



Welcome to the Reading Guide for *Differentiated Reading Instruction: Strategies and Technology Tools to Help All Students Improve*.

Thank you for taking the time to not only read the book, but to committing to discussing the book, and thinking deeply about its content. The reading guide is intended to be 1 part comprehension-checker, 2 parts discussion-starter, and 3 parts innovation-sparker.

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How to use this Guide

This guide can be used individually, but it is primarily intended for groups to use together. Whether that group is a school or a book club, whether it is virtual or “IRL,” the guide is a way of being on the same page, and to help guide discussions.

Each chapter’s guide has a similar structure, and they are explained below. The Epilogue functions like the pages in this Guide, thus it does not have its own page.

- **Within the text**

- *Quotations:* I’ve selected a few quotations that are either essential to understanding a concept, or could lead to an interesting discussion.
- *Questions:* The first few questions in each section are more “nitty gritty” comprehension questions to assess your understanding. I enjoy learning with assessments so I can prove that I have, in fact, learned the essentials, but they are optional, of course. The second section of questions are questions about bigger ideas-- some are taken from the Reflections section, and others are unique to this guide.

- **Beyond the page**

Here is where the magic really happens. Even if you understand every tool and method in the book, if you don’t implement it, then you will have wasted your time reading the book!

- *Actions:* The *Beyond the Page* section asks you to think of an action or actions that you will take based on the chapter. It can be something as small as having a conversation about differentiation with a colleague, or as big as writing a grant to start a 1:1 program. Most likely, your actions will be to use a tool a certain way, or to tweak something you are already doing to include a new tool. I have included a few sample “actions” to get your gears turning, but the idea is for you to generate an goal that will feel authentic and meaningful for you.
- *Allies:* The “Allies” section is partly for accountability, but is primarily for support. Here, you are to jot down whom you would like to turn to with support (whether it’s technical or emotional support you think you’ll need). It may also be a colleague whom you’d like to share this book with. As an aside, I’ve written the “Actions” step first, but you may choose to find Allies first, and then having an ally provide suggestions for “Actions.” Up to you!

Introduction: What is Reading, and How Can I Help?

Within the Text

- Questions:
 - What's the annual difference between # of words read by middle schoolers who "read well" and those with "reading difficulties?" (calculators permitted ☐)?
 - What are the sub-skills of reading? Which one(s) are the hardest to detect? Easiest? Hardest to teach? Easiest?
 - What are three research-validated ways technology supports reading? (Hint: page 8 has a partial list)
- Quotations:
 - "All educators who work with middle schoolers provide their students with texts since reading is an essential medium for learning content knowledge" (page 1). Do you agree or disagree? Is reading an "essential medium?" How can technology make it less "essential?" Should it?
 - "With such diversity, teachers' roles necessarily have to change" (page 6). Do "teachers' changing roles" help students? Help teachers? Why? How?
 - "[Technology and reading] are both best done embedded across content areas; and they are both primarily a means to an end, but sometimes require explicit instruction in order to be a useful 'means'" (page 7). Do you agree or disagree? Why?

Beyond the Page

Actions:

E.g. infuse more reading into a non-ELA class by...; read 1 research article about...; brainstorm ways that different breakdowns in reading affects my class, etc.

Allies:

Chapter 1: What Do You Mean by "Differentiation"?

Within the Text

- Questions:
 - How is differentiation different than tracking? What are the consequences of tracking?
 - Why is “learning style” not a useful way to group students?
 - What are the three types of differentiation according to the UDL criteria, and what is 1 example of each (e.g. Multiple Means of Representation: access to printed books, ebooks, and audiobooks)?
 - How are UDL and DI similar? Can you think of differences? (I find them to be blurry & I’ve disagreed with many definitions I’ve heard)
 - Acronym alert! How does the ESSA, as well as FAPE and the IDEA support DI?

- Quotations:
 - “Our job as teachers and educators is to teach students in a way that will help them learn, and ideally, become lifelong learners. Our job shouldn’t be to mold students to following a standard or unit, or simply to be compliant” (page 14). Which do you agree/disagree with? What *are* the purposes of teaching?
 - “Engagement is essential for memory and for behavior management at all ages, but it is something teachers of middle and high schoolers need to work harder at than others” (page 20). Do you agree or disagree? Why?
 - “Explicit instruction does not negate the use of problem-based learning or inquiry-based learning, but those tasks should always come after explicit instruction” (page 24). Do you agree or disagree?

Beyond the Page

Actions:

E.g. have a discussion about differentiated instruction with a colleague, brainstorm ways to differentiate by each UDL type, lead a PD session about types of differentiation, etc.

Allies:

Chapter 2: What Do Your Students Know? Formative Assessments for Differentiation

Within the Text

- **Questions:**
 - “Fun” fact: On average, what percentage of what we teach do students already know?
 - What are 3 of the benefits of formative assessment?
 - What are the benefits of using Google Forms for formative assessment?
 - What tools (listed in the book or otherwise) could help you obtain audio or visual formative assessments?

- **Quotations:**
 - “Growth mindset needs to be modeled as well” (page 31). Are you comfortable doing so? Why or why not? If you’ve already modeled a growth mindset, what success (or drawback) has been a result?
 - “A large part of formative assessment is the intentionality with which you pick your learning goals” (page 32). Do you get to pick your learning goals? Are your goals skills-based, content-based, or both? How do you align the two (if at all)?
 - “Sorting activities are game-based (thereby motivating), and they’re a valuable way for teachers to see how students are thinking” (page 48). How or why are sorting activities different than other formative assessments? How are mistakes similar or different? Does this make it more or less appealing to you as an educator?

Beyond the Page

Actions:

E.g. begin gathering formative data, set up Flubaroo, obtain a video formative assessment, etc.

Allies:

Chapter 3: What Does This Say? Differentiating for Decoding and Reading Fluency

Within the Text

- **Questions:**
 - What are the “BE MIND” benefits of having the Specific Learning Disability, dyslexia? Have you noticed others (anecdotally)?
 - What phases are most of your students in? How broad is that range (i.e. are they one phase or multiple phases apart)?
 - Which text-to-speech tool(s) do you like best, and why? Consider voice customizations and internet access.
 - Which podcast(s) would complement your curriculum? What are some reasons to use them, or not use them?

- **Quotations:**
 - “Unfortunately, not all students receive clear instruction in reading, so some students may not decode efficiently or read fluently without having dyslexia” (page 55). Is this an issue at your school? Why or why not?
 - “As a teaching team, ensure that you are all on the same page about expectations” (page 58). Read the questions on page 58 (and think of some of your own) to clarify to yourself and others the *hows* and *whys* of using text-to-speech or speech-to-text tools.
 - “[I]t’s essential that we point out the benefits of dyslexia (and acknowledge their struggles), but also find something for them to love” (page 59). Is this too much to ask? How can you model this explicitly and implicitly?

Beyond the Page

Actions:

E.g. use a podcast, have students make posters of famous people with dyslexia, set up eBook lending library, record audio comments for students with Kaizena, etc.

Allies:

Chapter 4: What Does This Mean? Part 1: Differentiating Vocabulary Instruction

Within the Text

- **Questions:**
 - How does vocabulary influence reading comprehension, and vice versa?
 - What are the disadvantages of randomly searching Google Images?
 - What are the benefits of learning morphemes (i.e. word parts)?
 - Why is formative assessment crucial for vocabulary instruction (too)?

- **Quotations:**
 - “Manyak et al suggest the teacher provide a student-friendly definition, but I have found it more meaningful for students to generate their own definitions and hooks for words” (page 78, chart). What are the benefits/drawbacks of traditional definitions? Of teacher-generated student-friendly definitions? Of student-generated definitions?
 - “Students can collaborate on visual dictionaries about certain topics in order to better understand terms and concepts” (page 86). What are the benefits of learning vocabulary collaboratively? Potential drawbacks?
 - “Vocabulary learning takes time, thus we must be mindful of what texts we are using” (page 93). How can you ensure that students are exposed to complex vocabulary, but not overwhelmed? (Hint: you can list some of the tools in this chapter as scaffolds)

Beyond the Page

Actions:

E.g. have students create Google Slides for vocabulary words, assign a Flocabulary video, teach metacognitive vocabulary checklist, etc.

Allies:

Chapter 5: What Does This Mean? Part 2: Differentiating During the Research Process and Reading Nonfiction

Within the Text

- **Questions:**
 - What are some commonalities (i.e. text structures) of nonfiction texts?
 - Why is nonfiction reading essential?
 - What are the features of useful videos?
 - What close reading principles are relevant for videos (i.e. “Close Viewing”)?

- **Quotations:**
 - “Some of the research related to digital versus print is irrelevant, however. Putting a PDF on a computer screen or iPad does not demonstrate the transformative powers of technology” (page 97). How are digital texts sometimes the same as analog texts? How can the digital texts be used in a “transformative way” to support nonfiction reading, in particular?
 - “Many reading advocates and researchers (most notably Fisher & Frey, 2014) argue for providing struggling students with grade-level or even above-grade level texts with various levels of scaffolding for students, instead of providing them with texts that are for younger students” (page 118). Why do researchers advocate this? What type or amount of planning do you need to do (and what tools can you use) to make access to grade-level texts a reality?

Beyond the Page

Actions:

E.g. have students create an educational playlist about a topic, use a UDL CAST template, use the social media features of DocentEDU, etc.

Allies:

Chapter 6: What Does This Mean? Part 3: Differentiating During Fiction Reading

Within the Text

- **Questions:**
 - What are essential skills for understanding (and enjoying) fiction?
 - What are some example of active reading strategies? Hint: ACTIVE is also an acronym for these
 - How do visualization tools teach you about student thinking?
 - Why and how do we teach fiction text structure?
 - What are some ways you can make a Google Doc a hypertext?

- **Quotations:**
 - “Self-monitoring (also known as ‘fixing up’ or ‘checking for understanding’) is a crucial part of fiction reading” (page 127). Why are self-monitoring strategies particularly important for fiction reading? Which are useful for nonfiction reading, too?
 - “Visualization is a skill that we explicitly teach to students, even though many ‘good readers’ claim not to use the strategy” (page 128). Why do we teach visualization (or other explicit strategies) if “good readers” don’t all use it?
 - “The tools in [the summaries] section may have been considered cheating in the past, and you may still take issue with students using these tools” (page 137). Do you? If so, why? If not, how do you use them effectively?
 - “Lastly, I feel compelled to urge you to create a community of readers” (page 139). How will you do this in *your* setting?

Beyond the Page

- **Actions:**

E.g. explore Calgary Academy’s short story unit, have students complete “you’re the casting agent” project, have students fill in CSPACE chart on Google Docs, etc.

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- **Allies:**
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Chapter 7: Can You Tell Me About It? Differentiating Writing (to Help Reading Comprehension)

Within the Text

- **Questions:**
 - What's the relationship between reading and writing?
 - What is the effect size of having students analyze or synthesize a text? What are some examples of analysis and synthesis activities?
 - What are the benefits of using dictation software? What are some examples?
 - What are some text structure keywords for each of the major categories: cause-effect, sequence, compare/contrast? What are the benefits of teaching these?
 - What does TBEAR stand for? How would you use it?

- **Quotations:**
 - "It is essential that the type of writing we urge students to complete requires deep thinking and inferring" (144). Why is this so crucial? How will you ensure your students are thinking deeply about their writing?
 - "Explicit instruction of writing has been around since Ancient Greece, and back then, individuals paid much more attention to the content of a work than to the 'formal rules' associated with it" (page 146). How do you feel about valuing content over grammar? When is it appropriate, and when is it not (if ever)?
 - "[S]tudents who write about reading, and receive feedback on it, become better writers about reading" (page 151). As stated in the long quotations on pages 144 and 145, quality is more important than quantity when it comes to writing. How can you ensure effective writing? Effective feedback?

Beyond the Page

Actions:

E.g. have students use word prediction software to reflect on a text; use Google Docs to plan and write TBEAR paragraphs, use Form Publisher to transfer prompted writing into paragraphs, etc.

Allies:



Chapter 8: How Much Do You Know? Differentiating Summative Assessments

Within the Text

- **Questions:**
 - What are support-based assessments? What's an example of some goals that are phrased in this way?
 - What are three ways to use Google Slides for summative assessments?
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- **Quotations:**
 - “Ideally, you should have control over the types of summative assessment that students receive. If you don't, speak with an administrator, or break the rules. This way, your summative assessments can truly assess all that your students learned in a period of time, and not just content, skills, too” (page 161). Whom could you speak to about changing summative assessments? How could you measure skills learned?
 - “Nonetheless, even if you are giving letter or number grades, I urge you not to average these grades” (page 163). Do you agree, or disagree? What underlying beliefs do these opinions align with?
 - Project-based assessments are more difficult to do from a time management perspective and multitasking standpoint, but they also help students highlight their strengths and demonstrate their knowledge” (page 167). Given that, how can you support students who have difficulty with time management and multitasking?

Beyond the Page

Actions:

E.g. give students a choice of formative assessments (with the same rubric), have students create a virtual museum in Google Slides, have students collaborate on a Google Form as an interim & summative assessment, etc.

Allies: