Acceleration, Distilled*

Distilled (di-stild') adj. 4. Separated or extracted essence

What Acceleration is…

- Previewing the important concepts in the unit or lesson
- Previewing and manipulating the key content vocabulary prior to the introduction of the lesson
- Previewing (and using) the graphic organizers to be used in the lesson
- Providing challenging but attainable tasks that encourage and motivate students
- Building students' background knowledge and skills *before* the lesson begins

What it is NOT …

- Additional work
- Worksheets
- Easier work to replace the "standard, required" curriculum
- Lower expectations for less able students
- Remediation, which happens after the student has failed
- More of the same work
- "Drill and kill" work

Why Acceleration Matters?

Acceleration . . .

- Enables all learners to begin the new lesson with balanced background knowledge, giving students who lack the required knowledge and experiences that prepare them for learning
- Engages and focuses learners' minds and energy to access grade-level content
- Gives new learning something to "stick" to (*Velcro* effect)

Key "Acceleration" concepts

Acceleration—prior to the lesson, giving students background knowledge through explicit instruction of key concepts and vocabulary, working with the graphic organizers used in the lesson, and previewing targeted content, texts

Scaffolding –strategies that give students access to more difficult, grade-level content and information through temporary support structures, organizers, etc.

Differentiation—systematic planning of curriculum and instruction for academically diverse learners by modifying or differentiating content, process, products, affect, or learning environment

Graphic organizers—visual, graphic structures that help students think in a certain way and organize information accordingly (deductive, abstract, etc.)

Modification—adaptations in classroom/instructional content and structures—either in content, process, products, or environment—that enable students to have access to the grade-level curriculum (see *differentiation*)

Student engagement—students <u>actively</u> learning, constructing meaning rather than passively listening, viewing, silently reading

Constructivism—students using active techniques (experiments, problem-solving, real-world situations, discussion, and reflection) to build background knowledge, construct meaning, and deepen their understanding

How to Plan for Acceleration…

A teacher will need . . .

1. An up-to-date, accurate Student Learning Map for the unit, with clear lesson essential questions for each lesson
2. The key standards of the unit which will be assessed
3. The specific graphic organizer(s) for each lesson
4. A focused list of necessary content/academic vocabulary (only include the essential—don't overwhelm the students)
5. Research-based, explicit instructional strategies for teaching the key vocabulary
6. Alternate texts at appropriate levels to give all students access to the information
7. Engaging, student-centered activities and learning experiences that require students to actively construct meaning
8. Cooperative, collaborative experiences that enable the students to talk about and manipulate the content, using higher order thinking skills
9. Note-taking structures (could be advance organizers) that are clear, easily used, and scaffolded if necessary

Some Examples of Acceleration Strategies…

For Vocabulary and/or Key Concepts:

- Use a Frayer model to help students deconstruct terms/concepts
- Give students multiple opportunities to use the terms in context
- Use a Concept of Definition or a Frayer model to help students deconstruct concepts
- Provide opportunities for students to represent understanding of vocabulary or concepts nonlinguistically

For Graphic Organizers:

- Have students use the graphic organizer with information they already know or have used before
- Provide models for the use of graphic organizers
- Provide organizers that are partially completed (to scaffold)

For Texts:

- Preview significant segments of the text in advance of the whole-text reading
- Provide structures that enable small groups of students to do shared readings, expert/jigsaw readings, collaborative note-taking
- Offer students alternative texts (articles, websites, etc.) to access the content
- Provide organizers to help students construct meaning and manipulate information within text
- Give students opportunities to work with the information in different modalities (visual, audio, graphic, dramatic, etc.)

Sources: Tomlinson, C., and Eidson, C. (2003). Differentiation in practice. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
Riedl, C., and Boyles, C. (2010). Scaffolding grade-level learning for at-risk & exceptional students. Boone, NC: Learning-Focused Solutions.

Acceleration, Distilled*

Distilled (di-stild') adj. 4. Separated or extracted essence

Developed by Aleta Thompson, Cape Henlopen School District, Lewes, DE; April 2012.