

Tips for Keeping Differentiation Alive in Your School

- ▶ Spotlight a strategy or share an application at each faculty meeting.
- ▶ Convene problem-solving groups. Bring together teachers who have had success with a strategy and those who are finding it difficult to implement.
- ▶ Do school mailbox or email professional development. Share an article or contribute a new idea or strategy by duplicating and delivering it to teachers' mailboxes or forwarding an article or link via email.
- ▶ Share ideas and differentiated activities by placing a hanging file by the copy machine or in the teachers' lounge or workroom.
 - Organize file folders by grade or department.
 - Ask teachers to share their differentiated activities by putting an extra copy in the file folder for others to review as they have time.
 - Agree to a practice that if you modify someone's idea or activity based on the needs of your students, you put your new version in the file. This way the ideas grow.
 - Alternately, post a share file for each grade level or department on your school's intranet site.
- ▶ If such requirements are possible, require a professional growth target related to differentiation.
- ▶ Hold a question and answer session with an outside differentiation expert or an active practitioner in your district or school or neighboring school district.
- ▶ Establish a book study group on a differentiation text.
- ▶ Set up expert groups for each differentiation strategy. Determine who to go to for advice about tiering, for using a particular choice format, for using informal assessment strategies, etc.
- ▶ Discuss an article or piece of research related to differentiation at a coffee and dessert "happy hour" or a brown bag lunch session.
- ▶ Set up a make-and-take work session to create differentiated classroom materials.
- ▶ Commit a grade-level or department meeting agenda to discussing ideas for differentiation or for collaborative planning.
- ▶ Encourage and provide opportunities for teachers to observe colleagues using a particular differentiation strategy in their classrooms.
- ▶ Identify teachers who could be coaches for colleagues as they try out new differentiation strategies. Allow time for them to visit the classroom, observe a lesson, and provide feedback, ideas, and coaching to enhance practices.
- ▶ Determine times when teachers can do specific topic-alike planning. For example, all primary teachers can get together to work on literacy ideas, or all social studies teachers can meet to work on service learning activities.