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Differentiation in Teaching Reading Comprehension and Motivation of Students

By

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Differentiation in Teaching Reading Comprehension and Motivation of Students

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Chapter I - Introduction

Meeting the needs of all the students in a classroom is probably one of the biggest challenges teachers face today. Teachers are given goals by the federal government through the No Child Left Behind Act, and by the standards set forth by the state of New York. In addition, local school districts also have initiatives they want teachers to focus on to help students meet these standards. The amount of curriculum teachers have to cover can limit how they go about teaching it. Helping teachers connect to the students can seem daunting as they are faced with all the varied learners within their classrooms. Can the way the teachers teach the curriculum affect the students' desire to learn the curriculum? Teachers try to engage their students through many different styles of instruction. Is there one style specific to each student's needs which, if applied, will make learning more meaningful for him/her?

Planning lessons in a differentiated format is the way many teachers are attempting to help bridge the gap between different levels and styles of learners in their classrooms. Willis and Mann suggested:

Differentiated instruction is a teaching philosophy based on the premise that teachers should adapt instruction to student differences. Rather than marching students through the curriculum in lockstep, teachers should modify their instruction to meet students' varying readiness levels, learning preferences, and interests (2000, p.1).

This involves understanding where each student is in terms of his/her readiness, learning, and interests; then developing instruction based on this knowledge. Although the concept is complex, this basic explanation gets at the heart of what teachers are trying to do to help students learn in their own ways.

This study attempted to evaluate how a more student-centered, differentiated approach to teaching compared to a more traditionally based instructional approach that is primarily teacher-centered. Specifically, the study sought to determine whether using a differentiated style of teaching would result in an increase in the students' levels of engagement. The goal was to observe students to see if they were more comfortable and eager to learn when exposed to one style of teaching as compared to the other. In my teaching experience when talking with students who were energized about what they were learning, they seemed better able to internalize the content and did better on assessments. When teachers have a clearer understanding of the teaching styles that motivate their students, they can develop lesson plans that are more meaningful and get their students more involved in their own learning.

When discussing differentiation in professional settings I have found that teachers feel overwhelmed by this approach. Developing lesson plans that meet each student's specific needs can be intimidating when looking at the many levels of learners in a single classroom. Research from Tomlinson (2001) suggested that if teachers begin by applying a few differentiated teaching techniques to a few areas of their teaching, it would gradually become a more natural aspect of their teaching.

I observed students and their reactions to what they were being taught and how they were being taught. This helped give insight as to what teachers can do when designing their instruction. An exploration of the research revealed that many theorists seemed to feel that one teaching method was better than another, and that a particular curriculum and materials were better than others. However, students come with their own perspectives and learning styles, and teachers need to tap in to those perspectives and learning styles in order to help their students get the most from educational experiences. One way to accomplish this can be as simple as listening to students more closely.

McAleer suggested that when teachers do a better job of listening to students and gearing lessons and activities to enable them to explore their passions and interests, it would develop increased self-confidence, self-esteem, curiosity, and leadership skills (2004). As teachers learn to develop their abilities to listen more closely to the cues their students are giving them, it may help them make their teaching more engaging. This, in turn, may result in an increase in their students' motivation to learn the curriculum.

Research supports the contention that students can be taught using a differentiated method. Willis and Mann (2000) suggested that while differentiated instruction is not easy, teachers could develop the skills necessary to use this model rather than moving students through the curriculum in only one way. Many techniques can be used to modify instruction based on students' readiness and individual learning

styles, which motivated me to want to learn all that I could to see if this was a style and methodology that I would want to apply to my own teaching.

Definition of Terms

- differentiated instruction – in this study the definition of differentiated instruction is teachers modifying and adapting their instructional methods in order to meet individual students' varying readiness levels, learning preferences, and interests
- traditional instruction – in this study traditional instruction refers to a method that is more teacher centered. There are more lectures from the teacher, the student activities are independent and students rely on the teacher for answers more than their peers.

A review of the literature surrounding the differentiated approach to teaching will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter II - Review of Literature

Understanding Differentiation

A review of literature shows there are many definitions of the term differentiation. Logan (2004) described curriculum differentiation as the name educators give to the process used to provide optimal learning opportunities that will accommodate the differences in learning needs, readiness and interests of the students. Researchers in the field of education mentioned that differentiated instruction is a theory grounded in the premise that instructional approaches should vary and be adapted in relation to individual and diverse students in classrooms (Hall, 2004).

Many prominent scholars have written research focusing on the topic of differentiation with the most prolific being Carol A. Tomlinson. Tomlinson (1999) suggested successful differentiation was grounded in the students' levels of engagement, as well as the students' understanding of the content knowledge. One of the ideas expressed by Tomlinson was the fact that teachers must consider what each student brings into the classroom and incorporate that into the instructional planning when preparing instruction for classrooms of diverse learners. The students come from all sorts of different backgrounds and, Tomlinson suggested, teachers needed to differentiate at least four classroom elements based on the diverse students' readiness, interests, or learning profiles. These elements were identified by Tomlinson as: content, process, products, and learning environment.

Tomlinson (2000) described content as the use of different levels of reading material to meet students at the point at which they were ready. It was also the use of different mediums when providing content, such as audio, video, or other means. Using different strategies such as reading buddies and meeting with small groups to re-teach an idea or skill for struggling learners, or to extend the thinking skills of the advanced learners, were ways Tomlinson identified content could be used to effectively meet the varied needs of learners in the class.

Process referred to the steps of providing different tiered activities for students to work through. Activities were created using a variety of techniques; for example, centers that provided varied levels of challenges as they moved through them. Another process included the use of personal organizers, such as agendas and task lists, which enabled students to become more independent as they moved at their own pace. Using manipulatives and varying the length of activities were another process that helped in differentiating. Tomlinson stated that using different manipulatives to help students develop a more concrete understanding of specific concepts proved beneficial. Teachers in Tomlinson's research found that giving the students a little extra time alleviated stress that slowed their progress.

Products referred to the student work that was created. Tomlinson recommended, based on her research that student products should be varied and unique to the students' learning styles. She used rubrics and evaluated the products at their particular levels, helping to give the students an understanding of the

expectations for the assignment. Giving the students the ability to shape their end products ensured it contained the necessary contents that made the learning stick.

Other researchers supported Tomlinson's assertions that assessing students was important to understanding what the next steps needed to be when addressing the students' goals. Salend (2005) suggested that when providing differentiated instruction, students' learning styles and preferences should be addressed. He also pointed out that it was important to use different types of reinforcement and feedback to increase students' motivation and to acknowledge their performances. Understanding the varied backgrounds that students brought into the classroom, such as distinctive cultures or socioeconomic status, helped teachers design educational plans that best fit the learners' styles. Adaptations to lessons brought more relevance to students and made the lessons more valuable to them.

Tomlinson laid the foundation for a clearer understanding of the differentiated approach. She found that teachers needed to reflect often on the instructional elements they were differentiating in order to determine the continued benefits for the students. Further it was suggested that assessments should be ongoing and closely linked to instruction, and that teachers should provide an environment that incorporates respect for all students. Flexible groupings of students helped kids learn to work with many different peers and draw new and unique information from each peer they worked with. According to Tomlinson, adhering to these attributes made differentiated instruction a successful endeavor.

Tomlinson promoted the idea that the learning environment was arranged so there were quiet places to work, along with group areas that fostered collaboration among students. In addition, the content of materials included the multiple cultures represented in classrooms. Established and consistent guidelines for class work, projects, and behavior had to be in line with the determined needs and routines and consistency went a long way in making students comfortable and ready to learn.

Seeing the need to provide consistency for students in their learning the federal government established guidelines by enacting “No Child Left Behind” (NCLB) which became law in 2001. NCLB, along with the 1999 amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), required that all students must be provided with the opportunity to learn according to state-mandated curricula. These requirements have created what some feel is an increased need to differentiate instruction for all students. Hoover and Patton (2004) suggested that the overall purpose of these acts was to ensure that all children meet state educational standards. These laws pushed teachers and school districts to look more closely at adopting differentiated curricula in order to help ensure all students, including students identified with learning and behavioral problems, to meet the requirements. This made it imperative that teachers go about finding new and creative methods to reach students. Yet, as Hoover and Patton suggested, the methods needed to conform to meet the standards in order for students to be successful in state evaluations.

The researchers used what they called alignment procedures, and followed steps, or phases, similar to other curriculum development in order to ensure their

curriculum aligned with state and/or national standards. They suggested that the knowledge of this process was of value to educators when differentiating curricula for students with high-incidence disabilities, such as learning disabilities, mental retardation, and emotional disabilities. They found that standards-based reform has given educators a better opportunity to reverse the trend of lowered standards for students that had learning and behavioral problems. Educators of students with special needs, needed to regularly adjust and adapt their curricula and to differentiate their instruction to meet the various needs of the students in their classrooms.

Hoover and Patton concluded that NCLB and the 1999 amendments to IDEA raised the importance of meeting the needs of diverse learners (2004). Since all students are required to be included in meeting these standards, curriculum differentiation and adaptation must occur more frequently within the guidelines of standard-based teaching in order for students with learning and behavioral problems to be successful.

Teaching Reading Using Differentiation

Much of the research focusing on differentiated instruction suggested this approach could be beneficial when teaching reading to students. When Ivey (2000) surveyed and interviewed students during her study, the students explained that time alone with a book actually had helped them develop greater interests in reading, as well as helped them to better understand what they had read. Reading was one place Ivey began differentiating and made books accessible to all students by making sure reading materials were made available in all genres and varied levels in the

classroom. Ivey evaluated the students' reading using running reading records, which allowed her to evaluate students more consistently over time. The evaluations also helped her discover the levels at which the students were most fluent, while also leading them to books that still challenged them. Ivey found that when students had control and made decisions about their reading it resulted in an increase in self-relevance for the students and heightened their interests, and engaged them in reading.

Ivey also proposed that differentiating opportunities to read actually widened and increased reading differences among students. She pointed out that some popular activities used in schools, such as oral round-robin reading, were used to keep control of students and did very little to develop reading skills. Teachers needed to slow the pace for weaker learners, which minimized the bad experiences readers had with printed material. Ivey showed that when students had the appropriate materials and had the time to read and comprehend the material, they improved their reading skills and were engaged in their reading. Ivey showed that having the time to read, when it was not "attached to a grade" increased the students' desires to read. She further suggested that when entire schools gave priority to a time for reading in the school day, there was an increase in the students' interest to read. When there was a school-wide emphasis, the likelihood of success was greatly increased according to her research, and adhered to most initiatives that a school or district wanted to bring to their learning community (2000).

Salend's (2005) research found that adjusting the instructional style that was best for an individual student's learning style had had an impact on the student's ability to progress. He showed a phonetic-based reading approach worked for one student, but another student with a hearing problem had a more difficult time with this. His research compiled examples of how teachers used different reading approaches such as whole word, language experience, or whole language, in order to meet the needs of students, and found an increase in their reading skills. Salend promoted the development of vocabulary, using peer-based instruction and methods such as literature circles, response journals, guided reading and sustained silent reading. He also believed in the use of a variety of motivational strategies geared towards encouraging students to read and suggested that reading on a regular basis increased students' phonemic awareness and reading proficiency.

Among the motivational strategies outlined in Salend's piece were: modeling the enjoyment of reading and demonstrating that it can be fun; using reading materials that were well written, easy to comprehend, challenging, and which relate to their own lives; and using the internet. Another activity Salend promoted was reading aloud to students and using picture books, even at higher grades. His experiences showed that students from grades kindergarten through sixth grade enjoyed being read to, which helped to reinforce connections between the students and their learning (2005).

Another researcher who emphasized making meaningful connections between learners and their learning was Parker (2002) whose research goal had been to

provide “at risk” students with extra social, emotional, and/or academic attention to increase their connectedness to school and their schoolwork. His study was motivated by research from Wang (1993-94) who found that teacher-student social interactions ranked fifth among 28 factors that affected student achievement. Parker’s students were chosen based on poor attendance, behavior problems, and/or working significantly below potential. He used simple activities and situations to meet with two-five students, for four weeks. Parker used quick, consistent, one-on-one conferences to check on the amount of work they accomplished, the students’ understanding, and to answer questions students had about what they were working on.

Parker also integrated students into a class by giving the students classroom jobs or by giving them special status for a week, like a “star student” or “VIP.” Small things like establishing eye contact, smiling, or making sure students’ birthdays were recognized, were things that impacted the students’ school days and helped inspire them to exhibit the learning and behavior traits deemed more desirable by teachers. Teacher-student social interactions were both negative and positive, yet the importance of having those targeted specific times for students increased the students’ willingness to participate. Parker shared that small acts of kindness had the biggest impact. He added that a genuine, caring attitude on the part of the teachers, when seen by students, was an important step in connecting with them and enabled a differentiated process to work more smoothly.

Hoover and Patton (2004) suggested that the standards-based education brought on by the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) increased the pressure to use curricula to meet standards-based initiatives, and the task of adapting instruction (i.e. differentiation) for students with special needs became increasingly more important. In their findings, Hoover and Patton stated that those individuals teaching students, especially students with learning and behavioral problems, who adopted a differentiated style, helped their students' academic success. They concluded that differentiation or adaptation occurred more within the guidelines established by standards-based teaching.

McAleer (2004) interviewed former students from a variety of schools about what they thought had worked well in their education. She suggested seven different factors that were found in educational research and were supported by these students and their experiences. She talked of exploration of interests and passions, knowledge and use of thinking processes to create independent thinkers, and collaboration and teamwork skills. McAleer wanted to see how developing self-confidence, along with creating a positive self-concept and self-esteem, encouragement of curiosity, and development of leadership skills had impacted the students' education. When students had had the chance to explore and discover the subjects they were studying they felt their learning became more applicable to their lives.

When allowed the chance to work with other students and take responsibility for roles in group work, they were more likely to be engaged. This increased level of engagement then seemed to lead to the students' retention of the information they

were responsible for learning. Ongoing assessment was another factor consistently stressed in the research discussing differentiated teaching. Using ongoing assessments of readiness and interests helped teachers identify students that needed more support, as well as identify those students ready to move forward in their learning.

According to Hess (1999), teachers should not assume all students need a certain task. In her study she discovered that quality assessments were based on growth and goal attainment that the students were setting based on their interests, readiness and learning profiles. In addition to assessment, Hess suggested that successful implementation of the differentiated approach required significant staff development. Hess suggested starting one concept at a time.

Willis and Mann (2000) suggested a variety of strategies that helped when implementing differentiation. They suggested some ideas such as stations, agendas, compacting (not duplicating knowledge), complex instruction, problem-based learning, choice boards, and entry points. There is not one miracle strategy that works for every child according to Willis and Mann. A variety of strategies are needed. Along with this, Willis pushed the idea of flexible grouping being a must in any differentiated classroom. Many suggestions were made for successfully grouping the students. Suggestions ranged from grouping by readiness levels for reading instruction to grouping by students' interests. Grouping students in a cooperative style, by giving students responsibilities in the group, also gave the students greater opportunities for retention of the material.

All these things were instrumental in making education individualized for the students. This needs to be what teachers should be striving for. Teachers must also understand that this takes time and cannot be implemented all at once. Will students respond to this style of teaching? McAleer (2004) suggested that many of the students who responded to her research, described the qualities in the teachers who had inspired them most and enhanced their desire to learn, as teachers who had let them explore their interests and work at their own pace and level. Linan-Thompson (2004) showed in her compilation of the research of Dickson and Bursuck (1999) using a three-tiered system of instruction at varied levels, that students at risk for reading failure benefited the most when they were placed in small-group intensive intervention.

Making Connections Between Motivation and Differentiation

Baker and Bianco (2003) suggested that motivation positively connected to differentiation. They found both students and teachers were motivated when learning was relevant, meaningful, and fun. These were identified as basic principles of differentiated teaching. Baker and Bianco were influenced by Glasser and his hierarchy of motivation that all people had emotionally linked reasons that made them want to learn.

Meeting these varied motivations gave the students the needed connections when learning and retaining the information that they experienced. Baker and Bianco promoted the idea of live-event learning, which was described as learning by design to include the following factors: process skills; relevance; real environment; emotion;

real consequences; debriefing; and intentional and incidental learning. They gave the example from their research of a high school English teacher who wanted to teach writing in the first person and had her students develop written monologues. The English teacher had the students visit the local senior center and interview residents living there. From the senior citizens' perspectives the high school students wrote monologues. The students practiced presenting their monologues then each coached a fourth grader to present the monologue to the senior citizens at the center. When fourth graders, dressed in clothes of the time period, presented the monologues, the senior citizens participated by trying to guess which story was theirs.

Baker and Bianco ended this example by relating the various elements and then asked the question, "Did they have fun?" They left this question unanswered for the reader and suggested, motivation was intrinsic; it came from within. The researchers used the elements of live-event learning and relied on Glasser's model for motivation suggesting it went a long way toward letting students learn, and that was the highest form of motivation. The basics for these learning events shared similar principles with that of differentiation: belonging, power, relevance, and real environment. Belonging refers to the connectedness a student had to their learning; power is the students' sense of ownership of their learning, relevance related to students' understanding of how the material connected to their life, and real environment is the students' ability to apply their learning to the community around them. The principles helped students become engaged in their learning and grew in their skills (2003).

In his article, *Lesson from Skateboarders*, Sagor (2002) contended that children displayed abilities to be focused and driven when they reached for goals that they were intrinsically motivated by. For example, Sagor found that when attempting to learn new tricks, most beginning skateboarders experienced failure-to-success ratios of at least 100 to 1. With this rate of failures to successes it would seem natural for them to be discouraged to the point that they would stop attempting the tricks. Nonetheless, they continued to struggle and persevere without any expectation of extrinsic rewards. He suggested that there are five innate desires that we all need to satisfy. The desires outlined were the need to feel competent, to belong, to feel useful, to feel potent, and to feel optimistic.

Research found that schools had developed ways of inspiring students by establishing strong feelings of membership, engagement, and commitment. Challenge is a term that continuously came up in the research regarding students' desires to learn. Tomlinson (2003) found that teachers who challenged their students to set obtainable goals, showed higher rates of success. Sagor found that when teachers created these environments in their classrooms they reached some of these alienated students and got them more involved in classroom activities. He discovered that when teachers designed their instruction to meet standards and considered and incorporated all of the multiple intelligences addressing a wide range of learners, the students understood that teachers had designed the learning experiences with the students in mind.

Cole's (2002) study revealed that students exhibited their own distinctive literacy personalities. Students in her study were motivated to read by individual factors such as his or her own beliefs about reading, and specific, unique reasons and purposes for reading. This led her to become much more responsive to their literacy personalities, as well as find ways to foster their strengths, honor their creative "voices" when students completed written tasks, and meet their needs. This motivation was as multifaceted and as complex as each student. Listening to the students' interests again became threads to the weaving of the fabric of differentiation and motivation.

Much of the research and journal articles seemed to have a commonality in understanding students' interests and needs. Developing differentiated lessons started with the inventory of the children's interests, desires, and needs. Developing lessons in this format led in the direction of making learning engaging and towards motivating students to set goals and work diligently toward those goals. With the understanding that developing a differentiated approach does not happen overnight, teachers worked on integrating it at their own speeds. Selecting groups of students who could work and learn together, and from each other, helped streamline the implementation of this type of instruction. Students' interests varied like the demographic make up of each community. Families and friends outside of school had had immense impacts on certain areas such as showing children that reading is useful, fun, interesting, and informative by modeling this activity themselves (Baker 2003).

There were many different theories outlining a variety of instructional strategies that teachers explored as they often grew tired of teaching to the middle and trying to create a one-size-fits-all classroom. Willis (2000) suggested that even though differentiated teaching was difficult, teachers were inspired to persevere with this approach when they saw the results. Students were engaged and made more rapid progress. Advanced students were no longer bored, and struggling students were finding learning more accessible – and hence their sense of self-efficacy rose. He also noted that veteran teachers were energized and new teachers were excited. Willis added a comment from one veteran teacher, “This differentiation is exhausting, frustrating, and time-consuming – and I would never go back to the old way”(2001, p.7). If a differentiated approach to teaching was invigorating teachers like this, it makes sense to presume students were benefiting. Just as we can presume that when teachers are excited and engaged in quality teaching practices, students will be engaged in their learning, motivated, and gain educational skills.

Chapter III – Applications and Evaluations

The main objective of this study was to develop insights into whether teaching in a differentiated style would increase a student's motivation and engagement in their learning. Some of the underlying questions the study served to explore were what learning strategies the students felt helped them become engaged, as well as maintain engagement in their classroom activities; what other classroom conditions and settings may have helped or hindered their engagement or interest in lessons; did the style of teaching help to motivate students, resulting in the development of their reading comprehension skills; and did their opinions about the way they preferred to learn change at all as a result of working in the different settings?

Before beginning the study, a letter was sent home to obtain consent from the participants' parents (See Appendix A). Signed consent forms were received from all seven 3rd grade students. During a span of approximately 10 guided reading lessons, they were exposed to two different styles of teaching - a differentiated style and a traditional style. The classroom teacher provided background information on the students reading levels, any behavioral issues, and learning styles. The participants were a group of average to above average readers consisting of three girls and four boys. I wanted the group to consist of strong readers so their ability would not affect their reactions during the study. I also wanted students that had different learning styles, and relied on the classroom teacher's experience with the students to tell me the kinds of learning styles the students tended to exhibit. I was looking for a mix of

learners such as creative, analytical, or kinesthetic, to see if the different activities met their interests. The background information on each of the students helped determine the levels that the lessons needed to target. The content of the material covered was at the current levels of the students as approved by the classroom teacher. The school was set in suburban, middle-class, neighborhood outside Rochester, NY. The student body was a mix of racial types with the majority being Caucasian and a very small percentage African-American.

I decided I would focus my intervention by creating differentiated lesson plans to use during the students' guided reading time. I felt this would allow me to evaluate the lesson's effectiveness in increasing student motivation to learn the content. A mystery genre story was used during both the traditional lessons and differentiated lessons to minimize the effect of the child's interest being influenced by their like/dislike of a particular genre. The stories chosen were leveled readers. Since the group was small, it was important to the study that the group represented an equal level of reading ability yet had different styles of learning, so I could get feedback from a diverse learning group that was not influenced by their ability to read.

The classroom teacher and I felt it would be best to meet with the students for 45 minutes during the guided reading portion of their English and Language Arts block. It was hoped that this would minimize any anxiety for the students, by helping to ensure that they were not missing anything or falling behind. The entire group met during the same time period every day for two straight weeks, during which time the participants were pulled out of the classroom and met at a round table in an open area

in the back of library. I felt an open area would provide the student with a good environment to read in, where they would feel comfortable and relaxed, with a minimal amount of distractions. Consideration was also taken to get an area that was partially blocked off from the main part of the library by a few bookshelves. The rest of the class was participating in similar guided reading activities at the same time as directed by the classroom teacher. The participant group had not previously had the opportunity to work with anyone other than their classroom teacher for guided reading. The participants expressed interest at working with someone different.

A pre-study survey was administered (See Appendix B) in which the participants were asked questions about the ways they thought they learned best. I evaluated the participants' answers to these questions in order to gain insights into what participants expressed as their preferences when learning, as well as what they thought would help them learn better.

The study design for the first week was to teach using a more traditional approach. The story that was to be the focus of our guided reading group for the week *The Case of the Vanishing Anasazi* by David Meissner, was introduced, after which the students were engaged in learning activities that centered on the story. During these lessons the participants were involved mainly as a large group, although at times they worked individually. The lessons (see Appendix C) comprised of activities such as: taking a picture walk for familiarity with the basic content of the story and development of predicting outcomes; introducing key vocabulary by using context clues; and practicing dictionary skills. Most of this was accomplished through

teacher-led instruction and discussion, as well as individual worksheet tasks. There were very few student- peer interactions.

There were also discussions meant to explore the background knowledge of mysteries that each of the participants brought to the group. Then the group discussed the mystery genre and what made a good mystery story. The participants then read the story in a round-robin format, where each student took turns reading one page at a time. Finally, the lessons concluded by having the students complete comprehension worksheets that were developed to go with each of the stories. The teacher and participants discussed settings, clues, solutions and other aspects of the story each day, working on worksheets that went along with the day's skill. The end of the week culminated with a writing assignment focusing on sentences that used examples of descriptive language. The participants were not given any choice in this final activity, which was consistent with the activities of the week. The work they did was assessed during the week using the work sheets and the writing assignment to evaluate the skills they developed throughout the week.

The following week the participants were engaged in a differentiated approach to teaching. The material (see Appendix D) was presented to the participants in a small group oriented approach using activities furnished by their classroom teacher that were considered to be geared to their reading readiness and comprehension levels. A mystery genre story was used again. The story *Treasure in the Puget Sound* by William Harryman was first read in a reader's theater style. It was

presented in both a play format and traditional story format. Each participant was able to choose a character and read the part.

I chose the reader's theatre format to engage the learners that were more creative. The participants discussed the different vocabulary pertinent to the story. They then did a search for vocabulary words just like looking for a treasure, which complemented the mystery we were reading. On the second day the participants spread out around the library and re-read the story in pairs. They were given questions, verbally given by me, to ask each other while they read to help keep them focused.

Then participants were allowed to choose from different activities that were designed to meet their particular learning styles. Activities were designed to allow them to express themselves more artistically, in written form, or a combination of both. The participants played a game to build their use of adjectives. All of the characters' names were written on slips of paper and placed in a bag. The students then pulled out a slip of paper and had to use adjectives to describe the characters they selected while the other students guessed which characters they were describing. Another activity was reviewing map skills where the students were able to construct their own treasure map of their classroom then share it with others and see if they could find each other's treasures.

The culminating activity for the week required students to select a project they would like to complete. Each project required students to explore and demonstrate an understanding of the important details of the story we had read during week two of

the intervention. I was exploring to see if their ability to choose which activity they wanted to do would increase their interest and engage them in the content. The projects were geared to different learning styles. One was to draw a comic strip, another was to write a review for the school library using a specially laid out format that would allow them to write and illustrate just a small part of the story, and the last choice was to write a fictitious letter to the main character or any character of their choice, describing what they would have done if they were in that character's situation in the story. The goal was to give students an avenue to express what they had comprehended about the story. I also gave them a chance to share the work they produced as I did each day that week with the projects we completed.

After completing the two weeks the participants were given a post study survey (See Appendix E). The survey asked the participants to comment on which week's lessons they liked better. Many of the questions on the post study survey were very similar to the pre study survey so any changes of their perspectives or feelings about how they learn could be easily recognized and documented. The participants were given an opportunity at the end of the survey to express what they liked most about the past two weeks. The survey explored what aspects of the study the participants really liked and felt would be helpful for their future learning. Data was collected and documented based on the pretest/posttest survey results and anecdotal notes that were taken throughout the intervention in a spiral notebook kept during sessions.

After taking the participants back to their classroom, approximately fifteen minutes were spent at the end of each session to reflect on the lessons and the students' participation. The work they created during each lesson was reviewed and evaluations were recorded in the observation log. I also recorded in my notes informal conversations with individual students throughout the two weeks. These conversations were about their reactions to particular activities which, it was believed, might give insights into their feelings towards the activities. In addition, the work they created was used as a way to help compare possible observable differences in the efforts the participants put into the tasks when taught using a traditional style as opposed to a differentiated style.

Chapter IV – Results

This study set out to try and determine the effects of a differentiated teaching style on students' motivation and engagement. I first explored the students' understanding of how they learned or preferred to learn. The students' reactions to the two different weeks of teaching were captured through a pre-study survey and a post-study survey, as well as anecdotal notes taken continuously by me.

The results of the pre-study survey helped provide a better idea of the students' perceptions of their own learning. Results of the pre-study survey administered before the intervention took place showed that most of the students seemed indifferent to the method the teacher used when teaching material. This was evident by the fact that six of the seven participants responded to question two on the survey, which asked whether they learn better using worksheets or when doing projects, that it "does not matter." (See Table 1)

The results of the pre-study survey also showed that most students preferred to learn on their own. When asked whether or not they preferred to learn by working alone, or during small or large group instruction, four students answered the question that they preferred to learn by working alone. The remaining three students responded that it did not matter, which showed many of the participants (over half) might not be interested in the collaborative style used in the differentiated teaching approach.

Table 1

Pre-Study Responses	Students responses (numbers represent student)						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Questions							
In a classroom how do you like the desks set up to help you learn?	Does not matter	In groups	Does not matter	Does not matter	Does not matter	In rows	Does not matter
Learn better by doing worksheets or projects?	Does not matter	Does not matter	Projects	Does not matter	Does not matter	Does not matter	Does not matter
Do you learn better by...							
Teacher talking and explaining						X	
Hands on/research/discovery				X	X		X
Does not Matter	X	X	X				
Do you learn better by...							
Working alone	X			X	X	X	
Working in a small group							
Full class lessons							
Does not matter		X	X				X
When reading which do you prefer							
Reading on you own	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Reading with a partner							
Having someone read to you							
When writing which do you prefer							
Writing in your journal							X
Writing creative short stories	X			X	X	X	
Writing informational reports		X	X				

There was concern during the planning that some of the students would react negatively to the activities that required them to work in small or large group

situations; however, I did not change the lesson plans based on this data and chose instead to see if those students would be ultimately influenced by engaging in learning situations they were not normally accustomed to.

The students' feedback on their learning preferences showed that three were indifferent to either the teacher talking and explaining, or hands-on/research/discovery methods. One student chose the teacher teaching as their preferred style to learn, while three others chose the hands-on method.

The question on the pre-study survey that asked how the students liked their desks arranged in the classroom was an attempt to discern whether or not students who liked their desks in groups would enjoy working collaboratively and be motivated by a differentiated teaching style. If they preferred the desks in rows the assumption was that the students might enjoy the traditional style more than a differentiated approach to teaching. Most students said it did not matter. Only one student preferred their desk arranged in rows while one student preferred that desks be arranged in groups. The fact that the way the desks were arranged did not really matter to the student revealed that my assumption may have been in error. Their answers seem to have correlated with their preferences for a differentiated style in the sense that their learning needs could be met with various room arrangements. This supported the idea of multiple levels and style learner's equals the ability to have multiple room arrangements and meet their learning needs.

During the first week's lessons in the traditional teaching style I noted that students became a bit fidgety after sitting and listening to the introduction of the

story, the picture walk, the vocabulary discussion, and the background knowledge discussion. The story was related to their background knowledge in an effort to keep the students interested. When I first introduced the story, which focused on the southwest and Native American traditions, the students displayed a genuine interest in the topic since it was something they had already studied earlier in the year during social studies.

I noted their initial interest with entries in my notebook, such as, “The students shared many facts, such as the area the Native American tribes lived, what type of housing they had, and what type of food they ate, they told me they gained this knowledge while studying this topic earlier in the year,” and “All the students actively participated in the opening discussion by answering questions about cave paintings, the climate, and the types of tribes that were native to that area.” As the students and I read through the story however, I noted that the students were losing interest and focus. I documented behaviors that showed this disinterest such as students: constantly moving the book around; playing with pencils; shifting in their chairs; frequently watching other students nearby; and falling behind or losing their place in the text. Their disinterest was also noted as staring out the window and/or rolling their eyes.

On the third day of the first week I noted that while completing the lesson on personification and similes the students were looking for examples in their own independent reading books. This was different from the first two days where they were only working in the story we were using for the week. They enjoyed using their

own books. During a discussion with the group, four of the seven students commented that the activity was not interesting because they had done a similar activity multiple times previously during the school year. One student commented, “Mr. Bates, we’ve done this before, it’s getting kind of old.”

Using the differentiated teaching style the second week started off with the students showing excitement when I introduced the reader’s theater format to read the story. Student Three said, “This is really cool, can we make props too?” Followed by “What about costumes too?” The excited reaction from students when presented with a new approach to a common task was recorded in my notes, with more similar comments such as “We have never done this before, can we do this with other stories?” and “ This makes reading the story fun!”

While most of the students responded positively to the new approach of introducing a new story in a unique way, not every student seemed to fully enjoy the approach. I recorded in my notes this comment from one of the last two students to receive their part: “This part does not have many lines.” I recorded in my notes that the student did show dissatisfaction in their facial expressions with a scowl and a frown. Despite the fact that some students were put off at the onset, once we began reading the story all students read their parts with dramatic flare. They did not continue any negative reactions during the rest of the week.

The results from the students’ work did not seem to represent an increase in their reading comprehension skills. I collected their work at the end of each day’s lesson. The quality of the work for the students was evaluated based on their responses to the

questions that were asked, and/or the quality of the work they had produced if it was not a written piece. The first week's work was compared to the second week's work to see if there were any notable improvements in the students' reading comprehension skills. The work represented a consistent picture of the students' abilities and showed no real improvement. Their work was graded with a simple check for satisfactory work, check minus for less than satisfactory work, and a check plus for work that was more than satisfactory work. A sample piece of work was selected from week one for Student One; a worksheet on context clues, another sample piece of work was selected from week two for Student One, a writing sample on expressing the important parts of the story. Student One received a grade of check for the week one's piece of work and a check for the second week's piece of work. For all student's the grade results show only a 7% increase from week one to week two in the students' performance when asked to complete activities meant to demonstrate their comprehension of the stories they read. It was inconclusive whether either of the two styles was more likely to increase the students reading comprehension skills.

At the conclusion of the study we engaged in a conversation to allow the students time to discuss the two different methods of teaching used over the course of the study. The students made comments that indicated that they preferred differentiated approach more. A brief portion of that conversation follows:

Student 1: I really liked the second week cause the reader's theater was cool!

Student 2: I liked being able to choose what we did for that final thing.

Student 4: Making the treasure map was good. Helping each other find each other's treasures was all right.

Student 1: Yeah! That was my second favorite thing to do.

Researcher: Do you think it helped you learn?

Student 2: Kinda', I think I learned because of actually doing some of the stuff.

The final component of the study was to administer a post-study survey in order to help understand how, if at all, the students' perspectives had changed as a result of the intervention. Results from the post-study survey supported the initial claim of the study that the differentiated style of teaching was a preferred style that could motivate and engage students. 100% of the students responded that they preferred the second week's lessons and activities to the first week's. (See Table 2)

The results of the post-study survey also showed that all of the students preferred to read in the reader's theater style. This was a shift in the students' opinions about reading alone documented in the pre-study survey results.

The interest of the students to do projects seemed to increase by the end of the intervention as well. The second question on the post-study survey was taken directly from the pre-study survey. Three students did change their response to the preference of "projects" and one changed from "projects" to "Did not matter".

Table 2

Post-Study Responses Questions	Students responses (numbers represent student)						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Which week of lessons did you like better?	2nd	2nd	2nd	2 nd	2nd	2nd	2nd
Did you think you learned better w/ worksheets or projects?	Did not matter	Did not matter	Did not matter	Projects	Projects	Did not matter	Projects
Did you learn better by...							
Teacher talking and explaining							
Hands on/research/discovery							
Did not Matter	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Did you learn better by...							
Working alone							
Working in a small group							
Full class lessons			X		X		
Did not matter	X	X		X		X	X
When reading which did you prefer							
Reading on your own							
Reading in the reader theater style	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Having someone read to you							
When writing which did you prefer							
Writing short responses			X		X		X
Writing creative short stories	X	X		X		X	
Writing informational reports							

The response that seemed to be a bit of an anomaly was whether they preferred lecture style teaching to hands-on activities. In the pre-study survey three students' preferred hands-on activities and one preferred lecture style. The rest responded, "It doesn't matter". In the post-study survey they all responded, "It didn't

matter.” This seemed in direct contrast to much of our discussions where students shared comments such as; “I really like science when we can do experiments and can try to solve things” and “I would rather do things than just sit and listen.”

The final question on the post-study survey was open-ended and asked students to comment on their favorite aspects of the lessons that had been taught throughout the intervention. Most of the comments reflected the fact that the students preferred the learning activities they had engaged in during the week dedicated to the differentiated approach to teaching. Some of the written comments received on the post-surveys were:

- “My favorite parts of the lessons these past 2 weeks are reading in a reader’s theater style and making treasure maps.”
- “The reading the script and doing the mock interview”
- “My favorite parts in the past two weeks are making maps and playing the game.”

The students were eager and showed this each day by quickly grabbing their books and materials and joining me when I entered the room. The results and data were gathered in a variety of ways from the students. The intervention outcomes revealed points that may be helpful to understanding how this differentiated approach effects students motivation in their learning.

Chapter V – Conclusions and Recommendations

This study set out to explore the question of whether a differentiated teaching style would do more to motivate and engage students than a more traditional approach. The results of the study seemed to support the idea that students who are presented with teaching that is designed with their learning styles in mind would cause them to be more motivated and engaged. The fact that the students all answered positively on the survey to preferring the second week's lessons to the first week's lessons was a good indication. Anecdotal notes that showed heightened levels of attention to tasks and positive comments like, "That's cool," and "I really like learning when we get to chose what we do" provided the foundation to believe that a differentiated style is helpful when motivating students.

The ways in which the students' responses changed from the first week to the second week showed me that they did find the differentiated style of learning to be more engaging. According to the work that the students created, the differentiated style helped them to grasp the concepts and become more meaningfully engaged in the story. As the results showed, students preferred to be included or active in the reading situations they were given. They liked to be given choices and to feel empowered when selecting ways with which to represent their understanding of the material presented. The self-efficacy in this group was fairly high. Each child participated at a fairly equal level, and worked hard at the tasks they were given. I noted that they definitely seemed more enthusiastic in the activity choices they had during the second week.

Students confirmed that they enjoyed hands-on activities through their responses to the surveys and by their comments, yet at the end of the study they were indifferent as to how they learned best, hands-on or teacher led. One student said, “One way I like to learn is to read alone, another is experimenting, another is talking, another is listening, another is writing.” Meeting all these needs or preferences can be challenging. This student’s response was consistent with the research I read. Willis (2000) suggested that even though differentiated teaching was difficult, teachers were inspired to persevere with differentiated instruction when they saw the results. The results of this study, which I have also observed as a teacher in the field of education outside of this study, suggested the most effective methods of teaching are the ones where you gain an understanding of the students’ prior knowledge surrounding a particular topic, and then allow the students to provide insights into how they would like to go about exploring that topic.

The second week confirmed much of the research that I have found that calls for teachers to figure out how to adapt lessons to multiple intelligences (Hoover and Patton, 2004). The students were very enthusiastic to take on roles in the reader’s theater style when reading the story. The ability of each student to take on a character enabled him or her to play a part in the re-telling of the story. This promoted the self-efficacy goal of having students feel good about their learning abilities. They tackled more tasks and took more risks that they may not have done before. I witnessed this when one of the girls expressed that she didn’t think she could draw a good map. Two of the participants encouraged her and helped her understand that some of the

symbols didn't need to be complex drawings. When she realized that, she seemed to approach the task with a renewed sense of purpose. Most of the students wanted to continue and create other maps. They swapped maps and tried to find each other's "treasures." They shared ideas about creating different features to their maps and how to show different classroom furniture items. Creating lesson plans that take into account the students personal experiences motivated them because it was something they were able to connect to their own lives. Differentiation promoted these ideas and contributed to motivating students to participate to a greater degree in their own learning.

The preferred reader's theater style, used during the second week, is a group reading activity and they had indicated on the pre-study survey they preferred to read alone, a direct contradiction. This could have been because the activity itself was more interesting and/or the fact that it was not a typical group reading activity. Teachers could take from this that the normal guided reading group activities of round-robin reading, for example, need to be varied and new approaches tried. Students might take from this that group reading can be fun, meaningful, and they could learn something from it too.

Did the students reading comprehension increase? Based on the responses and work they created in the two weeks, the results were somewhat inconclusive. There were indicators I recorded in my notes that some students showed more ability in the activities of the second week when given the opportunity to be more creative. While the evidence did not support a marked improvement in the students' comprehension

skills, there was evidence to support the fact that the students were much more engaged during the lessons that were created using a differentiated approach to teaching. Teachers should assess their students up front in an effort to understand not only their learning levels, but almost equally important, their interests.

Conversations with the students showed an elevated level of interest in the activities, but the comprehension of the material wasn't really better using one approach as compared to the other. So, while the results of the achievement may not have been dramatic, the fact that the students enjoyed one approach more is not insignificant. It is not insignificant because research informs us that when student interests are increased there seems to be an increase in learning (Hess, 1999).

There is not much empirical research showing the direct effects of differentiated teaching on the motivation of students. More research is needed to get a better idea of what other tools teachers can use to motivate and engage students. The questions on the surveys administered in this study could be considered too general and may not have allowed the students to give enough substantial feedback that would speak to the full impact of a differentiated style of teaching. Future research should seek to elicit a more in depth understanding of the effects a differentiated approach has on students' motivation to learn the content they are being asked to master.

Reflecting on the experience of conducting an action research study, when teaching to different style learners and students at different academic levels, I would conclude that students were more motivated and more engaged in their learning when

taught using a differentiated style as opposed to a traditional style of teaching. The differentiated approach really took into account the students' interests and helped to make the learning more student-centered. There was a sense of compromise as the teacher developed lesson plans based on state mandated curriculum, but also taking into account the students' input as well. Wherever the students are coming from, that is where we, as teachers, need to meet them.

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Appendix A – Parent Letter

Dear Parent,

My name is Mark Bates and I am a graduate student at SUNY Brockport. I have substitute taught in the Churchville-Chili schools in the past and specifically in Mr. Ziegler's classroom. As part of my graduate studies I am completing a simple study of teaching styles and their effect on students. Mr. Ziegler has graciously allowed me to conduct this study with a small reading group within his class. Your child will not lose any instructional time or be slowed in his/her progress. It will not increase his/her classroom work. This will likely be a rich learning time for your child.

The details are:

- I will survey the students to get an idea about how they feel towards different styles of teaching.
- I will be working with the small group of students for two weeks.
- I will be teaching their reading lesson for those two weeks.
- The first week I will be using a more traditional style of teaching by having the students read and answer questions, discuss, and write about what they are reading.
- The second week I will be teaching in a more interactive way, the students will be working on small projects based on what they are reading to express what they have learned.
- I will then be asking the students about their feelings and reactions to the different lessons.

All data that I receive from the students will be anonymous and your students name will never be used in any part of my study or outcome paper. The time I spend with your student will be part of a small group during their regular ELA time. I will meet with them in the classroom or the library.

Please fill-out and return the bottom portion of this page to school with your child. If further information is needed, I would be willing to talk with you and explain any aspect of my study.

Your time and consideration are greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Mark Bates

I, _____ agree to allow _____ to participate in the small group with Mr. Bates.

Signed: _____

I cannot consent to allow my student to participate in the small group with Mr. Bates.

Signed: _____

Give me your ideas and thoughts!

Circle your one favorite answer after each question

A) In a classroom how do you like the desks set up to help you learn?

- 1) In rows 2) In groups 3) It doesn't matter

B) Do you learn better by doing...?

- 1) Worksheets 2) Projects 3) It doesn't matter

C) DO you learn better by...

1. The teacher talking and explaining
2. Hands on/researching/discovering
3. Doesn't matter



D) Do you learn better by...

1. Working alone
2. Working in a small group
3. Full class lessons
4. Doesn't matter

E) When reading which do you prefer...

1. Reading on your own
2. Reading with a partner
3. Having someone read to you

F) When writing which do you prefer...

1. Writing in your journal
2. Writing creative short stories
3. Writing informational reports

Tell me your favorite ways to learn in your classroom

Appendix C – Lesson Plans Week One

Week One – Traditional Lesson Plans

Lesson Plans for THE CASE OF THE VANISHING ANASAZI Level V

Reading level V

Text type: Fiction / Mystery

Word Count: 3,118

Page count: 26

Length: 5 days

NYS Standards: 1 & 2

Text Summary

Stanley DeCapers and his class are on a field trip to the Anasazi ruins in Colorado. Stanley is determined to solve the mystery of the vanishing Anasazi. With a friend's help, he manages to slip away from the group and strike out on his own to search for clues. He meets a mysterious security guard who helps him learn about how the Anasazi left these dwellings to move to a different area. When Stanley asks why they moved, the guard tells him that there are some mysteries the sky will never reveal.

Vocabulary

Challenging Words:

ancestor	Native Americans
camouflage	ruins
descendant	summon
disapproving	petroglyph
disintegrate	mesa
drought	kiva

Reproducibles

Worksheets

Worksheet 1-Mystery Story Features Chart

Worksheet 2-Context Clues

Worksheet 3 – Vocabulary/Predictions

Lesson Objectives

Comprehension

You will likely address a number of comprehension skills as students work to understand the text, for example, identifying character traits and evaluating character actions. The targeted comprehension strategy for this lesson is: identify structure and features of a mystery story.

Word Work

Figurative Language

Identify examples of figurative language

Context Clues

Use context clues to understand word meanings

Visual Literacy

Students will demonstrate the ability to interpret illustrations.

Day One

Vocabulary

Introduce vocabulary have students gather definitions using worksheet

Before Reading

Introduce

Introduce the book by showing students the front cover.

Ask: *What do you see on the cover? What kind of story do you think this is? Have you ever read any mystery stories? What are some features in a mystery story that are the same as in other types of stories? What are some things that are different?*

Ask students if they have a prediction about what might happen in the story.

Ask: *Do you think that Stanley will be able to solve the mystery?*

Elicit Prior Knowledge and Build Background

Discuss with students what they know about the civilization of the ancient Anasazi. Provide a map and show them where these people once lived. Explain that these people vanished from the area, leaving behind their homes and many artifacts. Today, there is speculation about why these people seemed to leave so suddenly. If any student has visited Anasazi ruins, have them describe what they saw. Bring some of the vocabulary words into the discussion in an informal way, such as *Native Americans, ruins, ancestor, descendant, mesa*.

Skim and Scan

Give students their copy of the book, and have them skim through it, looking at the illustrations. Ask them what they think might be happening. Suggest that they might want to revise or add to their predictions now that they have looked at the illustrations.

Day Two

Begin Reading

Set the purpose

Introduce Worksheet 1. Explain to students that this chart lists common features of a mystery. Define what a "red herring" is (a false clue). Explain that all stories have characters and a setting. All stories have a problem too, but in a mystery story, the problem is posed as a mystery to be solved.

Explain to students what they are to do.

Say: *As you read the story; I want you to take note of the features of a mystery story. Think about who the main characters are and where the story takes place. Jot these down as you read. Look for clues in the story and record those. See if you can find any red herrings. When you have finished reading, you can take a few minutes to finish the worksheet. Then we'll talk about the features you recorded.*

After Reading

Building Comprehension

Discuss the characters. Encourage students to make inferences about them and to evaluate character actions.

Ask: *What characters did you list on the worksheet? What do you know about each one? How would you describe Stanley? Why? What do you think about Stanley leaving the group on his own? What are your thoughts about the mysterious security guard?*

Discuss the setting.

Ask: *What is the setting of this story? Could this story have happened in a different setting?*

Discuss the problem in the story and the clues to the solution.

Ask: *What is the mystery that Stanley wants to solve? What clues does the author provide? (the ring, the security guard) The security guard is central to the solution of the mystery. What clues does the author provide that let you know the guard is not what he appears to be? (guard has unusually long thumb; the author describes him as "this unusual security guard;" the way the guard speaks: "there are some mysteries the sky will never reveal;" Ranger John says he's never heard of the guard.*

Ask students if they found any red herrings and what the purpose of red herrings is. Students may not have discovered the red herring in Stanley's notes: "Ranger John has suspicious red moustache." The author includes this to divert the reader and make them think Ranger John may have something to do with the solution to the mystery.

Day Three

Word Work

Figurative Language

Discuss how writers of fiction include figurative language in their stories to help the reader visualize what's happening. Have students look on page 12 to find and read the sentences that include the phrases, "heavy clouds began to blanket the western horizon" and "moon bathed Cliff Palace in a soft light." Explain that these are examples of personification where inanimate objects are given human characteristics. In these phrases, the clouds are described as if it were spreading a blanket across the sky, as a person might spread a blanket over a bed. The moon is described as if it were bathing the area.

Read the phrase on page 14 "Stanley danced around the holes, flapping his arms like a chicken." In this example the author wants the reader to visualize Stanley's movements as if he were moving around like a chicken. Explain that this is an example of a simile.

Have students get a fictional book they have already read and hunt for personification examples, have them try and find at least 5. Then have them try and come up with some of their own.

Remind students to be aware of language in fiction they read. They should try to include examples of figurative language in their own writing.

Day Four

Context Clues

Explain that students can often use context clues to help them figure out words they don't know or understand. Have them turn to page 8 and find the word *kiva* in bold print. Point out that by reading the whole paragraph, they can understand what a kiva is.

Say: *The text first tells us what the kiva was used for. This is an example of a context clue that describes the unknown word. The text then restates the meaning, using a different word that is familiar us, and tells us that it is a big pit.*

Explain that context clues sometimes use description to help the reader. Sometimes they provide an example of something familiar the reader can compare the word to, and sometimes they explain directly what the unknown word is.

Have students find these words and explain how the context helped them understand their meaning.

- *Petroglyphs* (the text describes them)
- *Summon* (need to read several sentences. Author provides the clue "invitation")
- *Mesas* (description is provided).

Have students read worksheet 2 to figure out the words. Have them point to features in the text that helped them understand the words.

Learning through Visual Devices (this will be done during day four or five depending on timing)

Illustrations

Have students look at the illustrations on each page. Have volunteers describe what is happening in the illustration that corresponds to the story line. Ask them what else the illustrator might have done to express the story's events. Explain that illustrators always have choices in illustrating stories, and that they try to create images that are both visually interesting and helpful in interpreting the story's meaning.

Day Five

Writing Link

In a group setting, have students write some descriptive sentences that use examples of figurative language. Choose something to personify, for example, the wind. Ask students to brainstorm ways the wind moves. Jot their ideas on the board. Ask students how they can make the wind seem alive by using words that compare its movements to that of a person.

Remind students that a simile uses the word "like" to compare two things, and give them an example such as, "he looked like the cat that had eaten the cream." Ask them what the phrase means. Then as a group, brainstorm examples of similes. Write these on the board as students suggest them. Read through the examples of personification and similes on the board.

Finally, have students write their own examples of figurative language.

Assessment

- Review students' completed comprehension worksheets to assess their understanding of the structure and features of a narrative, and of a mystery story in particular.
- Review students' completed context clues worksheet to assess how well they can use context clues to understand the meanings of new words.
- Review students' completed writing to evaluate their ability to use figurative language.

Appendix D – Lesson Plans Week Two

Week 2 – Differentiated Lesson Plans

TREASURE IN THE PUGET SOUND

By William Harryman Illustrated by John Kastner

Level: V Genre: Fiction/Mystery

NYS Standards: 1 & 2

The differentiation in these plans allows the students to express their understanding of the literature through different products. This allows each student to chose a way that more compliments his or her talents and comfortable learning style.

Lesson Objectives

Comprehension

Students will demonstrate the ability to describe common character traits that might identify a "good" guy and a "bad" guy.

Word Skills

Students will demonstrate the ability to list descriptive character traits and situations pointing to character development. In doing so, they will identify antonyms as they apply to good and bad traits.

Visual Literacy

Students will demonstrate the ability to locate items based on a grid using an x-y axis.

Materials:

Book and Reader Theater Script – Treasure in the Puget Sound

Prediction Nuggets and Treasure Chest Envelope

Treasure Hunter Log

Character Names on separate pieces of paper for "Who Am I?"

Instruction sheets for Important Part expression

Map example

Grid paper for map making

Day One

- Introduce Story
- Review Vocab
- Picture Walk
- Predictions – Have student write and/or draw their predictions on a sheet of paper and put in a "treasure chest" envelope to be revealed after the story is read
- Set Purpose Have student make treasure hunter logs – to keep track of characters, traits and important facts, settings plots
- Read Story in Reader Theater style

Day Two

- Read Story (in pairs)
- Students will show their understanding of Characters, Plot, Setting Outcome revealing what they wrote in their logs
- Discuss predictions

- Important part of story to them? Create something to show why that was an important part to the story and to them. Students will create a comic strip, poster, or a mock interview with a character to demonstrate what their important part of the story was. Showing their comprehension of the story and its details.

Day Three

- Activity
- Present product created previous day from important part
- Put the names of the characters in an envelope: Tim Hawkins, Johnny Bones, Tim's mother, Tim's father, Dr. Living, Black Dog, Captain Glint, Glint's men, Robert Jacks, Frank, Captain Elliot, John Gold, Ron Gunn, Gold's men, Gold's parrot.
- Have students draw out names and play "Who am I?" Each student will give as many adjectives as they can that describe the character they've drawn. Other students guess the character. When one student guesses, he or she draws the next name and gives the traits.
- As students play, be sure that you or a student lists the words on the board. After the game is complete, go through the list and point out those that are similar (synonyms) and those that are opposites (antonyms). Also note that the antonyms should be describing the good guys in contrast to the bad guys.

Day Four

- Visual literacy
- Using a map from the book, explain that maps are miniature versions of a larger area. Based on the experience level of your class, take time and teach them how to read a simple map if necessary.
- Once students are familiar with reading and using maps, tell them to pair off and look at their maps. Have them make a map of the classroom, focusing on scale.

Day Five

- Assessment - Student will chose one of the activities below.
- Have students write a fictitious letter to the adult Tim Hawkins or any of the characters in the story. Prompt them to include descriptions of what they would do if they had been in the same situation. (You might ask them to include suggestions that are nonviolent and discuss why.)
- Write a review for the school library. You will write a review of your book for your friends using the tri-fold review pamphlet. You will tell why you liked it or didn't like it and other details about the story. What you think others will like about it.
- Procedure: Fill in the areas in the blank review pamphlet.
- Discuss product

Give me your ideas and thoughts!

Circle your one favorite answer after each question

A) Which week of lessons did you like better?

- 1. First week
- 2. Second week

B) Do you think you learned better by doing...?

- 1. Worksheets
- 2. Projects
- 3. It didn't matter

C) Did you learn better by...

- 1. The teacher talking and explaining, and discussion
- 2. Hands on/researching/discovering, doing project
- 3. Didn't matter

D) Did you learn better by...

- 1. Working alone
- 2. Working in a small group
- 3. Full class lessons
- 4. Doesn't matter

E) When reading which did you like better...

- 1. Reading on your own
- 2. Reading in the reader theater style
- 3. having someone read to you

F) When writing which did you like better...

- 1. Writing short responses
- 2. Writing creative short stories
- 3. Writing informational reports

Tell me your favorite parts of the lessons this past two weeks
