

# Foreword

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**K**athy Glass is a teachers' teacher. And her book, *Lesson Design for Differentiated Instruction, Grades 4–9*, is an invaluable teacher tool. How many of us as educators remember slogging through our preservice “methods classes” to learn how to design and teach instructional units and lessons? It was more often a sterile exercise since we had not yet experienced the exciting dynamics of the classroom. We tried to design activities to meet curricular “objectives,” but with little or no actual classroom experience we felt like creative writers suffering from insecurity complexes. How I wish Kathy Glass and her book had been available to help me learn how to design quality differentiated, instructional lessons!

*Lesson Design for Differentiated Instruction, Grades 4–9*, is a current and timely book reflecting the latest research and thinking on quality designs for learning. Kathy presents in a clear and accessible way the thinking and ideas of noted national researchers and educators, like Carol Ann Tomlinson on differentiated curriculum and instruction. But she extends their work and makes her own mark by combining different ideas to create a solid lesson planner that incorporates standards, guiding questions, concepts, skills and activities, resources/materials, timing, grouping suggestions, teaching strategies, differentiation suggestions, extensions, and assessments. Kathy provides a war chest of valuable concrete examples to illustrate the components that make up her lesson design. She encourages teachers to adapt and apply the many examples to fit their own curricula and classrooms. Kathy also includes numerous completed lesson plans for different subject areas. She is an educational generalist who is able to work across subjects. Her powerful examples for a variety of subject areas give this book broad appeal.

*Lesson Design for Differentiated Instruction, Grades 4–9*, is packed with ideas, examples, and tools to teach and aid an instructor. The writing style is exceptionally clear and focused. Sentences are concise and to the point. The flow of the ideas, the logical organization of the text, and the illustrative examples throughout allow the reader to relate to, and enjoy, the reading experience. It is easy to visualize the lessons as they would play out in the classroom, and the teacher can easily see how to adapt activities or questions to his or her own instruction.

One thing that made this book so outstanding was the amazing number of support materials from the lesson-planning template to ways to differentiate, to student response guides across subject areas, to multiple kinds

of assessments A–Z, and rubrics. This is a teacher’s candy store. I have been an educator for more than four decades and I was still excited to examine the tremendous wealth of support materials found in this book.

*Lesson Design for Differentiated Instruction, Grades 4–9*, is a solid performance of the author’s knowledge and understanding in the area of curriculum design, instruction, and current research. For example, many educators think that a statement like “Analyze the history of Native Americans” is a skill. But Kathy Glass understands that skills need to transfer across many examples; that when we tie a skill to a topic, we have stated the content objective or the activity. The skill would be “Analyze primary and secondary source documents.” This skill can be applied to understand the history of Native Americans as well as to develop the skill. Of course, teachers need to *develop* the skill within the context of particular content; but they also need to internalize the “skill set” for the subject or subjects they teach so that they can transfer the different skills across many applications in their designs for learning. Learning how to articulate rich, discipline-specific skills that can be applied across different applications is a skill in itself.

Another indicator of this author’s expertise is her clear statement that differentiation does not mean “dumbing down” curriculum and instruction for struggling students. She tells teachers that the expectation of differentiated instruction is that all students have equally engaging work; and though tasks may be diverse to meet different readiness levels, learning styles, and interests, the goals are the same for all students.

This book further emphasizes the importance and power of guiding questions. Kathy provides many subject-specific examples for unit-level and lesson-level guiding questions. She teaches us how to design quality questions and guides us in learning how to use questions to focus learning, deepen understanding, and tie them in to required standards.

Teachers are always looking for that great lesson plan. They scour the Internet and commercial materials and gather what they can find that relates to the topics they teach. But they are often disappointed when they try out the lesson. There is something missing. Kathy understands that the best lessons are designed by the teacher who is going to do the instructing. They know their students best—their learning preferences, their readiness profiles, and their interests. Kathy’s book gives a teacher everything he or she needs to design excellent lessons that are differentiated and conceptually focused. She is the support for teachers who want to be architects for learning—who want to combine the science and art of teaching as the design for instruction. Yes, I wish Kathy had been my “teacher of teachers.”

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