



Tiering an assignment is one way to differentiate the curriculum for heterogeneous classrooms. The content and objectives are the same, but the levels of tasks are varied according to the students' readiness level their background knowledge and skills related to the learning objective. This practice ensures that students understand the information at their level of challenge because it builds on what they already know. Assignments at each tier should be interesting and challenging to avoid students' perception that we expect less of some students than others. Students are very sensitive to the labeling of themselves and their peers.

- Identify a focused measurable lesson objective.
- Formally or informally pre-assess the students' current level of knowledge and skill with the topic.
- Develop a lesson assignment that is clearly focused on the concept.
- Determine what the assignment will be for on-level students.
- Adjust the assignment to provide varying levels of difficulty.
- Match students to tiered assignments based on their pre-assessment results.
- Explain and model the assignments to the students.
- Allow time for students to complete the assignment.
- Assess student mastery of the lesson objective.



Additional Tools

Tiered Question

This strategy allows the teacher to vary the complexity of the question according to the readiness level of the student. Scaffolding the questions for understanding helps build higher-order thinking through rigor into each interaction with students. Question stems may be based on Bloom's Taxonomy. Example: a) What kind of bear lives in the North Pole? b) Why are polar bears white? c) How would you change a polar bear's physiological make-up to help it survive in the desert?

Tiered Writing Prompts

This strategy allows the teacher to vary the complexity of the writing prompt according to the readiness level of the student.

For more strategies and/or resources, visit houstonisd.org/EffectivePractices



ALERTS

It is important for the teacher to communicate to the class why each person/group may be working on different tasks to avoid misunderstandings. Be sure to prepare scoring guides/rubrics to assess different products fairly.



QUICK TIPS

Teachers can provide different prompts, assignments, or questions to each student, include two or more tiered options and have students choose the right level of challenge for them. Tier assignments by providing different levels of reading materials, forms of expression, levels of complexity, number of steps, and/or time allotted for the assignment.