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Process Differentiation: The Key to Student Learning and Engagement

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Process Differentiation: Key to Student Learning and Engagement

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Research Question

How can I differentiate instruction when teaching sight word literacy and how do students respond to these differentiation approaches?

Literature Review

- The *process* in which students learn is an essential component of differentiation (Watts-Taffe, Laster, Broach, Marinak & Walker-Dalhouse, 2013).
- According to Sullivan, Konrad, Joseph, and Luu (2015) student engagement plays a vital role in sight word acquisition.
- Jasmine and Schiesl (2009) argue that DI strategies involving movement dramatically aid sight word recognition.

Methodology

- 19 second grade students from a diverse urban school served as participants.
- Students engaged in three DI strategies during sight word practice in small groups.
- Tomlinson's (2000) conceptualization of DI was used as theoretical framework for the study.



Figure 1. *Sight Word Charades* aided the quietest students in the class in participating and becoming engaged in sight word practice.



Figure 2. *Musical Sight Words* received mixed reactions from students. Some students did not believe this DI strategy aided them in their sight word acquisition.

Results and Data Analysis

- Videos and photographs showed student engagement in the DI strategies through body language (Figure 1 and 2).
- Ninety-five percent of the students read all of their sight words correctly in the post assessment.
- Students identified *Name Mix Up* and *Sight Word Charades* as the most beneficial to their learning.
- Analysis of data supports the finding that student engagement plays a major role in sight word learning (Sullivan, Konrad, Joseph, & Luu, 2015).

Conclusion

- Differentiated instruction involving movement both engages students and aids in their learning.
- Movement provides another avenue for students to learn and acquire sight word fluency.
- Teachers need to adapt these DI strategies to best fit their students and environment. All strategies may not aid all students.
- Future research should study the effects of tactile DI strategies on sight word learning.