

Differentiation through Academic Choice



*“When teachers use
Academic Choice to
structure lessons, children
become purposeful,
competent learners who
connect to each other in
positive ways.”*

(Denton, 2005)

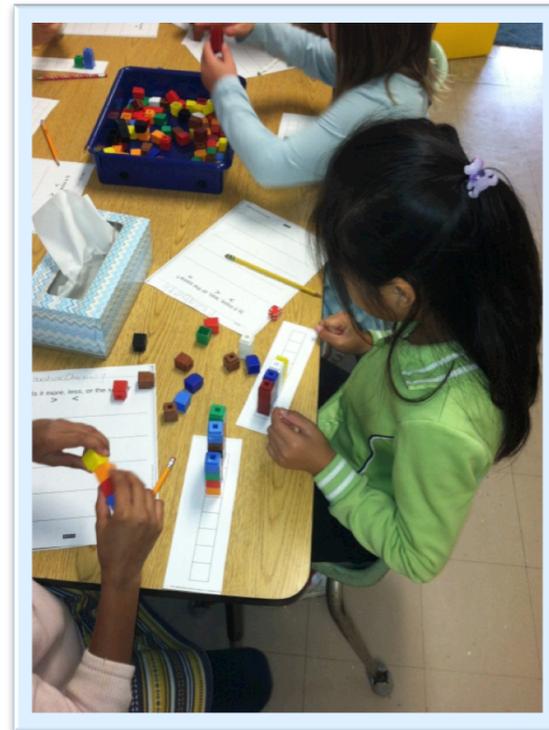
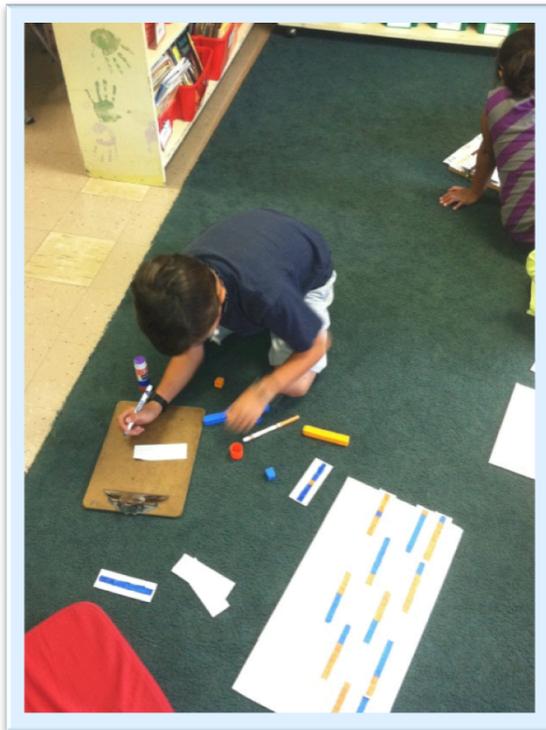
Differentiation...



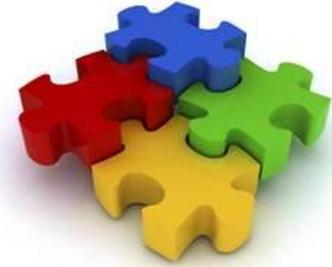
- Provides multiple approaches to content, process, and product.
- Is a blend of whole-class, group, and individual instruction.
- Allows learning experiences to be engaging, relevant, and interesting.
- Is student centered.
- When students and teachers are learners together.
- Planning a variety of ways to express learning.

(Tomlinson, 2005)

“In a differentiated classroom, the teacher proactively plans and carries out varied approaches to content, process, and product in anticipation of and response to student differences in readiness, interest, and learning needs.” (Tomlinson, 2005)



Academic Choice...



- Supports children's intrinsic motivation to learn.
- Gives students opportunities to learn from each other's good ideas.
- Addresses a range of strengths, interests, and skill levels.
- Maximizes student learning.
- Uses a cycle of planning, working, and reflecting.
- Improves student investment.
- Provides insight into students' preferred learning style and interests.

(Denton, 2005)

CHOICE BOARD FOR MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES		
<p>Verbal/Linguistic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write instructions • Keep a personal journal • Write a poem • Write TV ads • Tell stories to others • Tell in your own words • Match concept • Spelling • Write a crossword • Jumble 	<p>Logical/Mathematical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a time line • Compare/contrast ideas • Create an outline for a story • Design a map • Decipher codes • Create patterns • Design a game to show... 	<p>Visual/Spatial</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a poster • Draw a map • Create visual diagrams • Draw from different perspectives • Create a comic strip • Graph results of a survey 
<p>Interpersonal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write stories • Play a cooperative game • Role play a situation • Discuss and come to a conclusion • Conduct a survey or interview • Interview others 	<p>Free Choice</p>	<p>Body Kinesthetic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make up a cooperative game • Practice physical exercise • Conduct hands-on experiments • Construct a model or representation 
<p>Musical/Rhythmic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write raps • Play musical instruments • Listen to music • Match dance steps • Make up sounds and effects • Write a jingle • Write rhymes that... 	<p>Naturalist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect and categorize data, materials, or ideas • Discover or experiment • Take a field trip • Study means of survival • Adapt materials to a new use • Label and classify 	<p>Intrapersonal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep a personal journal • Write about personal experiences • Think about and plan • Review or visualize • How would it feel to... • Imagine and write about the future 

Academic Choice

“Choice develops confidence, fosters independence, creates a sense of responsibility, and gives students ownership in learning.”

(Chapman and King, 2005)



“What to Learn”

Teachers incorporate making choices into their daily lessons. Students make choices about whether to work alone or with a partner, where to work, and when to work.

Academic Choice is different in that it limits students to two kinds of choices: *what to learn (content) and/or how to learn (process)*.

“How to Learn”

(Denton, 2005)



3 Phases of Academic Choice

Maximizing the cycle of learning.

Planning

Students decide what they are going to do and sometimes plan how they are going to do it.

Even though the teacher plans the overall goal, the student initiates a specific path to that goal.

The student selects the desired materials to assist them in their work.

Working

Students are working and completing their chosen task.

Students are using their selected materials purposely.

The teacher is observing the students to discover more about their learning styles and interests.

Reflecting

At the end of the working period, the students will think back about what they have done.

The students will answer a focus question that helps them to think about their work and how it is meaningful.

Reflection can take the form of written or self assessment.

(Denton, 2005)

The Five Steps:

1. Introduction and naming of materials
2. Generating and modeling of student ideas
3. Exploration and experimentation
4. Sharing exploratory work
5. Cleanup and care of materials

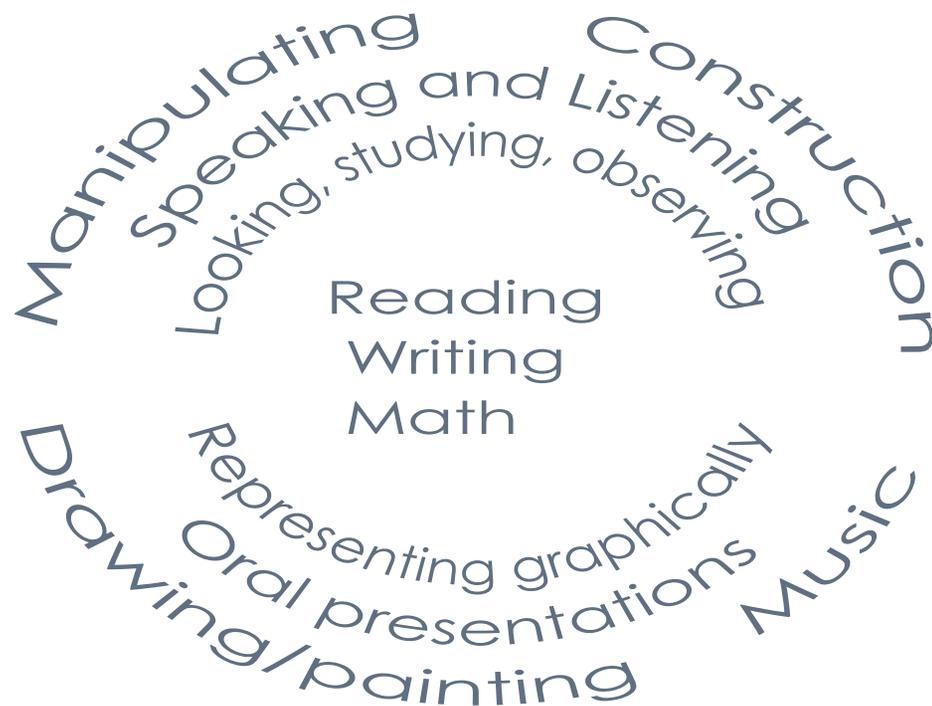
Guided Discovery

Preparing for Academic
Choice

“In Guided Discovery, children use observation, brainstorming, and exploratory play to learn about the use and care of materials.”

(Denton, 2005)

Academic Choice activities
connect to different subject areas...



The students will teach their classmates about a character from a book series they have been reading.

Students will use Academic Choice to decide *what character* traits, feelings, or actions to present and *how* they will present their character to the class.

Character Study

An example of an Academic Choice activity



Lesson Plan: A Character Study

Curriculum Area:

- English Language Arts

Objective:

- To demonstrate an understanding of a main character from a series book.

Criteria for good work:

- The students will have a well developed sense of their character.
- Time will be used effectively.
- The final product will be cohesive and well defined.
- Other students will be able to gain information as a result of the presentation content.



Lesson Plan: A Character Study

Student Choices:

What (choices about content):

- A selection of the particular aspects of the character, including: traits, feelings, and actions.
- What will the student describe about their character?

How (choices about process):

- Short report
- New Story
- Journal entries
- Interview
- Letter
- Acting out/dressing-up
- Play or skit
- Song
- Diorama
- News article
- Poetry
- Comic strip
- Board game
- Poster
- Puppet



Lesson Plan: A Character Study

Key Prior Knowledge:

- Series book reading
- Identifying character traits and feelings
- Tracking character actions
- Material use and cleanup
- Class presentation
- Academic Choice routines

Tools:

- Paper (different sizes/colors/types)
- Markers, crayons, color pencils, paint
- Clay, pipe-cleaners
- Props
- Glue, scissors, tape
- Workspace/project storage



Lesson Plan: A Character Study

Classroom management considerations:

Potential issues:	Ways to address issues:
Students can not choose a process, or they choose a process for the wrong reasons. (i.e. choosing their friends choice, etc.)	Review process options and take questions. Use an exemplary as a model. Offer a limited set of pre-selected choices to the student(s).
Students do not manage their time wisely and may not finish by the deadline.	Offer the student(s) a checklist of tasks for project completion. (Checklists can be written or icon based). Review time-frame expectations and use a timer.



Lesson Plan: A Character Study

Planning: *(oral, sign-up, choice board, written?)*

- The students will sign-up for their choices.

Working: *(Where will the students work: assigned or student choice? Who will the students work with: individually, partners, groups? Teacher assigned or student choice?)*

- The students will work independently in a work space of their choice. If their project requires a partner, the teacher must approve partnerships.

Reflecting: *(How will the students reflect: in a representing meeting, written, self-evaluation? What is the possible focus for reflection?)*

- The students will reflect in a representing meeting and complete a self-evaluation. The focus for reflection will be: Were you able to clearly describe/teach your main character's traits/feelings/actions?



Lesson Plan: A Character Study

Introduction:

- A Guided Discovery of materials will take place.
- The what and how of the academic choice will be introduced.
- The students will select their character and character aspects (i.e. traits, feelings, actions)
- The materials will be selected and collected
- The expectations, time-frame, and storage procedures will be discussed.

Assessment of learning: *(How will I assess learning? How will I know if the specific learning objective has been met? What are other criteria for good work? What is a possible focus for teacher observation?)*

- The teacher will observe the students working. The quality of the presentation and the final product will be used as evidence. Learning style will be the focus for observation.

Academic Choice

Differentiating Student Learning

“Jean Piaget and John Dewey said that in order to learn most effectively, children must initiate activities based on self-generated goals, actively interact with concrete materials, explore, try out ideas, solve problems, and then make sense of their experiences through reflective thought. As children engage in this cycle of learning, their knowledge base gradually becomes broader and more sophisticated.”
(Denton, 2005)





*"Push me! See how far I go!
Work me 'til I drop. Then pick
me up. Open a door, and then
make me run through it before
it closes. Teach me so that I
might learn, then let me enter
the tunnel of experience alone.
And when, near the end, I turn
to see you beginning another's
journey, I shall smile.*

-Kathleen, a student

(Tomlinson, 2005)



References:

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- Denton, P. (2005). *Learning Through Academic Choice*. Northeast Foundation For Children, Inc.: Turner Falls, MA
- Tomlinson, C. A. (2005). *How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms (2nd Ed.)* Pearson Education, Inc.: Saddle River, NJ