

Annotated Bibliography

How can teachers aim to differentiate learning so that each student can have a personal, meaningful and academically rigorous learning experience?

Kieran, L. & Anderson, C. (2018). "Connecting Universal Design for Learning With Culturally Responsive Teaching." *Education and Urban Society*, no. 9, SAGE Publications, July 2018, pp. 1202–16. *Crossref*, doi:10.1177/0013124518785012.

In this journal article, Kieran and Anderson explore the connection between Universal Design Learning (UDL) and Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT). The premise of the text is to allow educators to see the importance of CRT when designing and implementing UDL, warning that without doing so may increase the disparity in student achievement for students of color, students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, and English language learners. The authors focus on utilizing students' culture as a vehicle for learning, a core element of CRT, promoting strength-based language over deficit-based language. Though the article is well researched and provides specific examples of how UDL and CRT are pedagogies that can work off each other, the authors give few examples or strategies of how to apply these pedagogies in the classroom.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). "But That's Just Good Teaching! The Case for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy." *Theory Into Practice*, no. 3, Informa UK Limited, June 1995, pp. 159–65. *Crossref*, doi:10.1080/00405849509543675.

Gloria Ladson Billings coined the term "culturally relevant pedagogy" in the 1990s, combining what she knew to be good teaching with collective empowerment. The core idea of her newly termed pedagogy, which took elements from critical pedagogy, rested on three main goals. "Students need to succeed academically, develop cultural competence, and develop a critical consciousness" through which they challenge the status quo of societal norms. As a main difference to other progressive pedagogies of the time, Billings focused on the culture aspect of education, utilizing students' culture as a vehicle for learning. This article provides a deeper look into the three main goals of the pedagogy, offering the structure and the reasoning behind her ideas. As the title suggests, many practices of her revolutionary work are not all that radical, they're "just good teaching". This article does a great job not only providing insight into the pedagogy that has since become CRT, but also shows specific ways that teachers can apply good teaching strategies into their classrooms. Many of her "good teaching" strategies inherently provide opportunities for differentiation as a big focus of CRT is understanding the student as a whole and teaching with this in mind.

Mehta, J. & Fine, S. (2019). *In Search of Deeper Learning*. Harvard University Press..

In this nonfiction book, education professors out of Harvard, Jal Mehta and Sarah Fine, explore different high schools across America, looking for instances of the kind of education they call deeper learning. With an initial intent on finding unique schools that were going above and beyond the traditional American high school education system, they were met with disappointment. Spending hundreds of hours at thirty different schools, Mehta and Fine write about the rare instances they found of both whole schools and teachers engaging in exceptional teaching.

The term deeper learning, the key focus of the book, is defined as having instances of powerful learning - learning that feels meaningful and engaging to students - consistently over time. The book discusses how this can mean different things to different students, and only through iterative cycles of teaching and learning, trying new things, experimenting, and giving students voice and choice, can this kind of learning begin to take place. Though the term differentiation is not directly mentioned in the book, the idea is explained in other words - giving students opportunities to learn in meaningful and engaging ways, and in a sense take control of their own education. In this sense, differentiation can be thought of as designing curriculum where students have the opportunity to consistently show up, engage in work they find meaningful, and be held to high standards by their teachers.

Morgan, H. (2014) "Maximizing Student Success with Differentiated Learning." *The Clearing House*, Routledge, doi:10.1080/00098655.2013.832130.

In this article, Hani Morgan gives an explanation of how to differentiate instruction in a 21st century classroom. Morgan argues that differentiated instruction done well comes from teachers who are willing to personalize learning based on student interests as well as provide access to technology in the classroom to engage students in a way they are familiar with being engaged. Though many of the ideas mentioned in the article seem like great ways to engage students at first, the article lacks depth when it comes to rigor and achieving high levels of academic success.

P. Holder, personal communication, Jan 18, 2024.

Pat Holder is one of the most senior, veteran teachers at the original High Tech High. With over 15 years of teaching, he is well versed in project based learning, and engaging all of his students in his projects. I had the opportunity to have a conversation with Pat about the structures he puts in place so that students can self modify their learning.

During our conversation we discussed two specific strategies, one on reading, and the other on project builds, that allow for differentiation to work effectively in his class. For his reading strategy, Pat's main goal is for students to be able to show up for a class discussion and be able to contribute in a meaningful way. He gives students a text, and allows different entry points for students to engage with the text by allowing the student to choose how much of the text they read. The important part is that they show up ready to talk, and Pat makes it clear that every students' voice is important.

Pat is not only a seasoned teacher, but also a skilled carpenter. Most of Pat's projects involve an opportunity for students to build products of their own design out of wood. With a focus on giving students voice and choice on both the design process and the construction phase, Pat promotes student autonomy and has seen great results. Pat explained that when students are given agency to design, they can then set their own parameters, and in so doing, differentiate their learning in a personal and meaningful way. Additionally, as opposed to a more traditional view of making sure that students learn specific content and can be assessed on if they've learned it correctly, Pat stresses keeping learning outcomes open so that students are doing the work for themselves instead of for the teacher and the grade. Pat's class, like many of the teachers at High Tech High provides an opportunity for differentiation, but in doing so puts less emphasis on rigor. By giving students opportunities to do less than what is required, are we as teachers de-emphasizing the need to engage in high quality work? This is a question I struggle with and have no great answers to.

Santamaria, L. J. (2009). "Culturally Responsive Differentiated Instruction: Narrowing Gaps between Best Pedagogical Practices Benefiting All Learners." *Teachers College Record: The Voice of Scholarship in Education*, no. 1, SAGE Publications, pp. 214–47. *Crossref*, doi:10.1177/016146810911100105.

In this journal article, researcher Lorri J. Santamaria attempts to assist the educational community in recognizing pedagogical differences while finding common ground in identifying complementary teaching practices between two common pedagogical approaches: culturally relevant learning (CRT) and Differentiated Instruction (DI). Santamaria observed students at two elementary schools in San Diego, CA over a period of five years, and found that the best teaching practices are those that consider all learners in a classroom setting, paying close attention to differences inherent to academic, cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic diversity. Though the article gives some practical advice on how to apply these best practices in the classroom, the main goal of the text is to compare and contrast CRT and DI expressing the benefits of adopting a hybrid approach to pedagogical practice. Similar to Kieran, Laura and Christine Anderson's "Connecting Universal Design for Learning With Culturally Responsive Teaching" cited

above, this article misses out on the opportunity to not only compare two relevant pedagogies, but also provide insight for teachers on how to apply CRT and DI effectively in the classroom.