

## Steps to Differentiation

*“If children grew up according to early indications, we should have nothing but geniuses”*

–Goethe

### **Step 1:** Know the travelers (children) (Pre-assessment)

- Are they prepared for the journey?
- What skills and abilities do they have?
- What differences from cultural background, life experience, and home life influence their ability to embark on this journey?

### **Step 2:** Determine the destination (learning goal, curriculum outcome)

- What curriculum outcomes and indicators will this journey address? What do you want the students to understand or to be able to do?
- Where do you want the children to be at the end of the journey?
- What is the overarching “big idea” or essential question for this journey?
- What are the guiding questions for this journey?

### **Step 3:** Identify evidence that they have reached the destination & understand what has been taught (Planning for assessment)

- What behaviors and comments would tell you that the students understand?
- What products, performances, constructions, and experiments would express understanding of the concepts, skills, and information taught?

### **Step 4:** Plan the journey (Set/Development/Closure)

- How should the journey begin?
- What teaching strategies should be used?
- What learning activities need to be planned?
- What resources need to be gathered?
- How will the students be grouped?
- What adaptations are needed?

### **Step 5:** Reassess and adjust according to new needs and changes (Assessment, Reflection, Planning)

- How will you know if the students have reached the destination, have learned the concept(s) and process(es) involved?
- What measures (observation, questioning, rubrics, portfolios) will help you to know if the child is on track or if he or she needs further adaptations?
- What are the next steps to plan in this learning journey?

Adapted from Smutny, J., Fremd, S. (2004). Differentiating for the young child: Teaching strategies across the content areas (K-3). Corwin Press, California.