blogging, or performance arts.
- Students have a growing sense of independence and are interested in receiving greater levels of freedom. This relates to the rights and responsibilities of citizens that are outlined in the amendments we’ll study.
- Students’ pride in their diverse cultures and communities should be incorporated. The rights and responsibilities associated with citizenship seem like a topic that is important to the diverse cultures in this community. Some of my students may have family members who experienced or at least have associations with the Civil Rights movement, the WWII Japanese Internment Camps, and the struggles of recent immigrants.

### 2. Design Choices
**Use the space below to brainstorm the choices you will give your students. Choices should still align to lesson objective(s).**

Students will interview two family and/or community members about their thoughts, opinions, and experiences on each of the identified amendments (1st, 2nd, 9th, 13th, 14th, 15th, 19th, 24th, and 26th). Students will also reflect on their own thoughts, opinions, and experiences as they relate to the same set of amendments. They will then synthesize their thoughts on the importance of each of the amendments and demonstrate this in at least two ways. The first is a creative product that demonstrates the importance of the amendments in their eyes. This product can be in the form of:
- Musical piece (rap, song lyrics, musical composition etc.),
- Art piece (dance, sculpture, drawing, etc.),
- Written form (fictional piece, persuasive OpEd, speech, etc.),
- Multi-media (documentary, etc.),
- Or other products could be created with the approval of the teacher.

The second product is an essay or performed speech that explains how the creative product demonstrates the importance of the amendments.
A General Process for Making Decisions

The following steps can be used as a guide to help students when making decisions either inside or outside of the classroom. These steps can be used when students are asked to select an academic choice you’ve provided. Modifications to language and the nuance of each step may need to be made based on the age of students.

1) Identify the decision that needs to be made.
   a. You should be able to describe exactly what decision needs to be made and why.

2) Brainstorm and identify options.
   a. If you need to think up different choices, take time to really think through all of the options available to you.
   b. When choices are given to you, make sure you know what all of the choices are and you understand each of them.

3) Analyze choices.
   a. Think about the benefits and challenges for each choice. Will any of them lead to a more positive or negative outcome?
   b. Think of your strengths, weaknesses, and your own personal interests. This information can help you narrow down your options.
   c. Consider if you need more information about any of the choices. If you do, reach out to your teacher, peer, or trusted adult to help.

4) Decide and follow through.
   a. Based on your analysis of your choices and what you know about yourself, make a decision.
   b. After you have made a decision and you experience the choice you made, reflect on the experience. What have you learned about yourself and the decision making process that can be used in the future?
**Glossary of Terms for Differentiation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Differentiating by “what” students learn and “how” a concept or skill will be learned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>Topics, skills, or content areas that spark student curiosity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learner Profile</td>
<td>Includes learning preferences, learning style, gender, and culture. These all work together to affect how a child learns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Learning tasks and strategies used by students to make sense of content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product</td>
<td>How students demonstrate and extend what they have learned over a period of time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readiness</td>
<td>“What students are mentally prepared to do or learn next” (Puckett, 2013, Ch. 13, Glossary).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respectful Tasks</td>
<td>Tasks that are challenging, interesting, and worth doing. They allow students to explore skills and understandings (Puckett, 2013, Ch. 13, Glossary). Example: A task that is not respectful is requiring a student to write spelling words 100 times each.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from *Assessment and Student Success in a Differentiated Classroom* (p 2), by Tomlinson, C.A. and Moon, T. R., Alexandria, VA: ASCD. © 2013 by ASCD. Learn more about ASCD at www.ascd.org.
References


