

# PLC/Book Study Guide for Inspiring Student Empowerment

**Patti Drapeau**

This guide is designed as a professional development resource and can be used to facilitate a book study or as a learning experience for a professional learning community (PLC). Facilitator notes are provided for additional support and explanation in planning and facilitating your school or group's sessions. We recommend that the principal and/or facilitator read the entire guide and the book before beginning the study.

For each session, participants will be asked to read chapters of the book. They may also be asked to bring materials or create or implement something *prior* to attending a session. Each chapter description includes guiding questions and suggested tasks that can be used as group activities during the group session.

Please note that each session's preparation work is noted at the beginning of the session notes. Before you dismiss participants for each session, look ahead to the next session and review and clarify what must be done before the next meeting. Reach agreements if suggested tasks are going to be adjusted or modified.



# Introduction

**Facilitator note:** *To encourage group conversation and individual professional growth, create a shared document or shared folder where teachers can post responses to questions and activities as well as their concerns and questions. If your staff is not comfortable with shared documents, teachers can write responses and a teacher leader can assemble and email them to everyone in the study group.*

## **Participant Preparation**

To be completed before the first session:

- Read the introduction.
- For every chapter, it will be helpful to look ahead at the activities and discussion questions. After you read the chapter, think about the activities and questions so you are prepared to respond when we meet.

## **Activities and Discussion Questions**

1. Whole-group discussion: Why is the diagram in **figure 1** considered an approach to learning? Would you make any changes to the graphic? Why or why not?
2. Whole-group discussion: Consider the advantages and disadvantages of reading this book as a guide and making your own decisions about the information versus reading the book as a step-by-step curriculum model.
3. Written: This book addresses ten essential questions (page 4). Which three questions are most important to you? Why?
4. Small-group discussion: Explain the difference between students who are learning and students who are fired up about their learning. How do you know when your students are fired up?

# Chapter 1:

## Engagement: It Matters

### Participant Preparation

To be completed before the chapter 1 session:

- Read chapter 1.
- Write a lesson plan that targets student engagement (see **figure 1-4**). Conduct the lesson and indicate the levels of engagement. Place the lesson plan in the study group's shared folder and be ready to discuss it at our next meeting.

### Activities and Discussion Questions

1. Small-group discussion: Share your reaction to this statement (page 11): “To make engagement matter, we should make our efforts mindful and intentional.” Provide examples to support your reaction.
2. Whole-group discussion: Why should we care about engagement? Shouldn't we just focus on covering the content?
3. Whole-group discussion: Watch “Schlechty’s Levels of Engagement” by John Spencer at [youtube.com/watch?v=256hluHbp2o](https://youtube.com/watch?v=256hluHbp2o). Next, watch “7 Ways to Increase Student Engagement in the Classroom” by Reading Horizons at [youtube.com/watch?v=TjADkTe5upA](https://youtube.com/watch?v=TjADkTe5upA). What are your reactions to these two videos? What strategies do you use to increase student engagement?

**Facilitator note:** Watch the videos as a whole group and then discuss reactions. Teachers individually write strategies they use to increase student engagement on sticky notes and post them on chart paper. The teacher leader assembles the ideas into a single shared document for teachers to refer to later on. This is a great way for teachers to share ideas and to recognize teachers for the fine work they are already doing.

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4. Partner discussion: How does the Engage-O-Meter (pages 21–22, 26–27) give a teacher useful information that results in improved instruction? Would you use the Engage-O-Meter? Why or why not?

**Facilitator note:** *Teachers discuss their ideas with a partner. After a few minutes, teachers find new partners, and they share ideas. Then the whole group comes back together to discuss their thoughts and draw conclusions.*

# Chapter 2: Introducing Empowerment

## Participant Preparation

To be completed before the chapter 2 session:

- Read chapter 2.
- Give examples of when you felt empowered as a student. Place your responses in our shared folder.
- Ask your students to complete the Student Strengths and Preferences questionnaire (page 47). Collect the answers and be prepared to discuss them at our next group meeting.

## Discussion Questions

1. Written or small-group discussion: Complete the Teacher Empowerment Questionnaire (pages 45–46). It is your choice whether to share your answers with others.
2. Small-group followed by whole-group discussion: What do you think empowers students? Give examples to support your ideas.
3. Whole-group discussion: Watch “The Shift from Engaging Students to Empowering Learners” by John Spencer at [youtube.com/watch?v=BYBJQ5rIFjA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BYBJQ5rIFjA). What conclusions can you draw from watching this video?

**Facilitator note:** Watch the video as a whole group and then discuss reactions. Direct the conversation so teachers reflect upon whether this video supports, contradicts, or extends the information in this book.

4. Small-group discussion: Does gender affect student empowerment? How does this information affect us as teachers?

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**Facilitator note:** *Lead teachers to conclude that empowerment is personal and can be affected by gender. Use caution to avoid stereotypes when drawing conclusions about groups of students.*

5. Whole-group discussion: What information did you gather from your Student Strengths and Preferences questionnaires? Did you discover anything surprising?

# Chapter 3: Empowerment: Best Practices, Strategies, and Programs

## Participant Preparation

To be completed before the chapter 3 session:

- Read chapter 3.
- Choose one discussion question from page 67 to answer.

## Activities and Discussion Questions

1. Small-group discussion: Answer question a, b, or c below.
  - a. What is the difference between little *e* and big *E* empowerment? Why is it important to distinguish these two types of empowerment? Provide examples to support your thinking.
  - b. Why is it important for students to know and understand Ron Ritchhart's seven kinds of language (pages 55–56)? What does the power of language have to do with student empowerment?
  - c. Teachers empower students by sharing strategies and tools with them. One such useful strategy is called Chunk and Crunch (**figure 3-2**). How might you use this strategy?

**Facilitator note:** Teachers work in small groups to answer one question above. Then everyone except one member of each small group rotates to a different group to hear other ideas. The people left behind share their groups' ideas. Finally, the members return to their original groups and share with the person left behind what they learned from the other groups.

2. Small-group discussion: Choose one of the following programs and describe how a student might experience empowerment through it: global education, inquiry learning, expeditionary learning, project-based learning, problem-based learning, genius hour, makerspace and design thinking, and entrepreneurship.



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3. Small-group discussion: Talk about your answer to your chosen discussion question from page 67 with other teachers who chose the same question.

**Facilitator note:** *After teachers discuss their responses in small groups, they gather as a whole group to talk about their responses. Encourage teachers to think about why certain questions were answered and why others were not. Is it because some questions were more important or more interesting or had more impact than others?*

# Chapter 4: In It to Win It: Empowerment Through Game-Based Education and Competitions

## Participant Preparation

To be completed before the chapter 4 session:

- Read chapter 4.
- Extend your chapter reading by watching “7 Ways Games Reward the Brain” by Tom Chatfield at [ted.com/talks/tom\\_chatfield\\_7\\_ways\\_games\\_reward\\_the\\_brain](https://ted.com/talks/tom_chatfield_7_ways_games_reward_the_brain). What does the construction of video games tell us? How can we use this information to inform our teaching practice?

## Activities and Discussion Questions

1. Written: Consider the advantages and disadvantages of using traditional board or card games versus electronic games to teach or reinforce content.
2. Whole-group discussion: Decide whether the Follett Challenge game model provides enough structure for you to feel comfortable creating your own game for instructional purposes. Why or why not?

**Facilitator note:** Refer teachers to the chapter 4 review video at [freespirit.com/empower-videos](https://freespirit.com/empower-videos). Then ask teachers if the author’s passion for this type of learning is evident. Does the video convince them to try to create a game like this one?

3. Whole-group discussion: Imagine and describe what your instructional game might look like.
4. Whole-group discussion: How might you use competitions such as Odyssey of the Mind or the Future Problem Solving Program as a curriculum model?

**Facilitator note:** These competitions are not really curriculum models, but they do provide some helpful tips for creating units that empower students. Make sure teachers can identify these helpful tips and do not get sidetracked with a lengthy debate on competition versus collaboration.

# Chapter 5:

# Differentiation Revisited

## Participant Preparation

To be completed before the chapter 5 session:

- Read chapter 5.
- Give the Learner Survey (page 113–114) to your students. Write up your overall conclusions from the survey and place them in your group’s shared folder.

## Activities and Discussion Questions

1. Whole-group discussion: What are some typical ways we define differentiation, and why should we define our differentiation practice?

**Facilitator note:** Place chart paper on the wall with the headers “Differentiation is” and “The importance of a differentiation definition.” Each group adds one idea under each header. No ideas can be repeated. At the end of the session, the ideas are read and discussed.

2. Written: When, how, and to what degree do you use intentional differentiation?

**Facilitator note:** Tell teachers to discuss their written answers with a partner.

3. Small-group discussion: Discuss whether you have experienced any of the limiting beliefs about differentiation described in this chapter. How have these beliefs limited you, or how have you overcome them?
4. Small-group discussion: SCARMA is an adaptation of a curriculum compactor. Why might you find using a SCARMA helpful, with whom, and when?

**Facilitator note:** Encourage teachers to share times when they actually used a tool like SCARMA and have them discuss whether it was worth the time to fill out a form.

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5. Whole-group discussion: When you're using a Bloom's Taxonomy matrix, how might knowing about themes and generalizations help you create conceptual questions? How might knowing about the four quadrants help you differentiate?

**Facilitator note:** *Remind teachers that the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy addresses not only thinking skills, but also levels of knowledge. Knowing about themes and generalizations and the four quadrants provides teachers with the tools to control the level of questioning.*

6. Whole-group discussion: Critique the reproducible forms at the end of the chapter: Learner Survey, KTW Chart, SCARMA Curriculum Adjuster, Peer Feedback Form, Self-Assessment Form, Differentiated Pacing Form, Flexible Grouping Tracker, and Themes and Generalizations.

**Facilitator note:** *There are many good reproducible forms to use in this chapter. Encourage teachers to try them out and share their results with the group.*

# Chapter 6:

# Personalized Learning:

# Voice and Choice

## Participant Preparation

To be completed before the chapter 6 session:

- Read chapter 6.
- Russell Quaglia has done a lot of research on student voice. Watch his video “Student Voice” at [youtube.com/watch?v=gsClwQXUXAI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gsClwQXUXAI) and prepare to share your thoughts about it when we meet as a group.
- Try using the Critique Starter Phrases template (page 138) with your students. What did they like and not like about using this form? Submit your responses to the group’s shared document.

## Activities and Discussion Questions

1. Whole-group discussion: What is the distinction between differentiation and personalized learning? Why might personalized learning be called differentiation-plus?
2. Small-group discussion: In what ways do you personalize learning in your classroom? Create a concept web.
3. Written: Describe the difference between providing students with choice and empowering student choice. Adapt one of your lessons so that it targets empowering students with choice.

**Facilitator note:** *Tell teachers to work with a partner to write up the differences and create a lesson together. They can share their lessons with the whole group.*

4. Small-group discussion: Brainstorm the many ways you encourage student voice in your classroom. Provide specific examples whenever possible. Place your responses in the group’s shared document.

# Chapter 7: Putting It All Together: Empowering Students to Design Their Own Instruction

## Participant Preparation

To be completed before the chapter 7 session:

- Read chapter 7.
- Analyze the steps described in the Instructional Design Planner for Personalized Learning (page 157). Complete a planner prior to our chapter 7 session. When we meet, you will describe to your partner, who will play the role of a student, how you completed the planner so that the “students” can complete one next time on their own.
- Whether you are in a competency-based, mastery-based, proficiency-based, or traditional educational system, think about ways you might include more personalized learning in your classroom.

## Activities and Discussion Questions

1. Whole-group discussion: Do you think it is helpful to fill out a 4S planner (page 154)? Why or why not?
2. Partner discussion, written: Practice with a partner the Drapeau Tiered Questioning system (pages 146–147). Begin by choosing a question, categorizing which tier it is (1, 2, or 3), and creating the other questions that align with the one you chose. Now create your own set of tiered questions.

**Facilitator note:** Generate along with teachers a variety of questions. Teacher pairs choose a question and classify it as tier 1, 2, or 3. The partners create questions targeting the other two tiers that align with the same content in the question they chose. Once the pair understands the Drapeau Tiered Questioning system, they create their own three-tiered questions. The partners can team up with another pair to check whether they used the tiered system correctly.

3. Whole-group discussion: In what ways does the Student Feedback Form (page 161) help build students’ understanding of themselves as learners?

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4. Written: Watch “Student-Led Conferences: Empowerment and Ownership” at [youtube.com/watch?v=L\\_WBSInDc2E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L_WBSInDc2E). What do you notice about the students’ affect? Students feel empowered when they lead their conferences. Using the Student-Led Conference Prep form (page 163) can help students feel prepared. Evaluate the form and describe any changes you would make to it.
  
  5. Partner discussion: Meet with your partner to discuss the instructional design planner that you created previously.

**Facilitator note:** *Show the instructional design planner that you created to your partner. Your partner will pretend they are your student, and you will explain to them how to fill out the instructional design planner by showing them the one that you created. Make sure to tell the “student” why using a planner is beneficial.*

# Chapter 8: Empowerment, Personalization, and Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

## Participant Preparation

To be completed before the chapter 8 session:

- Read chapter 8.
- Prior to our meeting, choose one of the five strands of the Affective Perspectives model (understanding of self and others, leadership, risk-taking, insight, or goal setting) and create a lesson. Try the lesson with your class and write up how it went. Place your write-up in the shared folder.

## Activities and Discussion Questions

1. Whole-group discussion: Describe the steps you take to create a classroom climate that encourages personalized learning and student empowerment.
2. Small-group discussion: Research says social and emotional skills are better predictors of success in the workplace than academic scores are. Provide examples of the ways you address the five social and emotional competencies: self-management, self-awareness, responsible decision-making, relationship skills, and social awareness.

**Facilitator note:** Post five sheets of chart paper on the wall and write one of the five social and emotional competencies on each. Divide participants into five groups and assign each group to one competency. Then share answers with the whole group.

3. Small-group discussion: What impact do executive function and self-regulation have on student empowerment and personalized learning?

**Facilitator note:** Encourage teachers to share personal stories to demonstrate their points.

4. Whole-group discussion: Brainstorm a list of strategies you use to promote social and emotional, executive function, and self-regulation skills.



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5. Whole-group discussion: Affective Perspectives is a model that integrates what students need to know (content), how the students learn it (process), and how the students approach the learning process (affect) through producing a product (product). The model provides a safe way for students to talk about SEL by first connecting it to content and then transferring what they learn to themselves, which leads to student empowerment. How do you see this model working in your classroom with your content?

**Facilitator note:** *Ask teachers to discuss whether it seems easier to promote this model at particular grade levels or with particular content even though the model claims to be usable across grade levels and content areas.*

# Final Thoughts on Empowerment and Personalized Learning

## Participant Preparation

To be completed before the final session:

- Read the Final Thoughts.
- After reading this book, in what ways have your thoughts about engagement, empowerment, differentiation, and personalized learning changed?

## Activities and Discussion Questions

1. Partner discussion, written: Page 183 asks you to think about eighteen questions. Choose the three questions that are most important to you and share your responses to those questions with a partner.
2. Whole-group discussion: What do you think is the role of student empowerment in education now? What do you think *should* be the role of student empowerment? Are you willing to close the gap between what is and what should be now that you know how?

**Facilitator note:** *This prompt is designed to encourage participants to take action to inspire student empowerment.*

# About the Author

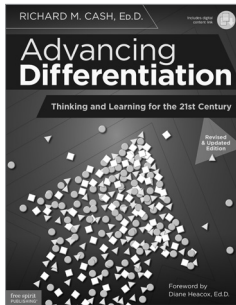


**Patti Drapeau (pattidrapeau.com)** is an internationally active educational consultant, author, and presenter, with more than twenty-five years of classroom experience. Patti conducts keynote sessions as well as short- and long-term workshops in the United States and abroad. She commonly presents on the following topics: differentiation, creativity, engagement, gifted education, student empowerment, and personalized learning.

Patti is the founder of Patti Drapeau Educational Consulting Services and has received the New England Region Gifted and Talented award for outstanding contributions in gifted education and the Maine Educators of the Gifted and Talented award for exemplary service. Patti coached programs such as Odyssey of the Mind, Future Problem Solving, Explorer Vision, and math teams. She also developed a curriculum model for the regular classroom called “Affective Perspectives: Combining Critical Thinking, Creative Thinking, and Affect,” and authored a variety of articles for *Maine Exchange*, *Teaching Matters*, and *Understanding Our Gifted*. Her other books include *Sparkling Student Creativity: Practical Ways to Promote Innovative Thinking and Problem Solving*, *Differentiating with Graphic Organizers: Tools to Foster Critical and Creative Thinking*, *Differentiated Instruction: Making It Work*, and *Great Teaching with Graphic Organizers*.

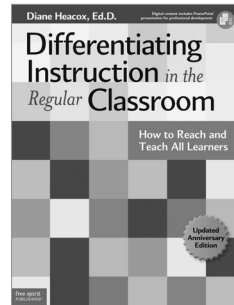
Patti currently works as a consultant, and she is a part-time faculty member at the University of Southern Maine. She lives in Freeport, Maine. Follow her on Twitter @ptdrapeau.

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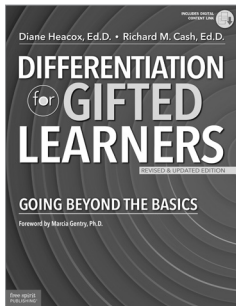
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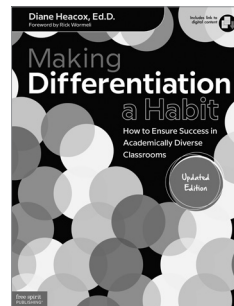
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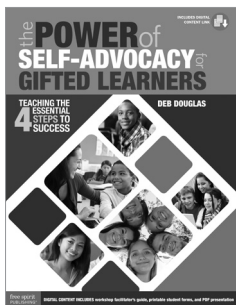


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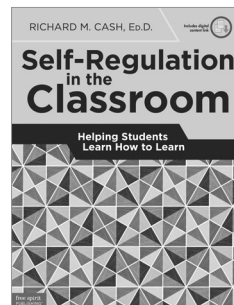
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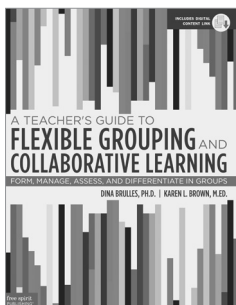
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