

Encouraging Reflective Thinking to Assess Understanding and Growth of Differentiation

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What role does **reflective thinking** play as educators begin to assess their understanding and growth when adopting and implementing a philosophy for differentiating curriculum and instruction?

“Research has clearly demonstrated that the effects of the reflection improve teaching” (Danielson, 1996, p. 53).



What should teachers reflect on?

- Student learning
- Student engagement
- Management of the lesson or task

How should teachers reflect?

- On student work





Danielson (2009) suggests a series of prompts or stems that would encourage educators to question their own classroom practices related to differentiations such as

- What worked in this lesson? How do I know?
- What would I do the same or differently if I could reteach this lesson? Why?
- What do I believe about how students learn? How does this belief influence my instruction?
- Is this the most efficient way to accomplish this task?
- What data do I need to make an informed decision about this problem? (para. 35)

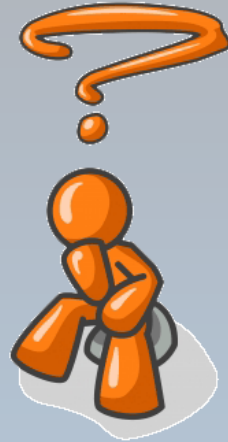
- Journal writing
- Dialogue (external and internal)
- Blogging
- Interactive journal format
- Others?

All provide an opportunity to expand thinking and stimulate awareness of personal values and beliefs.



Additional prompts for reflective thinking include

- I want to improve...
- I have learned...
- This makes me realize...
- This is important because...
- This reminds me of...
- I used to think...but now I think...
- This makes me think...
- I want to achieve...
-



- My long term and short terms goals for teaching and learning are...
- Maybe...
- I chose this task because...
- I want to achieve...
- This impacts my students' learning because...
- I want to keep challenging myself...
- I would do things differently...
- Others?

4 Areas to Assess for Growth in Implementing Differentiation

- Pedagogical Thinking
- Critical and Creative Thinking
- Personal Growth
- Transformational Learning



Assessing for Growth in Implementing Differentiation

	Foundational	Transitional	Accomplished
Pedagogical Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uses a limited range of pedagogical approaches in practice.• Recognizes that teacher standards link to practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exhibits a wide range of effective pedagogical approaches in practice.• Identifies the impact of teacher standards on practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applies in practice or experience an understanding of learning theories.• Links teacher standards to practice.

	Foundational	Transitional	Accomplished
Critical and Creative Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limits critical and creative thinking to analysis only. Views experiences in isolation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thinks critically to analyze and judge, but with limited adaptation and originality. Recognizes the need to connect experiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thinks critically and creatively employing advanced levels for analyzing, judging, originality, and accepting/rejecting ideas. Connects experience to prior knowledge, coursework, and NAGC-CEC teacher standards.

	Foundational	Transitional	Accomplished
Personal Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes some references to research and connections about the impact on the classroom or professional setting. • Able to identify area(s) for future development and improvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes references to best practices and some connections about the impact on the classroom or professional setting. • Able to plan, identify, and articulate both short and long term goals; able to identify objectives needed to meet goals; able to identify strategies needed to meet goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes specific references to best practices and describes the impact on the classroom or professional setting. • Able to assess growth over time and state future goals for teaching.

	Foundational	Transitional	Accomplished
Transformational Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Becomes aware of own and others' assumptions. • Recognizes the need to think in new ways. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begins to question assumptions. • Shows independent thinking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exhibits change in beliefs or attitudes thus contributing to an environment that encourages transformation. • Exhibits self-directed learning which creates opportunities for transformation.

How does reflective thinking support professional learning of educators?



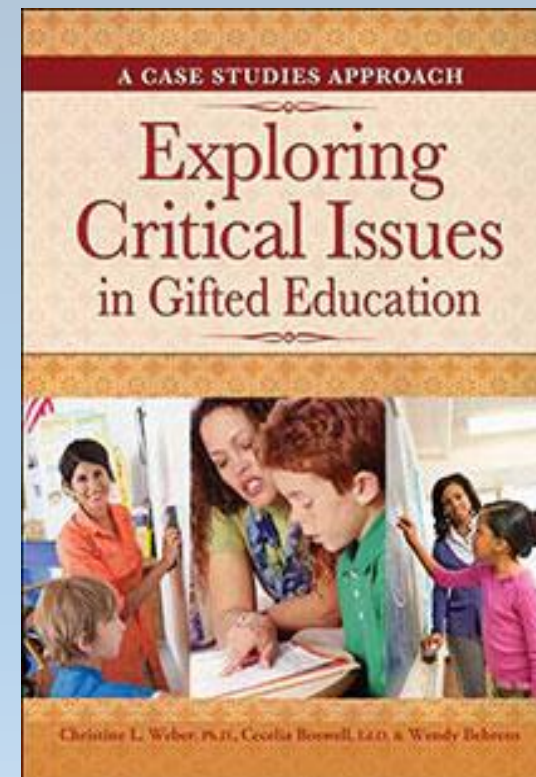
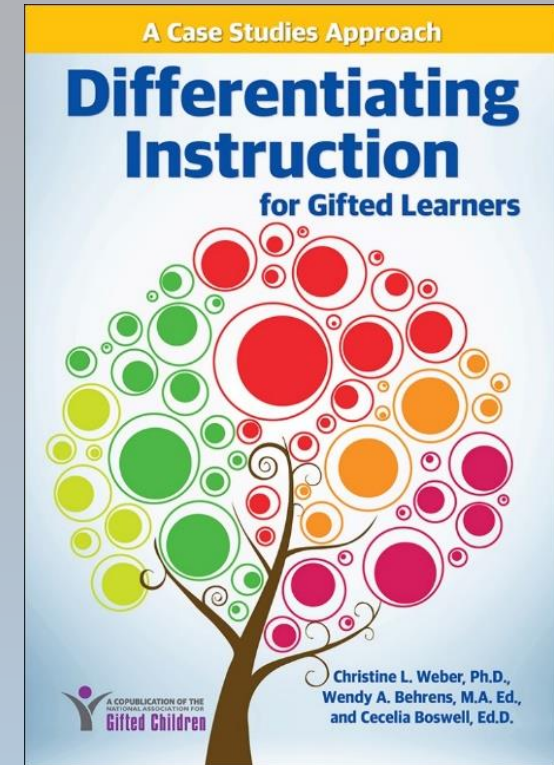
Reflective thinking places an emphasis on teachers learning **how to better meet the needs of their gifted students** instead of focusing on personal or individual changes which tend to be the traditional outcome of professional development. This reflective practice is the component of training that distinguishes **professional learning** from professional development.

QUESTIONS



References

- Danielson, C. (1996). *Enhancing professional practice: A framework for teaching*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Danielson, L. M. (2009). Fostering reflection. *Educational Leadership*, 66(5). Retrieved from <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/feb09/vol66/num05/FosteringReflection.aspx>



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