



# Making a Difference Means Making It Different

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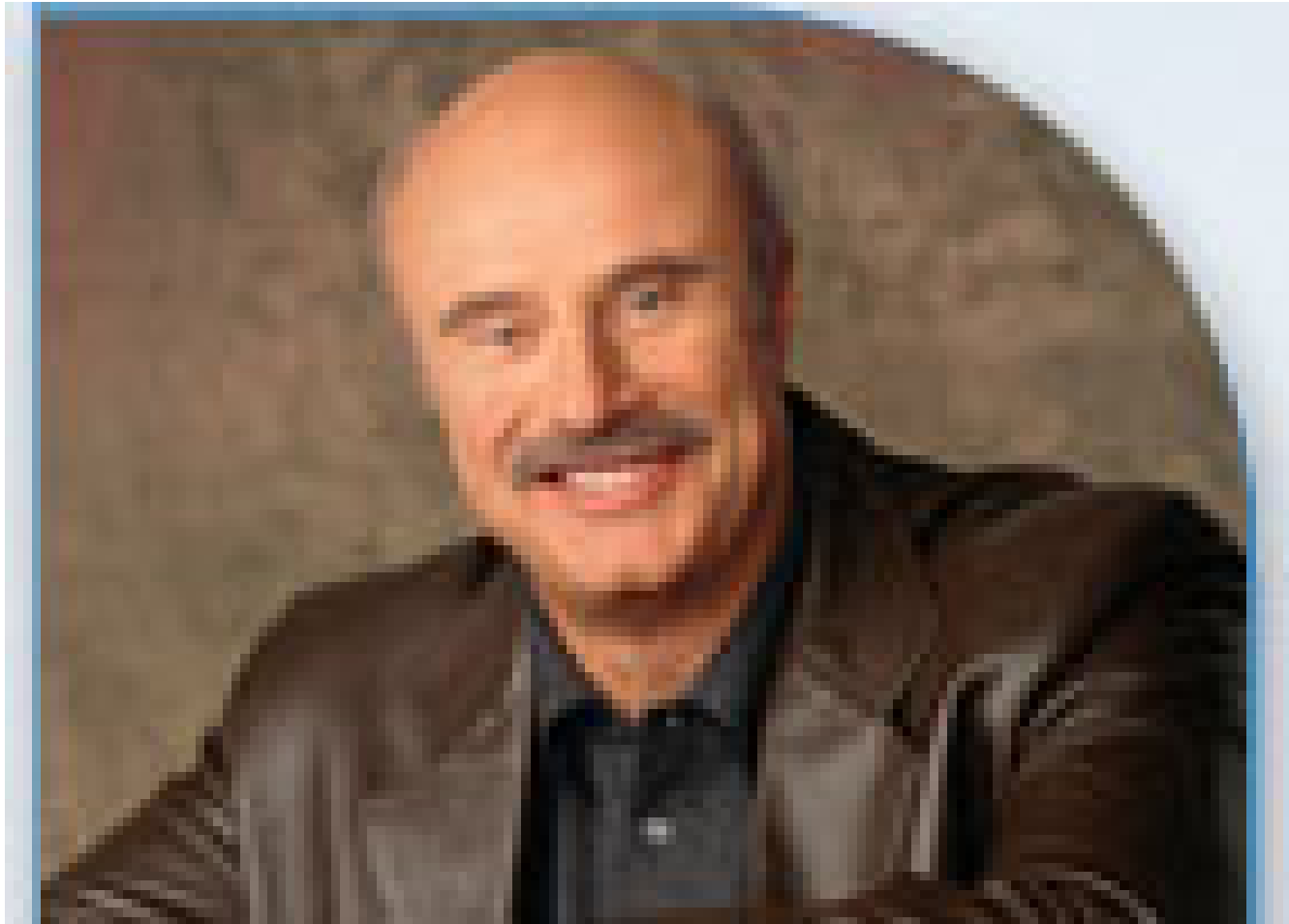
We are not all the same.



# The Problem

- Experimental research finds that differentiation and intensification improve reading achievement
- Descriptive research finds that teachers usually deliver whole class lessons with few adjustments based on student's needs

How's that working for you?



# Instructional differentiation

- The provision of varied learning situations to meet the needs of students at different levels of reading competence--Harris & Hodges (1995) *Literacy Dictionary*

# How can we differentiate?

- There are 4 kinds of instructional adjustment:
  - Content coverage
  - Amount of teaching
  - Level of instruction
  - Intensity of instruction

# 1. Content Coverage

- Reading has components: phonological awareness, phonics, oral reading fluency, vocabulary, comprehension (each part has parts)
- Two kinds of poor readers: some are low in everything, while others have uneven patterns of performance

# Content Coverage (cont.)

- Differentiation may involve creating special opportunities for students to engage more deeply with a particular component
- Tends to work to the extent that the extra attention is appropriate



## 2. Amount of instruction

- Low performance may indicate the need for more instructional time
- Carroll model explains teaching in terms of time—aptitude is the amount of time it takes to learn something
- Why provide equal learning time given the individual differences?

# Amount of instruction (cont.)

- Low performing schools should include a greater amount of learning opportunity
- Within classroom opportunities (re-teaching)
- Pull out opportunities
- After school opportunities

# 3. Level of instruction

- **Language is unique among academic subjects in that level of attainment is not defined by content**
- **In math multiplication follows addition**
- **In reading the components don't depend on each other to the same extent**
- **We use the concept of reading level which describes reading in terms of text difficulty**

# Level of instruction (cont.)

- **Not much research on the impact of level of instruction in reading**
- **Original theory: Independent, instructional, frustration**
- **Newer theory: Fluency comes from work with easy text**
- **Mixed research results of how reading level works: instructional level and frustration level both work (though, perhaps, is linked to component issues)**

# Level of instruction (cont).

- One way to facilitate learning is to put children at a level where they can make optimum progress:  
grouping with multiple texts
- “Guided reading” is an example of this, but it tends to over-group, because the levels are too close
- Can overdo it to the point that it reduces amount of teaching

# Level of instruction (cont).

- Keep your eyes on the prize: only group and vary text when it is inexpensive of time (such as paired reading) or when it is absolutely necessary
- Some plans give the same level of core instruction to all and then provide leveled opportunities (Cunningham, etc.)

## 4. Intensity of instruction

- It is possible to intensify instruction within the same time amounts and levels
- Teachers often don't target core/whole classroom instruction—but they can
- We can vary intensity in teaching for particular kids

# Intensity of instruction (cont.)

- Attention varies during instruction
- Some solutions
  - (a) vary numbers of kids
  - (b) seating placement
  - (c) amount of personal interaction



# Intensity of instruction (cont.)

- Engagement varies during instruction
- Some solutions:
  - (a) Fish-bowl
  - (b) Multiple-response cards
  - (c) Partnering

# Intensity of instruction (cont.)

- Grasp varies during instruction
- Some solutions:
  - (a) Increased scaffolding
  - (b) Greater amounts of modeling
  - (c) More responses

# Some Resources

Gibson, V., & Hasbrouck, J. (2008). *Differentiated instruction: Grouping for success*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Haager, D., Klingner, J., & Vaughn, S. (2007). *Evidence-based practices for Response to Intervention*. Baltimore: Brookes.



Making a difference  
means making it different!

**We must devote literacy teaching to the betterment of the lives of individuals. We must sustain the individual dignity and hope of each boy and girl. We want not only to leave our children rich from the economic benefits of reading, but to enrich their lives as individuals with reading as a source of power and joy.**



Thank you very much!

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