

Menu Center

This is the place where you will be able to:

1. Understand what a menu is and how they are a tool for differentiated instruction.
2. Explore the make-up and construction of a menu.
3. Begin to envision how menus can be integrated into your instructional program and classroom management system.

Part I

Just what is a menu?

How can a menu help in
differentiating my instruction?

What is a Menu?

*Menus are a combination of graduated difficulty (tiered) and stylistically balanced activities.

*Tasks represent each of the four learning styles and up to three different levels of difficulty.

- Students are given an opportunity to choose from a list of tasks.
- Students have to choose tasks from each of the different stylistic areas and at varying levels of difficulty.

What can a
menu look
like?

Romeo and Juliet Assignment Menu

Directions--you must complete four assignments for this unit. Choose one from each difficulty level, and one from each learning style.

| Difficulty level | Area #1 ST | Area#2 NT | Area #3 NF | Area #4 SF |
|-------------------------|---|---|--|---|
| 1 | Choose three unfamiliar vocabulary words from each act (15 total). Write the word, a definition and sentence. | Explain what possible solutions the Prince could have come up with early in the play to solve the problems the town and the two families were having. | Complete an "Open Mind" for Romeo or Juliet. Include a short written explanation for your symbols. | What advice do you give Romeo when you run into him in the street? OR You are old Montague. What advice do you give to Juliet when you run into her on the street? |
| 2 | Create a timeline of the play's major events. Use a long piece of paper or four or more regular sheets so the timeline is large enough to see if it is put on the classroom wall. | What happened to Romeo and Juliet probably wouldn't have happened if only...Find three places in the play where you would have had something different happen that would change the outcome of the play. Explain what could have happened, and what effect it would have had on the play's outcome. | Find a partner or partners and choose a portion of the play that you can perform in about 3-5 minutes. Rehearse carefully and perform for the class. OR If you wish to perform alone, find an important speech from the play and perform it for the class. | Interview all of the students in the class on their views of suicide. Write up the results of your interviews; give a brief presentation of your findings to the class. |
| 3 | Make a list of the play's archaic words and a modern equivalent. Your list should include at least 45 words. | Defend the statement some critics have made that Romeo acts foolishly and is responsible for the play's tragic conclusion. Prepare an argument that defends his actions. | Write a song for Romeo and Juliet. Record, videotape or perform your song; an alternative is to find a group that fits the style of your lyrics, play one of their songs, then explain to the class what your song would sound like if they did it. | Write four letters between any two characters in the play. They play starts on Sunday and ends early Thursday morning. The letters should reflect the events taking place, so date them. OR Write a daily journal entry for one of the characters for each day of the play. |

What was that?!?

1. It was a menu for Romeo and Juliet for a high school classroom.
2. It addresses the four learning styles covered today.
3. It was tiered into three different levels of difficulty.
4. The directions at the top explain the process of choice.
5. You can go back and look if you want...Or not!

NEXT

How can the menu help in differentiated instruction?

Well, here's how!

- Menus address each of the four learning styles by having an activity for each quadrant.
- Each quadrant offers 2-3 leveled activities.
- Menus can be used as an *independent* activity so the teacher can address the needs of the class through small group instruction.

Menus also offer authentic choice!

- Choice is one of the most important features of the menu.
- Students choose their pathway through the four areas and the different leveled activities.
- Students work at their individual pace, rather than the idea that the whole class begins and completes assignments at the exact same time.

And what does this
all mean?

Ideally, less headache for you and
more learning for your students.

Why? Because...

- More of your students' needs are being met by the basic structure of the menu, (stylistic and leveled activities).
- More of your students' needs are being met by the teacher through direct small group instruction.

How?...Successes!

- Higher level of success for all your students because their “highs” and “lows” are being addressed both in their independent activities, AND through small, individualized group instruction led by the teacher.
- Students feel more empowered because they are given authentic choice and have more control in their areas of interest and challenge.

And that is how menus are a tool for differentiated instruction.

Now we will move into the specifics of menu make-up and construction.

Part II

Menu Make-Up and Construction

Parts of the Menu:

The menu is comprised of the four learning styles, and up to three levels of difficulty for each area.

Remember the example for Romeo and Juliet.

| | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| ST 1. 2. 3. | SF 1. 2. 3. |
| NT 1. 2. 3. | NF 1. 2. 3. |

Putting a menu together...

- You'll need an area for focus.
- You need clear learning objectives and / or guiding questions to base your study around.
- You'll need the activities you have already created or found for the unit.

Steps for creating your MENU

1. Look at the independent and group activities that you already have planned. See how they can fit into the menu.
2. Check for gaps in style and level. Now what do you need to find / create to fit into the empty spaces?
3. It may be helpful to look at menu examples in your packets to get ideas for appropriate activities for each level and style.
4. Once you have completed that, now take a realistic look at your time frame and your student groups.

Some guiding questions

- Will there be a high level of success, while still offering challenge in the assignments that are structured?
- Are the different activities offering some amount of interest and excitement for the students?
- Can the activities be completed in the time allotted for the unit, in tandem with the small group studies and assignments?

Oh Yeah. One
more thing to
add to all of
this...

RELAX!

It may take a little time for you and your students to make the adjustments into this system. The first menu may be an eye-opener. Adjust as you go along, and make the necessary changes for your next unit.

Moving a little deeper into the
differentiated instruction.

Special Education

Work Sheets

and

More Challenging Menu

Development

Considerations for Special Education

Here is the place where you may want to begin thinking of making modifications to the menu according to the IEP goals for the students from Special Education that are included into your program.

You may wish to modify the menu in a few ways...

1. Pick some specific activities for the student to do.
2. Develop a peer support system for all your students.
3. Adjust portions of an activity to lessen the work load rather than the content depth.
4. In some cases, you may wish to create a separate menu depending on the level of support your student needs.

One more thing to remember is...

Don't throw
out those
worksheets!

Remember, this approach isn't about getting rid of any of the resources already available to you.

What's important is either maintaining or creating balance in your instructional program for student success.

So let's take a look at
where the work sheets fit
in...

Because of the balance that is structured into the menu format, work sheets, vocabulary and other cloze activities have a natural spot in the menu.

ST

1. Right here in the Sensing Thinking spot is where you can place most of these assignments. Also if you happen to believe that your students aren't getting enough "skills" in this process, then just have them complete two choices in this box as "Have to's". Adjust the program to fit your needs.

SF

NT

2. Chances are that a few may even fit into here... This is the Intuitive Thinking area. These activities are more open-ended, research and inquiry based.

NF

And Yes! The majority of the assessments out there are testing those two areas, the **ST** for the IOWAs and **ST** and **NF** for the ISATs.

So why do we support the students in other areas?

Because if we can reach students in their areas of preference and interest, we have a better chance in helping them gain success in the areas that they are weaker or struggling in.

Want more challenge?

If you feel you already have a grasp on this, try a few of these ideas:

- Include any one of the nine multiple intelligences into each of the quadrants.
- Look at the learning center about “Hemisphericity”. Work on integrating a right and a left brain element to each quadrant.

Alright. That's a lot of information about the make-up and construction of a menu. How about we move onto the last part...

Part III

Envisioning how menus can be
integrated into your instructional
program and classroom management
system

We understand that beginning anything new can be a huge challenge for you and your students. So, here are a few ideas for managing the menus in your classroom.

The most important step is

#1.

Start Small!

Don't try to do too much. Focus on one area of need and / or interest and see how it goes.

When introducing the concept of menus to your classes, it is helpful to do a “What do we know” about menus.

It is also helpful to really focus on the menus, the structures of helpful partners / peer buddies, and the quality and quantity for each individual student. Perhaps you do more whole group instruction, then have your students focus on their menus with you to support them.

It also may be helpful to begin on a smaller scale, introducing the menus during a mini-unit.

Decide how much you want to bite off, and go for it!

NEXT

Moving a little deeper into the
management and structure...

Here are a few ideas for
accountability
(and Sanity).

Sane Ideas

- Students sign up for what tasks they are working on, as in a contract. At five, or two minutes to bell, students fill out an “exit” slip about the work they completed, and turn it into the teacher.
- The teacher divides the class into 2, 3, or four different groups. The teacher provides each group with a series of mini-lessons on the topic. While the teacher is working with one group, the rest of the class are completing tasks from the menu.

More Sane Ideas

- Class is divided into small groups for homogeneous skills and strategy development in the content area. The teacher meets with the small groups while the rest of the class works on projects in the menu or teacher decided assignments.
- Create a learning center for the students to rotate through. You can either run the center with a small group while the rest of the class works on their menus, or you can have the center simply be one “stop” along the way to menu completion.

Next step?

Breathe!

The point of this isn't to get overwhelmed. Just find a way to work with **flexible groups**, **tiered activities**, and giving students **authentic choice**.

Choose one area, or all three.

Start where you are!

Menus aren't the only path,
but they do help to naturally
combine elements from each
of these areas.

Good Luck!