

Differentiating the Curriculum

A differentiated curriculum is a program of activities that offers a variety of entry points for students who differ in abilities, knowledge and skills. Differentiation ranges from slight to major modifications of the curriculum through adjustments to content, processes and skills. Differentiation includes enrichment and extension activities that are developmentally and intellectually appropriate for students.

What are *extension* and *enrichment*?

Extension means providing opportunities at a greater level of challenge to the student.

Enrichment means providing breadth to the curriculum at the same level of challenge to the student. This emphasizes the process of learning and application as opposed to the product; not all activities will have a paper product to demonstrate their learning.

Students have access to extension and enrichment at their appropriate intellectual level. Activities should be relevant and interesting to students while teaching accountability and ownership of their work; not all activities would match the learning needs of every student.

The CHIME Way

Throughout our day, CHIME students are given ample opportunity to access the curriculum based on its *Universal Design*. *Universal Design for Learning* is a set of principles for curriculum development that give all individuals equal opportunities to learn. UDL provides a blueprint for creating instructional goals, methods, materials, and assessments that work for everyone--not a single, one-size-fits-all solution but rather flexible approaches that can be customized and adjusted for individual needs. (CAST, Inc. 1999-2011)

Universal Design at its best is here at CHIME where students of all abilities are given access to the curriculum in a single classroom. Here are few examples from teachers:

- Open ended questioning
- A student who excels in math and likes mountain climbing writes a book on mountain elevations around the world
- Students are asked to explain how they got an answer and/or their reasoning behind their ideas
- Provide a problem that can be solved multiple ways, and ask that they come up with different ways to solve the problem, explaining why it works
- Students observing and reporting on the practical application of topics covered; demonstrating the use in their everyday lives
- Connecting concepts or themes to their lives and experiences
- Hands-on activities using realia and/or manipulatives
- Discussing bigger topics or ideas within a topic
- Small group instruction
- Incorporation and use of Kaplan's Depth and Complexity Icons

Parents and teachers alike want to ensure that all children at CHIME are working at their appropriate skill level and striving to maximize their potential. Differentiation is embedded in our school culture thus we are able to ensure a high quality education, everyday.

<i>Differentiated Instruction is</i>	<i>Differentiated Instruction is not</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • having high expectations for each student • permitting students to demonstrate mastery of material they already know and to progress at their own pace through new material • providing different avenues to acquiring content, to processing or making sense of ideas, and to developing products • providing multiple assignments within each unit, tailored for students with differing levels of achievement • allowing students to choose, with the teacher’s guidance, ways to learn and how to demonstrate what they have learned • flexible: teachers move students in and out of groups, based on students’ instructional needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a different lesson plan for each student each day • assigning more work at the same level to high-achieving students all the time; often it is important for students to work as a whole class • using only the differences in student responses to the same class assignment to provide differentiation • giving a “normal” assignment to most students and a different one to advanced learners • limited to subject acceleration; teachers are encouraged to use a variety of strategies

Tomlinson, C.A. & Allan, S.D. (2000). *Leadership for differentiating schools and classrooms*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD