

# 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)

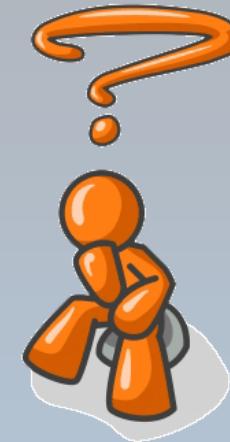
- Journal writing
- Dialogue (external and internal)
- Blogging
- Interactive journal format
- Others?

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

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

	Foundational	Transitional	Accomplished
Personal Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes some references to research and connections about the impact on the classroom or professional setting.</li> <li>• Able to identify area(s) for future development and improvement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes references to best practices and some connections about the impact on the classroom or professional setting.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes specific references to best practices and describes the impact on the classroom or professional setting.</li> <li>• Able to assess growth over time and state future goals for teaching.</li> </ul>

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

# 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.

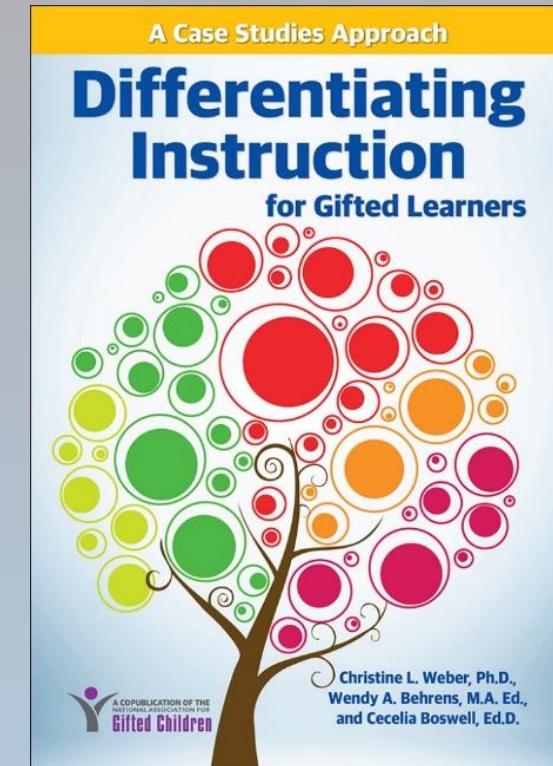
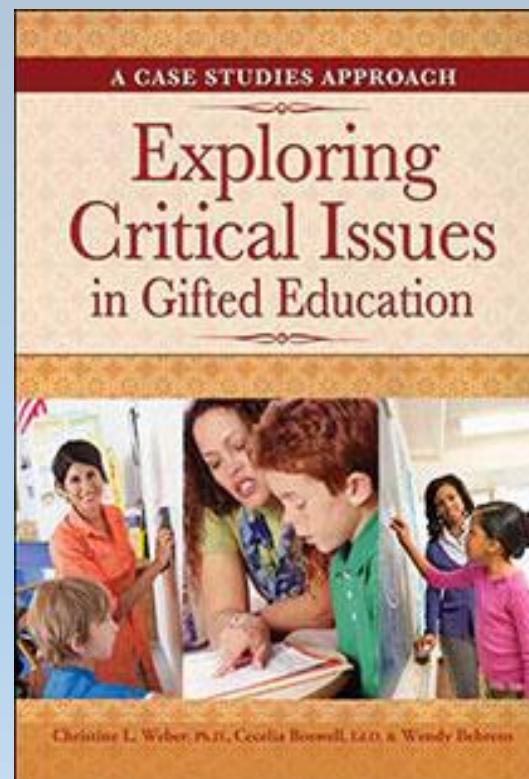
# QUESTIONS



# References

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