## Differentiated Teaching Strategies

## II. <br> Designing <br> Tiered

Assignments

- Designing Tiers
- Distributing Tiers
- Grading Tiers
- Plus Anchor Activities

Student "Talk Back" Memos to the Author

Qi Larry Le gin



next time you write a story, write $A$ about
sometiry exiting like sports. That would be
a better story. like spas. That would be

TO: Larry Lew in
From. Carissa
Date 4/3/03
RE'Sidd's Excellent Adventure
Your story was alright. The main reason I dicdn't like it was because I don't like farces. The one thing I can visualize is the bright orange on the cat with a black light because I watch a show called C.S.I. and it does a lot of stuff like that It was extremely easy to predict he was going to do something with the orange goo, but what he did with it was funny. The part I didn't like with the orange goo was when he was going to kiss Inga because that doesn't really appeal to this audiences age. I didn't really understand why you put what Sidd's tail looks like lparil4 line 6-7). Why did you worry about what your face looks like lar 14 line 7) 'when you cant see it when the black light is not on? How do Cats have glasses? I thought the Cat with the glasses was a bit too

Carey levine
Comp Michael C．LYON
E：SIDDDS EXCELLENT ADVENTURE
服化々，
Your story is，to put it simply，fair．There ace times of sheer greatness and parts that are difficult to get through with
out letting your mindwancler．
It stoats starts well．It caught my attention as well as my eyes，as I read through the thick punctuation seperativg the small fragments that made it seem mare like an outline
 Moving toward the middle you begin to fall off－line with a combination of poor word choice and orginiqationi In para－ graph three you＇have a variety of orginizational mishaps．In paragraph two you make a poor decision using to two consecuti ＊c，marks．Instead you could have created a wonderfull transition frombegining to middle by telling a brief＂mini＂advents－ re about catchinqyour cat．Your middle，poor．
As we hit the climax and slow decline toward the peaceful
Ending，We see great creativity but unconventional，＂nu＂dialog as I wild put it，with cepeaded use．of no somethings in place of A flawed climax makes your ending seem hopeless， but you a re quickley shacthectout by your vitra－heat condusion．So in that catogory you get a great． Meaning，good，poor and precut．kevelingout at fair．


Source：Mark McKelsey，Coos Bay School District， Coos Bay，OR

## Tiered ''Talk Back" Memos to the Author <br> Grade Level Task <br> P-Q-P

Praise - Question - Polish

## Early Readiness Task

P-Q
Praise - Question

## Advanced Level Task

P-Q-SS
Praise - Question - Write a Sequel Scene

## More Advanced Level Task

P-Q-PS
Praise - Question - Write a Prequel Scene

## Tiered Study Guide Booklet

## TIER 1



# Praise-Question-Polish The "PQP" Method of Critiquing an Author 

Here's a teaching technique to assist strugglers with the memo feedback writing assignment: the "PQP" method. I learned it from $7^{\text {th }}$ grade teacher Tom Cantwell at Cal Young Middle School in Eugene, OR. Tom learned it in education grad school at the Florida State University, and he uses it to guide his students into a successful critique of an author. I tracked down the original source: Bill Lyons, former K-12 Language Arts Coordinator for lowa City School District. (The English Journal , Mar., 1981,Vol. 70, No. 3)

He explains that a "critique" doesn't only mean "what you don't like," but rather "what you like, what you don't like, and suggestions for improvement." He coaches them in these three areas of feedback:
$\mathbf{P}=\begin{aligned} & \text { praise for what you like about the author's writing } \\ & \text { style or ideas }\end{aligned}$
$\mathbf{Q}=\begin{aligned} & \text { question(s) for the author to remove any confusion } \\ & \text { you have }\end{aligned}$
$\mathbf{P}=\begin{gathered}\text { polish ideas to the author for improvement in } \\ \text { her/his writing }\end{gathered}$

Using sticky notes is a great way to train students. Maybe provide yellow stickies for Praises, blue stickies for Questions, and pink stickies for Polish suggestions. As students read a novel, textbook, short story, or article, they think about what the author is doing, and they record this as feedback to the author onto the color-coded sticky notes.

This short, simple approach easily fits into a nice 3-parapraph memo format. Taking the three colors of sticky notes, they students compose memo to the author providing feedback in three categories. Or, they can use the stickies to write a postcard to the author. The structure provides struggling readers and writers a solid chance to succeed.

Source: Larry Lewin, Paving the Way: Overcoming Reading and Writing Obstacles in Grades 6-12, Jossey-Bass, 2003. (877) 762-2974. http://www.josseybass.com

## Student "Talk Back" Postcards to the Author



Dear Mr. Lowing
I liked your story it uses pretty good. I think you could have used some diffent names for the bands. One thing I really didny like was some of the bands names used because they reminded me of some of the bonds that are considered punll bonds just one more thing, I want to know whats your inspiration for writing a story like this.

Sincerely,
M. K he Below

Source: Brandy Rayhill, Great Bridge High School Chesapeake, VA

## Design Options For Tiered Assignments

Tiering $=$ Taking a solid, "baseline" assignment that has worked well in the past (for most students), and then trouble-shooting it to convert it into different versions (to connect to all students).

## 1. Tiering by Reduction and Amplification

Evaluate the "baseline assignment" and anticipate:

- problems for lower-achieving students that cause frustration; reduce them to increase success;
- problems for high-achieving students that cause boredom; amplify them to increase enthusiasm.


## 2. Tiering by Form

As Carol Ann Tomlinson suggests, we can differentiate the content, the process, and/or the product. The products students create to "Info Out" their content knowledge and skill level can vary. For example, for a "Talk Back" to the author, students could write a:

- postcard
- memo
- letter


## 3. Tiering by Bloom's Taxonomy

Bloom can assist you. Use Diane Heacox's idea of converting Bloom Hierarchy of Thinking into "challenge levels." Design several tiers at different levels of thinking. For example

- a tier that requires the student to reveal knowledge or comprehension
- a tier that requires analysis and application
- a tier that requires synthesis or evaluation.


## 4. Tiering by Readability

Readability is a measure of degree of reading difficulty based on a formula (ae). If the "baseline" reading assignment is over-the-head of some of your students, substitute it with a more accessible resource. These "easier reads" may be located:

- school library
- public or university library
- on-line resources

To measure the readability, use the free Lexile Analyzer from MetaMetrics available at http://www.lexile.com/DesktopDefault.aspx?view=ed\&tabindex=0\&tabid=1

# Feedback Formats 


#### Abstract

Teachers have options in assigning students to write a feedback to an author. The following formats all work to help students structure their response, but each has different benefits. Here are 4 options in increasing degree of difficulty:


Post Card Probably the easiest form for students because it is the shortest; post cards also afford the option of an illustration on the front side to make a picture post card.

Memo Probably the most intriguing option for students because most have never written a memo, much less know what they are; also memos offer students the coolest format to use To: From: Date: RE: C/C:

Letter Probably the most familiar form for students in that many of them have written letters both in and out of school; also, because of length, letters offer students more room to respond.

Position Paper Probably the most challenging form for students because of its nature: take a position on the assignment, defend your position, and to so in depth with formal references to the material.

## NOTE:

In a Differentiated Lesson, teachers could assign different students to write their author responses in one of the 4 different formats. Or, teachers could allow students to choose a format to write in.


| Sentence Starters for PQP | $Q=$ questions to the author (things that confused you) | $\mathbf{P}=$ Polishing - suggestions for improvement <br> I would have ended it like |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| $\mathrm{P}=$ Praise the author | I was confused with... | I would change..... |
| I like........ | I didn't understand.... | I wish that.... |
| It was really yeat that....... | I don't get...... | I'm beginning to wonder if.... |
| That was cool when...... 1 agree with.... | What did you mean when... | I couldn't believe that.... |
| I'was surprised when... | How did you come up with... |  |

Source: Theresa Alexander, Calvary Christian Academy,
Philadelphia, PA



Dear Gary Soto,
I gore with everghing in the story. I really liked haw José changed his mind about Estela. The starry was very interesting, because Doses, thought that he could win Estela's heart, but instead he got a broken heart.

How did you come up with the sammy? What exactly were you thinking when you wrote this story? Why did you choose to write about this story? Why did you chase to write about this subject?

I would have liked a better ending. The ending made me think, made me wounder if anything else happened. I would like to hear the rest of the story. Oh and one more question, how did you become a writer?

Sincerely, Liddya TM.
$\mathcal{L}$
Anchor Activity

## Illustrate a Story

Since none of the stories in Gary Soto's book Local News has any pictures, choose one story you read, and draw $3-4$ illustrations to send to Gary with your P-Q-P letter. Write a caption in the rectangle below describing which scene you are drawing.


At uncle Froddies
house.


## Anchor Activity



Reproductive structures of flowers

2. Complete the f 2 generation by coloring in the circles
$3: 1$ ratio

f2 generation

3. Complete the chart with YY, YG, GG

Source: http://anthro.palomar.edu/mendel/images/genotypes_of_pea plants.gif

## What are Anchor Activities?

An Anchor Activity is a teacher-designed back-up assignment that is waiting in the wings for students who finish the primary assignment early. They are relatively short ( $5-10 \mathrm{~min}$.), self-explanatory, and used at the end of a period.

Anchors are designed to be extension activities that take students deeper into the material by providing more depth, or a different perspective, or a review in a different format. Anchors not only give students another look at the topic or concept, they additionally provide a management tool that keeps students focused, productive, and quiet to the end of the period.

Anchors are similar to, but also different from, "early-finisher" assignments. Both are intended to fill up the end of a period with productive work, but an "early finisher" is a generic assignment that can be used in any unit, for example, "Study your vocabulary list," or "Read a library book," or "Begin your homework." Anchors, on the other hand, are customized to be "anchored" to a specific assignment. While both serve the same purpose, Anchors are preferred, but they require more teacher planning.

## Other Definitions of Anchor Activities - "On-Going"

"Anchor Activities provide ongoing assignments that students may work on independently when they are not engaged in classroom tasks. These activities help maximize academic learning time and allow students to explore topics at greater depth."
$\sim$ Francine Oliver and Matt Shields, Differentiation Toolbox, University of Virginia http://people.virginia.edu/~mws6u/diff/resources.htm\#
"Specified ongoing activities on which students work independently ongoing assignments that students can work on throughout a unit."
~Regina Public Schools and Saskatchewan Learning http://www.saskschools.ca/~bestpractice/anchor/index.html
"An Anchor Activity is a strategy that allows students to work on an ongoing assignment directly related to the curriculum that can be worked on independently throughout a unit or a semester. An Anchor Activity is a logical extension of learning during a unit, an elaboration of important goals and outcomes that are tied to the curriculum and tasks that students are held accountable.
The purpose of an Anchor Activity is provide meaningful work for students when they are not actively engaged in classroom activities (e.g., when they finish early, are waiting for further directions, are stumped, first enter class, or when the teacher is working with other students.) "
~ Wilmette Public School Dist., IL http://www.wilmette39.org/DI39/iagc05lowprep/anchoractivitydef\ .pdf

## Anchor Vs. SideBar Activities

SideBars as longer assignments (multiple periods) that allow quicker learners to move laterally across the curriculum instead of moving forward at an accelerated rate (aka "Curriculum Compacting"). SideBars are useful for adding a deeper degree of learning for advanced students. They should be timed to allow the other students to complete the regular assignment, so that everyone can then begin the next assignment / new unit together.

Another way to differentiate instruction is to be ready for students who learn the material quickly and accurately.

Teachers can create a "sidebar activity" for these students who have demonstrated successful completion of an assignment (or unit).

A "sidebar activity" is an assignment that moves laterally across the curriculum to further strengthen student understanding and aptitude. It requires several class periods (or even longer, like an on-going project).

This is not "curriculum compacting" whereby the teacher accelerates faster students through the assigned curriculum. Rather, it is more of a "scenic turn-out" * from the assigned curriculum. (* Betty Shoemaker)

For example, here is a SideBar designed for US History students who successfully completed a reading notetaking assignment in their textbook.

Create a CliffsNotes study guide for a new student in Mr. Shannon's AP History course. This booklet must assist the student in learning how to take notes for this chapter. If you'd rather, create a "Note Taking in History for Dummies."

Your guide should include helpful tips for reading the textbook. For example:

- how to distill 3-4 paragraphs from the chapter down to a couple of summary sentences.
- how to locate key details that shed light on a main idea
- how to generate study-review questions at various levels of complexity
- quiz-type questions - recall basic information
- essay-type questions - deeper information processing

Your booklet could also include:

- key vocabulary terms
- study tips for learning and remembering historical information
- illustrations / graphics to highlight important points



## Tiering Tip

Challenge Levels
(1aikik

| Level | Definition | Action | Activities |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Synthesis | Put together in a new or different way | Create It | compose, hypothesize, design, formulate, create, invent, develop, refine, produce, transform |
| Evaluation | Determine worth or value based on criteria | Judge It | judge, predict, verify, assess, justify, rate, prioritize, determine, select, decide, value, choose, forecast, estimate |
| Analysis | Examine critically | Examine It | compare, contrast, classify, critique, categorize, solve, deduce, examine, differentiate, appraise, distinguish, experiment, question, investigate, categorize, infer |
| Application | Use what you have learned | Use It | demonstrate, construct, record, use, diagram, revise, record, reformat, illustrate, interpret, dramatize, practice, organize, translate, manipulate, convert, adapt, research, calculate, operate, model, order; display, implement, sequence, integrate, incorporate |
| Comprehension | Show your understanding | Understand It | locate, explain, summarize, identify, describe, report, discuss, locate, review, paraphrase, restate, retell, show, outline, rewrite |
| Knowledge | Recall facts and information | Know it | tell, list, define, label, recite, memorize, repeat, find, name, record, fill in, recall, relate |

Based on Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: Book 1 Cognitive Domain by Benjamin S. Bloom, et al. (New York: Longman, 1984). Described in Resources, page 18.

Excerpted from Differentiating Instruction in the Regular Classroom: How to Reach and Teach All Learners, Grades 3-12 by Diane Heacox, Ed.D. © 2002 , Used with permission from Free Spirit Publishing Inc., Minneapolis, MN; 1-866-703-7322; www.freespint.com. All rights reserved.

# Tiered RAFT Choices for Chapter 5.1 Physical Properties 

No. ROLE AUDIENCE FORMAT TOPIC

| 1 | $\begin{aligned} & \text { ping pong } \\ & \text { ball } \end{aligned}$ | golf ball | invitation to a swim party | Please come to my party, but I will explain to you why you must be careful of drowning. |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 1b | golf ball | ping pong ball | invitation to a diving contest | I will tell you how to convert yourself into being able to dive under water and stay there. |
| 2 | pH scale | orange juice | notice on a label | I will record what you should understand about yourself |
| 2b | Stomach indigestion | Antacid product like TUMs® ${ }^{\circledR}$ or PeptoBismol® | S.O.S distress call | Demonstrate what I need for you to do quickly to help me. |
| 3 | lemon | lime | private note | While we may look different on the outside, I will identify what we have in common on the inside. |
| 3b | lemon | lime | F.Y.I. memo (For Your Information) | I am tired of people confusing us, so here is what I am going to do to alter myself to become different from you. |
| 4 | soap | lemon | phone conversation | Listen up: We will discuss why we taste differently. |
| 4b |  |  |  |  |

Note the verbs in the Topic Column - they come from Bloom's Taxonomy.
Tiered Genetics RAFTs

| T1 | Mendel's Assistant | Mendel | e-mail to boss | Boss, allow me to explain how the pea experiment is going. |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| T1 | Mendel | Science Society | article for their journal | I will gladly indicate what I have discovered about genetics. |
| T1 | Pea | Mendel and his assistants | angry letter | Hey, Buddy, I'll reveal to you what's happening.... Now quit messing with me!! |
| T1 | Parent plant | offspring plant | a private talk about "the birds and bees" | I must tell you about sexual reproduction, cross pollination, dominant / recessive traits |
| T1 | Reginald Punnett, a British geneticist. | Upper and lower case letters | set of directions | OK, guys, I will list for you the rules of my brilliant Punnett square. |
| T1 | Coin | Biology student | text message | I will recall for you why the principles of probability that predict outcomes of coin flips can be used to predict outcomes of genetic crosses |
| T1 | cross-pollinated plant | true-breeding plant | on-line chat | I will put into plain words the difference between us |


| T2 | Geneticist | tall pea plant | 2 Punnett squares | Here's how I can determine your genotype with respect to height. |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| T2 | Green, wrinkled pea | Round, yellow <br> pea | Transcript of telephone <br> conversation | I will analyze the reasons why, unbelievable as it might be, we <br> have the same parents |
| T2 | 2007 Scientist | Mendel | letter to the editor of a <br> newspaper | I have evaluated the pro's and con's of genetic engineering |
| T2 | Salesman | Alleles | I will evaluate the 4 other genetic options for you aside from plain <br> ol' simple dominant/recessive, and try to sell you on one of them |  |
| T3 | F1 pea plant that is <br> homozygous for <br> shortness | F1 pea plant <br> that is <br> heterozygous | love letter | I have constructed a Punnett square to predict the probability of <br> our offspring becoming a tall pea plant |
| T3 | Biology student | Mendel <br> note sent back in time | I have created a set of contemporary hybrids that will blow your <br> mind! |  |
| T3 | High school biology <br> student | $8^{\text {th }}$ grade <br> science student | Cheat sheet | I have formulated a handy-dandy resource on genetics and <br> probability to make your life easier when you get to high school. |
| T3 | TT homozygous plant | Tt <br> heterozygous <br> plant | Proposal of marraige | Here's my prediction about whether our kid will grow up to play <br> center or point guard on the basketball team and therefore why you <br> should marry me and not "tt" |

[^0]
# World Language Tiered Assignment 

## Topic: Clothing <br> Language and Level: French III

Key Concept(s): Students use clothing vocabulary in real world contexts. They are able to describe in detail, suggest clothing items to friends and customers, persuade others, compare and contrast, and encourage. Students apply different social registers for friends and work situations. Students know about the impact of the French fashion industry and are aware of the styles of clothing in other Francophone countries. Students know how to use currency. Students are able to research information about the clothing industry using the Internet.

Key Understanding: Clothing is a form of expression in many cultures.


#### Abstract

Targeted Standards: COMMUNICATION: Presentational Mode CULTURES: Products and Perspectives CONNECTIONS: Access to information, Other subject areas COMPARISONS: Concept of culture COMMUNITIES: Within and beyond the school

Background: Students have studied clothing vocabulary and descriptive adjectives. They can use direct and indirect object pronouns when identifying clothing. They can persuade, encourage and suggest using commands, conditional, and subjunctive. Students are aware of the Francophone countries and are aware of the different styles of clothing and the roles of clothing in the culture and can relate this information to a diversity perspective. They have done a variety of activities and assessments. They have also done web quest research activities on the Internet. Therefore, these activities are designed for the readiness level of the students.


## TIER 1 ASSIGNMENT <br> (Complex and Abstract)

Your group works for a business training institute. Your task is to write two role-play scenarios for students to use as a practice when dealing with a variety of customers in a clothing store. You are to set up each scenario and for each one, write a practice conversation between a "challenging" client and a vendor. These conversations would be used by business school students to practice appropriate interactions between a challenging client and a vendor. The conversations should encourage and persuade. Submit a written copy and be ready to present one conversation, without notes, as a model for the class.

## TIER 2 ASSIGNMENT

 (Somewhat Complex \& Concrete)Your group comprises the "Rules Committee* for a high school in Montréal, Canada. You have been assigned to write a small section of the school handbook that explains the school's dress code. For this handout, write a brief general statement about the dress policy. Then write 12 school rules discussing the do's and don't of school dress. Describe the clothes that are acceptable or those that are not. Turn in a typed copy of the descriptions and the dress code for publication in the school handbook. Also create a poster with the 12 guidelines, and be ready to present it to the class.

## TIER 3 ASSIGNMENT

 (Very Concrete)You work for an ad agency whose job is to create a mini catalog and a sales ad for one of the big department stores in Paris. Using magazine pictures, drawings and/or pictures from the Internet, create a mini-catalog with 12 clothing items. You decide on theme, age, or gender group. Describe each item using models from previous readings. Price the item in euros. Type the descriptions and neatly arrange the catalog to make it appealing to customers. Also create an ad promoting at least two of these items which are on sale. Be creative in your design, and be ready to present both the catalog and the ad to the class.

## FIGURE 4: Tiered Lesson Plan

Source: SEDL, Austin, TX
http://www.sedl.org/loteced/communique/n06.pdf Used with permission.

# Mathematics - Pre-Calculus Tiered Assignment 

Grade: 11
Standard: \#1 Functions

Key Concept: Students use polynomial, rational, and algebraic functions. Generalization:Students make connections between a problem, its model as the equation of a function, and the graph of that function. Background: This lesson is adapted from the book A Watched Cup Never Cools, ISBN\#1-55953-318-8, Writing Assignment 2. This lesson should be presented about midway through the course. Students should already be familiar with functions and have modeled several physical situations using equations. An example is given in Indiana's Academic Standards for Pre-Calculus, page 3. Students should work individually to complete this lesson. This lesson is tiered in process and product according to readiness.

## Tier I: Basic Learners

Students in this tier are given a problem which the whole class has already worked or which was used by the teacher for demonstration. That is, students should be able to recall the problem and the related function. The students are to use their text to write a mathematical definition of function, being specific about the function which is related to the problem. Students are given a teacher prepared nonmathematical definition of a function from an everyday use of the word. Students prepare a graph of their function and compare/contrast diagram of the two definitions.

## Tier II: Grade Level Learners

Students in this tier are given a problem which they have not seen before. Students have to determine and specify the related function. The students writea mathematical definition of function in their own words, being specific about the function which is related to the problem. Students are given a teacher prepared nonmathematical definition of a function from an everyday use of the word outside of mathemaitcs. Students prepare a graph of their function and a venn diagram to compare/contrast the two.

## Tier III: Advanced Learners

Students in this tier are given several related problems some of which they may have never seen before. Students have to determine and specify the related general function which works for all the problems. The students write a mathematical definition of function using their own words, being specific about the function which is related to the problem. Students write a nonmathematical definition of a function from an everyday use of the word outside of mathematics. Students prepare a graph of their general function and write a short description explaining how and why it varies. Students prepare a short paper, 1-2 pages, which compares/contrasts the two definitions of function.

# Rolling the Dice Tiered Assignment 

## Task

A few students want me to play a game with them. They will give me a dime for each odd sum I roll with two die. I have to give them a dime for each even sum they roll with two die. I think I'm going to get cheated! I noticed that I can't roll one of my odd numbers - 1! I only get a choice of 5 odd numbers $(3,5,7,9,11)$ but they will get a choice of 6 even numbers ( $2,4,6,8,10,12$ ). Should I play this game with the students? Using as much mathematical language and representation as you can, show me that this is or is not a fair game.

## Alternative Versions of Task

## More Accessible Version:

$\mathcal{A}$ fewstudents want me to play a game with them. They will give me a dime for each odd sum I roll with two die. I have to give them a dime for each even sum they roll with two die. I think I'm going to get cheated! I noticed that I can't roll one of my odd numbers - 1! I only get a choice of 5 odd numbers (3, $5,7,9,11)$ 6ut they will get a choice of 6 even numbers $(2,4,6,8,10,12)$. List all of the possible ways of getting each sum using the digits $1-6$. Then determine the probability of getting an even and odd sum. Ulse the information to draw a conclusion; is this a fair game to play with the students?

## More Challenging Version:

$\mathcal{A}$ fewstudents want me to play a game with them. They will give me a dime for each odd sum I roll with two die. I have to give them a dime for each even sum they roll with two die. I think I'm going to get cheated! Should I play this game with the students? Ulsing as much mathematical language and representation as you can, show me that this is or is not a fair game.

Source: Clare Forseth
© Exemplars, 2008. Used with permission.
To view additional sample tasks and rubrics visit www.exemplars.com

## Assignments in Three Tiers

Middle school teacher, author, and presenter Rick Wormeli designs and labels his assignments in three tiers:

- grade level task
•advanced level task
•early readiness level task

Example A
Grade Level Task:

- Draw and correctly label the plot profile of a novel.


## Advanced Level Tasks:

■. Draw and correctly label the general plot profile for a particular genre of books.

- Draw and correctly label the plot profile of a novel and explain how the insertion or deletion of a particular character or conflict will impact the profile's line, then judge whether this change would improve or worsen the quality of the story.

Early Readiness Level Tasks:

- Draw and correctly label the plot profile of a short story.
- Draw and correctly label the plot profile of a single scene.
- Given a plot profile of a novel, correctly label its parts.

E Given a plot profile with mistakes in its labeling, correct the labels.

## Example B

Grade Level Task:

- Correctly identify five different types of clouds from given pictures. In writing, explain how they are different from each other.

Advanced Level Task:

- Correctly label the five basic cloud types in given pictures, then using your understanding of those types, identify clouds in given pictures that seem to be made up of more than one type. Explain your thinking in writing.

Early Readiness Level Tasks:

- Match the type of cloud in the picture with its name; explain your thinking in writing or orally.


## Tiered Lit Log Codes

|  | Code | Meaning | Date/Page |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | SR | - Simply retell what happened |  |
| - | Q | - Questions you have about the book that you can ask the teacher or author |  |
|  | CH | - Give reasons for choosing to read the book |  |
|  | GU | - Give reasons for giving up on reading the book |  |
|  | V | In your own words, write a definition for new vocabulary you've found in this book |  |
|  | S | - In your own words, describe the setting |  |
|  | PE | - Connection between the book and your personal experiences |  |
| 0 | EX | - Give an example of an observation you made about the book |  |
|  | J | - Judge a characters action or attitude |  |
| $V$ | RR | - Give reasons for rereading a section |  |
| 0 | P | - Make a prediction and explain your thinking |  |
| C | CD | - In your own words, describe a character |  |
|  | UE | - Tell us about an unexpected event and what you expected would happen. |  |
|  | P | - Write about a problem in the story and tell how it was resolved. |  |
| 0 | I | - If I lived in this setting... |  |
| 4 | PK | Do you have previous knowledge about a topic in this book - Share your information |  |
|  | AA | - Advice you have for the author |  |
| $\square$ | C | - Critique of the author's work |  |
| 0 | AI | - Give information about the author that you have learned |  |
|  | M | - Draw a map to show the places in your book |  |
|  | CC | - Compare and contrast this story to another you've read |  |
| $e$ | AC | - Give advice to a character in the story |  |
|  | CDO | - Give a character a do-over, What would you change? What would the outcome be? |  |
|  | WIC | -Why do you care? Talk about an event in the book that you can learn from. |  |
| $5$ | CR | Change the roles - write a portion from another character's point of view. |  |

# Tiering by Readability with a Teacher Written Adaptation "Students of the Game" 

Original Article by John Fox, Smithsonian Magazine, April, 2006
When Aztec and Maya played this game 500 to 1,000 years ago, it wasn't a good idea to lose! Losers would sometimes lose their heads, literally! In some remote areas in Mexico some scholars are trying to save Ulama, the oldest ball game in the Americas, from extinction.

A nine pound rubber ball flies high across the sky one afternoon in Mexico. Jesus "Chuy" Paez scampers after the ball and hits the ball with his hip. He wears special shorts made out of deerskin for protection. Chuy just passed the ball to a teammate running across the hard packed earth court.

Next the opposing team intercepts the ball and launches it back toward Chuy's side of the court. The ball bounces between players like a giant pinball. Each player hitting the ball with their hips. After a few volleys, the ball whizzes past the defense and slams into the chain link fence at the end of the court. Chuy's team just scored.

On the sidelines, 30 or so Los Llanitos hometown spectators erupt in cheers for their team.

The oldest ball game in the Americas is called ulama (the Aztec word for it is ullamaliztli) Archaeologists say this game has bee played for the last 3,500 years in communities from Honduras to the deserts of Northern Mexico. Against all odds this game has survived the rise and fall of the Olmec, Maya and Aztec civilization, not to mention the devastation brought with the Spanish conquest.

But, today ulama faces extinction. The players are very poor and geographically isolated. There isn't very much rubber left to make the balls. And competition from modern sports, like volleyball and baseball, has made ulama less popular. Yet, many groups have tried to save this dying sport. Businessmen, athletes and academics are fighting to preserve the sport.

Two professors at California State University at Los Angeles have formed the "Ulama Project". Archaeologist James Brady and historian Manuel Aguilar have formed the Ulama Project with their students to try to save ulama.

Brady says that he and his team used to go out and dig up ancient ball courts, take down the location and date and move on. But he is now interested in ...

# How to Distribute Tiers <br> <br> Deciding on Who Gets Which Version of an Assignment 

 <br> <br> Deciding on Who Gets Which Version of an Assignment}

This is a sticky issue for some teachers. While we recognize the theoretical value of putting doable assignments in the hands of our students, in practice we can feel uncomfortable about the potential reaction from students when they see that their classmates have a different assignment.

I understand this feeling. But I also know that we can overcome it in order to increase the chances for success among the wide variety of learners we serve. As Rick Wormeli wrote, "No one learns faster or better with material and tasks not geared to where they are mentally." *

## Option 1 Everyone Does Tier 1

As an introduction to tiering, I recommend telling your class what it is and why you are doing it. Be up front about this. I give a little speech: "Class, you all know that it's my job to teach each and everyone of you the material in this course, and it's my job to do it to the best of my ability, so that all of you can learn the material and successfully complete this course. You may not know how much work that takes on my part. That's OK. What is important for you to know is that I am always interested in learning new and better ways to teach you. Today we are going to try a new technique called Tiered Assignments. What does that mean? It means that instead of everyone doing the exact same assignment, I created different versions of it to better teach all of you what you need to learn. I have created 3 versions of our next assignment, and I call them 'Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3'. To make this easy to follow, let's all do Tier 1 today. Here is a copy for each of you."

Distribute Tier 1 to all students, explain it, and assist them as needed. The hope is that a student will wonder, "What does Tier 2 or Tier 3 look like?" If a student asks this question, great. Say, "I'm glad you asked. Here is a copy of Tier 2 for you to look at. Compare it to Tier 1 to see if you can find what is similar and what is different." If other students also are curious, give them a copy as well. Discuss the differences; determine what is more or less challenging in the versions.

If no asks about the other Tiers, you can ask them, "Anyone wonder what Tier 2 looks like?" The goal is to gently introduce the concept of Tiered Assignments, so that later when you do another one, your students will be familiar with them.

## Option 2 Let Students Choose a Tier

Obviously, students appreciate the opportunity to decide on what work they will be doing, and Offering Student Choice is an important principle of Differentiation. (See Chapter 1). In this distribution option, give the same speech (see above), but introduce all the Tiers to the students. Then offer them a choice. "You can see that each Tier is basically the same, but each is somewhat different. Pick the one you want to work on today."

The advantage to this method is obvious: Students will be happy. The disadvantage is equally obvious: Some students will select the wrong Tier - either pick one that is too difficult, or more likely, pick one that is not challenging enough. That's OK, our goal here is to gently introduce the concept.

## Option 3 Put the Students into Cooperative Groups

By grouping students, we can provide them with peer support in accomplishing a task that they probably would not yet be able to do independently. Temporary, flexible grouping is a long-time instructional practice that has merit, and it is a key principle of Differentiation (See Chapter 3).

By placing your students in "readiness" (similar ability) groups of three, four, or five, they can help each other do the Tiered Assignment you give them. Obviously, the advantage is that help is readily available and the give and take amongst team members supports learning. The down side, of course, is that some groups may not be able to function cooperatively, may drift off-task, or may rely on one member to do the lion's share of the work. Therefore, if you decide to employ this option, be sure to explain and train your students how to work cooperatively in a group, and tell them why you are assigning different versions to different groups.

## Option 4 All Tiers for All Students

This distribution option allows students to seek their own level. Introduce the different versions of the assignment, and then assign all of them to all of your students. Explain that you realize that different students will approach the versions differently, and that not everyone will be able to do them equally. That's OK. You want to see how each student does on each Tier.

Distribute all the Tiers to each student, and let them work on them. You circulate, as usual, checking in, offering assistance, giving encouragement. When a student reveals an inability to advance to a higher level Tier, say, "OK, what's the difficulty here? If you want, I can help you try."

Some teachers offer an incentive to advance to the next Tier. Typically, the incentive is more points earned. If you are comfortable with this offer, use it. If you have a better way of encouraging students to push ahead, use it.

## Option 5 The Teacher Decides Which Students Get Which Tier

This is the preferred method of Tier distribution, and in fact is why Tiered Assignments were first invented. It is the teacher who can best determine the level of complexity for his/her students. How do we know this? We can use pre-assessments, on-going class work, and teacher observations to detect the current level of each student to match a Tier.

The potential discomfort of having students realize that their classmates have different assignments can be mitigated by using this approach after using one or more of the above methods. By telling your class, "We have done Tiered Assignments a few times in the past, and today we will be doing another one. You remember why I am experimenting with Tiered Assignments, and you remember that last time you were the one who got to pick (or you were in a group to help you, or you were trying to do as many as you could). Today I get to pick, and I will give you the version I think you will do the best with. As always I will be moving around the room to assist you."

Remember: Tiered Assignments are only one aspect of Differentiated Instruction, and they are not used every period, every day. As Rick Wormeli, wrote, "It's often OK for students to do what everyone else is doing."

* (Fair Isn't Always Equal, Stenhouse, 2006, p. 73, 57.)


## Distributing All Tiers to All Students



The European War
Big Picture $\qquad$
$\qquad$
$\qquad$

Specific Ex $\qquad$

## Type I Question:

$\qquad$
$\qquad$

## From Isolation to Intervention

Big Picture $\qquad$
$\qquad$
$\qquad$
$\qquad$
Specific Ex. $\qquad$

## Type I Question:

$\qquad$
$\qquad$

## Pearl Harbor and the Coming of War

Big Picture $\qquad$
$\qquad$
$\qquad$

Specific Ex. $\qquad$

## AT - AS -AP

All Tiers - All Students in A.P.
Source: Tad Shannon
North Eugene High School
Eugene, OR


America Mobilizes for War

## Organizing for Victory

Big Picture $\qquad$
$\qquad$
$\qquad$

Specific Ex $\qquad$
Type II Question:
$\qquad$

## The War Economy

Big Picture $\qquad$
$\qquad$
$\qquad$

## Specific Ex.

$\qquad$

## Type II Question:

$\qquad$

## "A Wizard War"

Big Picture $\qquad$
$\qquad$
$\qquad$
$\qquad$

## Specific Ex

$\qquad$

Type III Question:
$\qquad$

## Propaganda and Politics

Big Picture $\qquad$
$\qquad$
$\qquad$

# What is FAIR? 

KATHLEEN M. LARRIVEY
West Jr.High / Middle School
Brockton Public Schools
Brockton, MA

Mom and Dad Smith
are going out to dinner for their anniversary...

so they are ordering a pizza for their four children to have for their dinner.

## Does FAIR mean <br> EQUAL?

## How to Grade Tiered Assignments

Q. How do we grade student work when that work is done at different degrees of difficulty? How do we score the different tiers? The last thing we want is for students to complain that the tiered levels are not fair. So whatever system we employ, we better be able to explain it as fair, right? This is a very tough aspect of Differentiated Instruction. I wish I could provide you with the perfect answer, but I cannot. I can only offer you the consideration of three options.

## A1. My Compromise:

1. When students are offered the choice of which tier they want to work on, we can urge them to seek the higher levels by offering more points. That is, for students who self-select the more demanding level, they can earn a higher maximum of points. The rationale for this option is obvious: dangle the bait to motivate them not to take the path of least resistance.
2. When the teacher decides which students are assigned which levels, then all students can earn the same maximum amount for the assignment. The rationale here is equally obvious: no one gets punished for working on a level that the teacher deems appropriately challenging.

Problem with this compromise: What if a student self-selects the lowest level of difficulty because the kid accurately knows his/her ability level in the class? This student is not copping out of work by taking the easy route, but rather is realistically self-assessing the ability level. How could we score this student's work for less points? Doesn't seem fair, does it?

Possible Solution: Again, I am not totally satisfied with this answer, but here it is: What if the scoring / grading system we use allows for multiple levels of success? That is, if you score on a 6-point rubric, couldn't a lower-level tier be able to earn a 4-point score -- which is a "passing" grade?

A2. Kathie Nunley's Layered Curriculum ${ }^{\text {TM }}$. In her book Differentiating the High School Classroom (Corwin Press, 2006), she writes,
" What if I tied the actual letter grade to the elaboration of study? Looking at Bloom's Taxonomy, I could see that the types of learning or thing could easily be divided into three blocks, or as I thought of them, three layers." She invented the Layered Curriculum ${ }^{\text {TM }}$ based on Bloom's Taxonomy:

C Layer: Gather information

B Layer: Apply or manipulate that information
A Layer: Critically evaluate an issue (regarding that information)
The letter grade the students would earn would be based on the complexity of their thinking." (p. 28)

For example, Kathie designed a Science lesson on Fish \& Amphibians: Conflict and Change and layered it for her students to pick: C, B, or A level.

## Section I. Basic Knowledge "C" level 65 points MAX Section II. Application/Manipulation "B" level Choose ONE for 15 pts Section III. Critical thinking/Analysis "A" level Choose ONE for 20 pts

Check out her Web site to read more about this approach and to view / download hundreds of Sample Layered Curriculum Lesson Plans submitted by teachers on a wide range of topics.
http://help4teachers.com


A3. Mike D'Ostilo's Point \& Percentage Distribution. This a rubric, but each point-value is aligned with a \%age. Mike and his colleague Carrie Crispin at Gateway Regional High School in Woodbury Heights, NJ, have created a 6-Point and 4-Point version.

| $\mathbf{6 . 0}=\mathbf{1 0 0}$ |
| :--- |
| $5.9=99$ |
| $5.8=98$ |
| $5.7=97$ |
| $5.6=96$ |
| $5.5=95$ |
| $5.4=94$ |
| $5.3=93$ |
| $5.2=92$ |
| $5.1=91$ |

# Layered Curriculum ${ }^{\text {TM }}$ Sample Unit on Fish \& Amphibians: Conflict and Change 

Grading: 86-100 A $\quad 71-85 \mathrm{~B} \quad 55-70 \mathrm{C} \quad 40-54 \mathrm{D}$


#### Abstract

Section I. Basic Knowledge "C" level 65 points MAX. Must get 60 pts here to move to Section II. 1. Listen to the lecture/take notes 5 pts/day $1 \begin{array}{lllll}1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5\end{array}$ 2. Write an autobiography. Include your name, age, your best physical feature, your favorite food, your favorite place to eat, describe your best friend and why, two conflicts you have in your life, where you go to feel the safest, and what you want to be doing five years from now. Write another autobiography. This time you are an amphibian. 15 pts. 3. Draw a water dwelling animal like a fish or octopus. Draw that same animal living on land. Describe the adjustments or adaptations that were made to move to land. This is an art project. It needs lots of artistic detail. Choose this only if you enjoying detailed drawing. 15 pts. 4. Watch the movie, Toadspell. Write 2 paragraphs summarizing the movie and 2 paragraphs on conflicts you saw in the movie and how change resulted from those conflicts. 15 pts 5. Listen to the lecture on amphibians. Take notes. 15 pts 6. How is a frog like a fish (list 10 similarities). How is it different (list 10 differences). 10 pts 7. Listen to the lecture on fish. Take notes. 15 pts. 8. Write a 10 sentence paragraph describing the difference between frogs and toads. Read it to 2 other classmates. Your paragraph can be in any language OTHER than English. 15 pts 9. Find 2 pieces of conflicting information on Fish or Amphibians between two textbooks. Explain why the books may differ on information. 15 pts 10. Watch any documentary-type t.v. show on fish or amphibians. List the title, network and date of broadcast. Describe the show in terms of conflicts in the amphibian world. 15 pts 11. Write a piece of poetry describing either conflict or change in an amphibian's world. Get written feedback from your English teacher. 15 pts 12. Read the chapter on Fish or Amphibians from any textbook. Outline the key concepts. Be prepared to summarize your reading. 15 pts. 13. Using adding machine paper, make a timeline showing when each vertebrate class appeared on earth. You must include a scale. 10 pts .


## Section II. Application/Manipulation "B" level Choose ONE for 15 points <br> 1. How fast does a fish swim in MPH?

2. Which moves faster, a fish or a frog?
3. How does temperature affect fish?
4. Do frogs have taste buds?

## Section III. Critical thinking/Analysis "A" level Choose ONE for 20 points

What government agencies are responsible for game fishing in our state? What environmental concerns affect that industry? Research the current role of the Fish and Wildlife Division in the State. Write a letter to your state Senator arguing either for or against the continued funding of that program.
parent signature
contact phone \# $\qquad$

[^1]
# Complexity Chart for Tiered Tasks 

The Learning Ladder

| A Task Requirements <br> Activities/Assignments can be applied, may be more abstract, are more complex, may contain multi-facets, require transfer of knowledge, are more open-ended, contain fuzzier problems, require greater student independence, require quicker pace of thought and study. <br> Students complete info. from C/IB tasks AND complete A which requires students to transform information into critical thinking and understanding | Are Assignments/Activities? $\qquad$ transformational abstract complex multi-facets more open-ended fuzzier problems greater independence $\qquad$ quicker pace of thought and study |
| :---: | :---: |
| B Task Requirements <br> Activities/Assignments are connected to ideas that are fluid (in-between concrete and abstract, challenging but not anxiety provoking, doable with mixed guidance/independence, move at reasonable but expected pace of study. <br> Students complete info. from C AND complete $B$ task which requires $C$ info. to be manipulated. |  |
| C Task Requirements <br> Activities/Assignments are the most important. They are the foundation for all learning. They are concrete, simple, factual, structured, have clearly defined problems and solutions, are less independent, and slower in pace of study. <br> Note: the C task is the foundation that all students must build in order to climb up the learning ladder. <br> Students build knowledge, skill foundation from information. | Are Assignments/Activities <br> foundational <br> concrete |

## 6.POINT RUBRIC Point 8 Percentage istritiution

| $\mathbf{6 . 0}=\mathbf{1 0 0}$ | $\mathbf{4 . 0}=\mathbf{8 2}$ | $\mathbf{2 . 0}=\mathbf{6 6}$ |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| $5.9=99$ | $3.9=81$ | $1.9=65$ |
| $5.8=98$ | $3.8=80$ | $1.8=64$ |
| $5.7=97$ | $3.7=79$ | $1.7=63$ |
| $5.6=96$ | $3.6=78$ | $1.6=62$ |
| $5.5=95$ | $3.5=78$ | $1.5=62$ |
| $5.4=94$ | $3.4=77$ | $1.4=61$ |
| $5.3=93$ | $3.3=76$ | $1.3=60$ |
| $5.2=92$ | $3.2=75$ | $1.2=59$ |
| $5.1=91$ | $3.1=75$ | $1.1=59$ |
| $\mathbf{5 . 0}=\mathbf{9 0}$ | $\mathbf{3 . 0}=\mathbf{7 4}$ | $\mathbf{1 . 0}=\mathbf{5 8}$ |
| $4.9=89$ | $2.9=74$ |  |
| $4.8=88$ | $2.8=73$ |  |
| $4.7=87$ | $2.7=72$ |  |
| $4.6=86$ | $2.6=71$ |  |
| $4.5=85$ | $2.5=70$ |  |
| $4.4=85$ | $2.4=70$ |  |
| $4.3=84$ | $2.3=69$ |  |
| $4.2=84$ | $2.2=68$ |  |
| $4.1=83$ | $2.1=67$ |  |

Source: Mike D'Ostilo and Carrie Crispin
Gateway Regional High School
Woodbury Heights, NJ

## 4.POINT RUBRIC Point A Percentage ilstriutuion

| $\mathbf{4 . 0}=\mathbf{1 0 0}$ | $\mathbf{2 . 0}=\mathbf{7 0}$ |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| $3.9=98$ | $1.9=66$ |  |
| $3.8=95$ | $1.8=65$ |  |
| $3.7=94$ | $1.7=64$ |  |
| $3.6=93$ | $1.6=63$ |  |
| $3.5=92$ | $1.5=62$ |  |
| $3.4=91$ | $1.4=61$ |  |
| $3.3=90$ | $1.3=60$ |  |
| $3.2=89$ | $1.2=59$ |  |
| $3.1=88$ | $1.1=58$ |  |
| $\mathbf{3 . 0}=\mathbf{8 5}$ | $\mathbf{1 . 0}=\mathbf{5 5}$ |  |
| $2.9=81$ |  |  |
| $2.8=80$ |  |  |
| $2.7=79$ |  |  |
| $2.6=78$ |  |  |
| $2.5=77$ |  |  |
| $2.4=76$ |  |  |
| $2.3=75$ |  |  |
| $2.2=74$ |  |  |
| $2.1=73$ |  |  |

Source: Mike D'Ostilo and Carrie Crispin
Gateway Regional High School
Woodbury Heights, NJ

# Tiered Activities <br> To Alter the Depth of a Lesson 

Subject Area:
Grade Level:
Topic:

|  |  |  |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Outcome/ <br> Performance <br> Indicators |  |  |  |
| Assessment |  |  |  |
| Lnstruction/ |  |  |  |
| Learning Activity |  |  |  |
| Resources |  |  |  |

## Pre-assessment:

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## Chapter Summary Review II. Creating Tiered Assignments

|  | Definite <br> Keeper | Maybe <br> Later | I'll <br> Pass |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Tiered "Talk Back" <br> Memo p.34-36 |  |  |  |
| Praise-Question- <br> Polish p. 38 |  |  |  |
| Tier Design <br> 4 Options p.40 |  |  |  |
| Feedback Formats <br> p.41 |  |  |  |
| Memo Templates <br> p.42-43 |  |  |  |
| Anchors \& SideBar <br> p.44-48 |  |  |  |
| Bloom's Challenge <br> Levels <br> p.49-51 |  |  |  |
| Sample Tiered <br> Assignments p.52- <br> 56 |  |  |  |
| How to Distribute <br> Tiers p.58-59 |  |  |  |
| "Fair Not Always <br> Equal" Slideshow <br> p. 61 |  |  |  |
| How to Grade Tiers <br> p.62-63 |  |  |  |
| The Layered <br> Curriculum p.64 |  |  |  |


[^0]:    Source: Jud Landis
    Sheldon High School
    Eugene, OR

[^1]:    / 50 point exam will be given over this unit on Day 6.
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