



Student Success
Differentiated Instruction Educator's Package (2010)



REACH EVERY STUDENT

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Student Success Differentiated Instruction Educator's Package

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NOTE: This symbol indicates that the identified information is included in the Differentiated Instruction Scrapbook and ready for your use.



NOTE: This symbol indicates that the identified information is provided on the Differentiated Instruction Reference Cards.



PURPOSE

The 2010 Differentiated Instruction Educator's Package is intended to support educators who are new to differentiated instruction (DI) as well as those who are refining their differentiated instruction approach. The guide is one of the resources in the multi-faceted Student Success/Learning to 18 Differentiated Instruction Professional Learning Strategy.

The 2010 Differentiated Instruction Educator's Package supports teachers in:

- Understanding differentiated instruction
- Improving student learning by recognizing and addressing their diverse needs
- Seeing the value of differentiated instruction
- Recognizing that differentiating instruction does not mean doing everything differently
- Taking new instructional actions, small or large, beyond current levels of implementation



FORMAT

The format of the Educator's Package allows for the inclusion of additional differentiated instruction resource materials as well as those that have been personally or collaboratively developed.

RESOURCES

Differentiated Instruction Professional Learning Strategy

Other resources for the Student Success/Learning to 18 Differentiated Instruction Professional Learning Strategy include:

- *Reach Every Student through Differentiated Instruction Brochures*
- *Student Success Grades 7 & 8 Differentiated Instruction Educator's Package (2007)*
 - Includes Teacher's Guide, Poster, Strategy, Structure and Student Cards, DVD and Facilitator's Guide
- *Student Success Differentiated Instruction Grades 7 & 8 Educator's Package Enhancements*
 - Includes Facilitators' Guides and Strategy Cards for Mathematics, Literacy and Assessment for Learning
- Subject-specific Differentiated Instruction Teaching/Learning Examples, Grades 7 to 10
- DVD of secondary classroom examples of differentiated instruction and DVD Facilitator's Guide
- Professional Learning Resources

(To access these resources, visit www.edugains.ca)

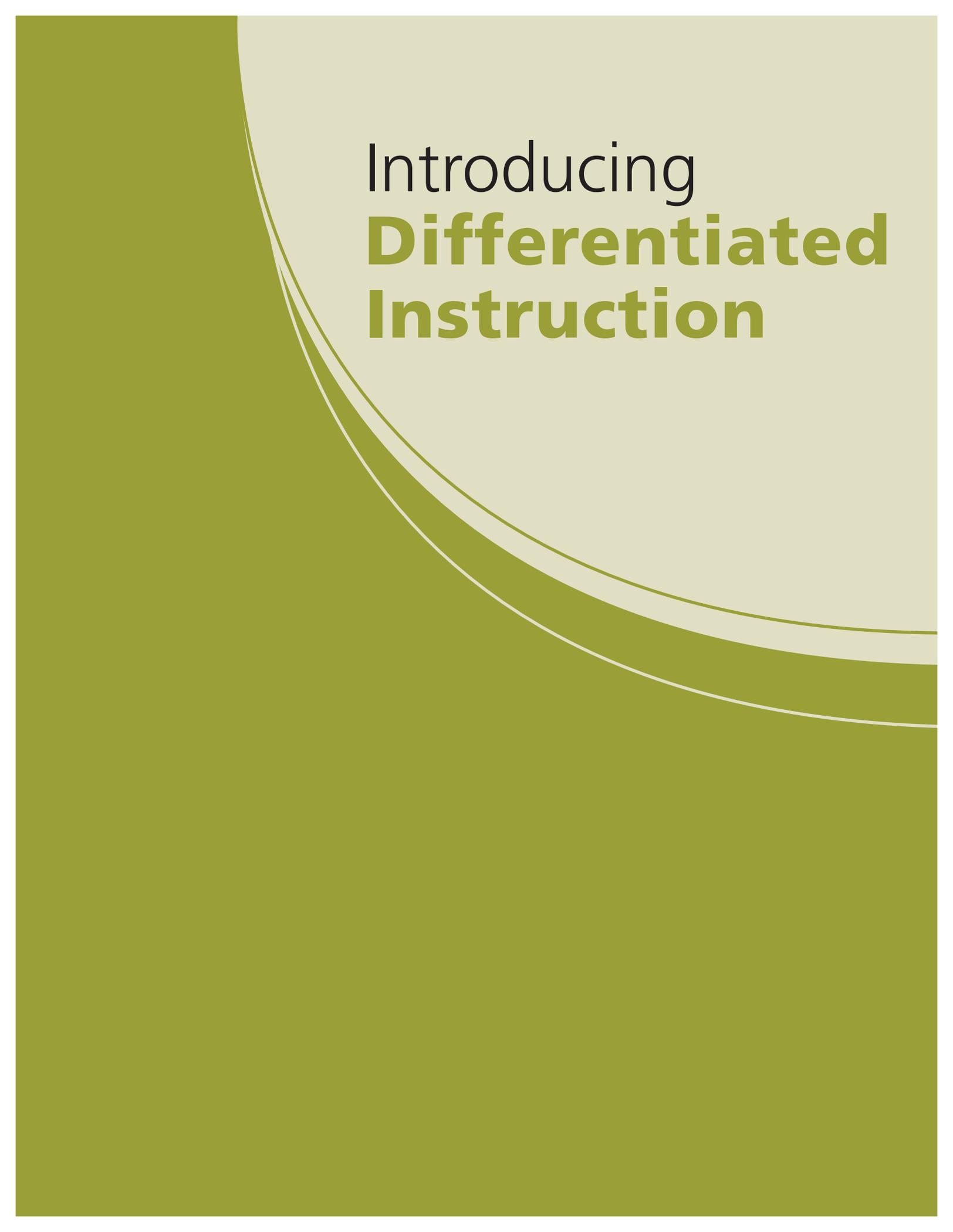


Student Success

**DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION
EDUCATOR'S GUIDE (2010)**

REACH EVERY STUDENT

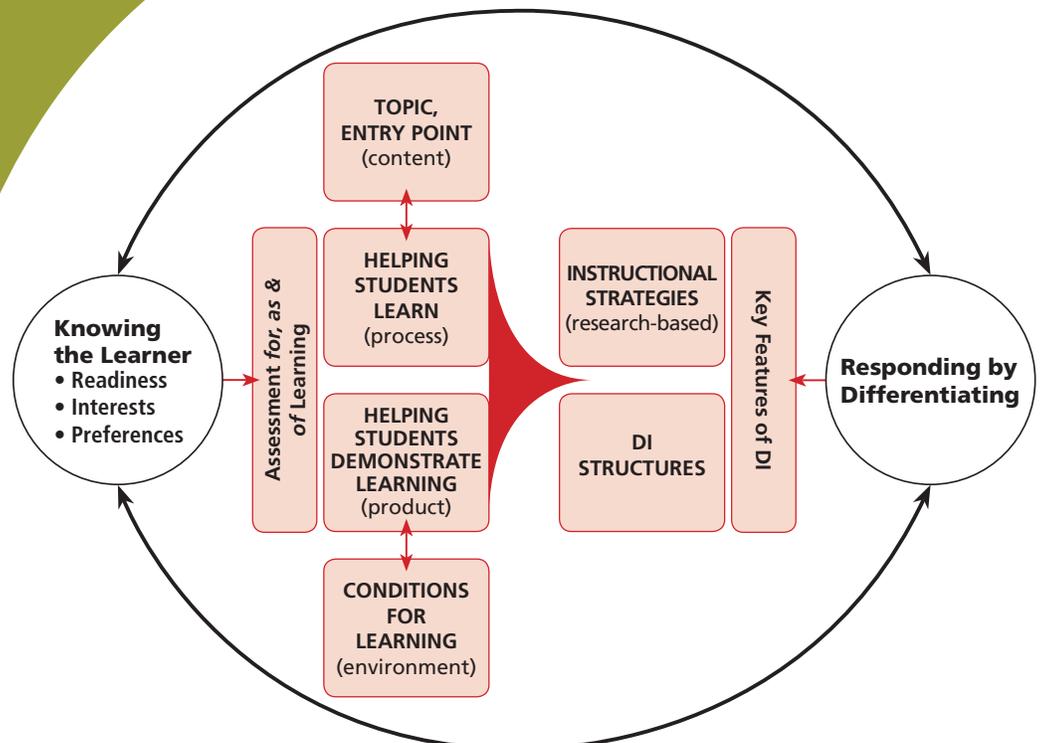




Introducing
**Differentiated
Instruction**

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INTRODUCTION TO DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

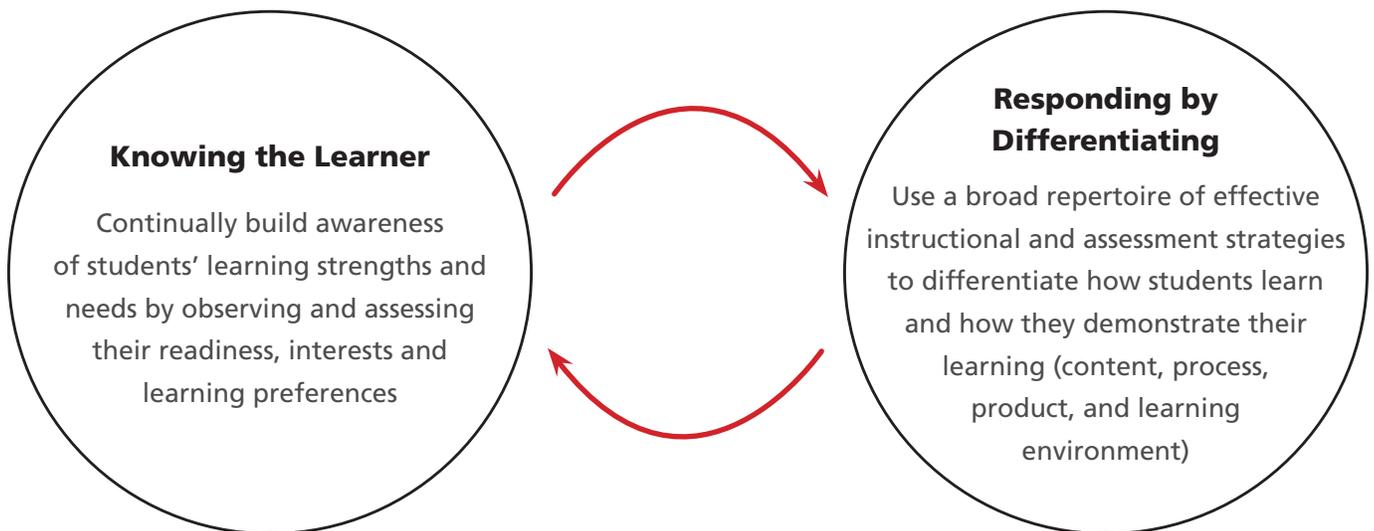


Differentiated instruction (DI) is not new. Concern for attending to the needs of particular students is captured in writings about teaching in ancient Greece and Egypt, in descriptions of life in the one-room schoolhouse and in every instance where instructional plans are adjusted to better meet the needs of an individual learner.

Effective differentiated instruction requires that educators take thoughtful and deliberate actions to address the particular needs of students. Differentiated instruction allows us to see learning from a variety of perspectives and provides countless, unexpected teachable moments that we may otherwise miss.

Underlying Principles of Differentiated Instruction

Differentiated instruction is a cyclical process of finding out about the learner and responding by differentiating. As we continue to learn more about the learner, we respond by differentiating instruction with increased precision and effectiveness.



Unless students are on an Individual Education Plan (IEP), all differentiated instruction is based on the same curriculum expectations and all students have opportunities to achieve the same high standards of performance.

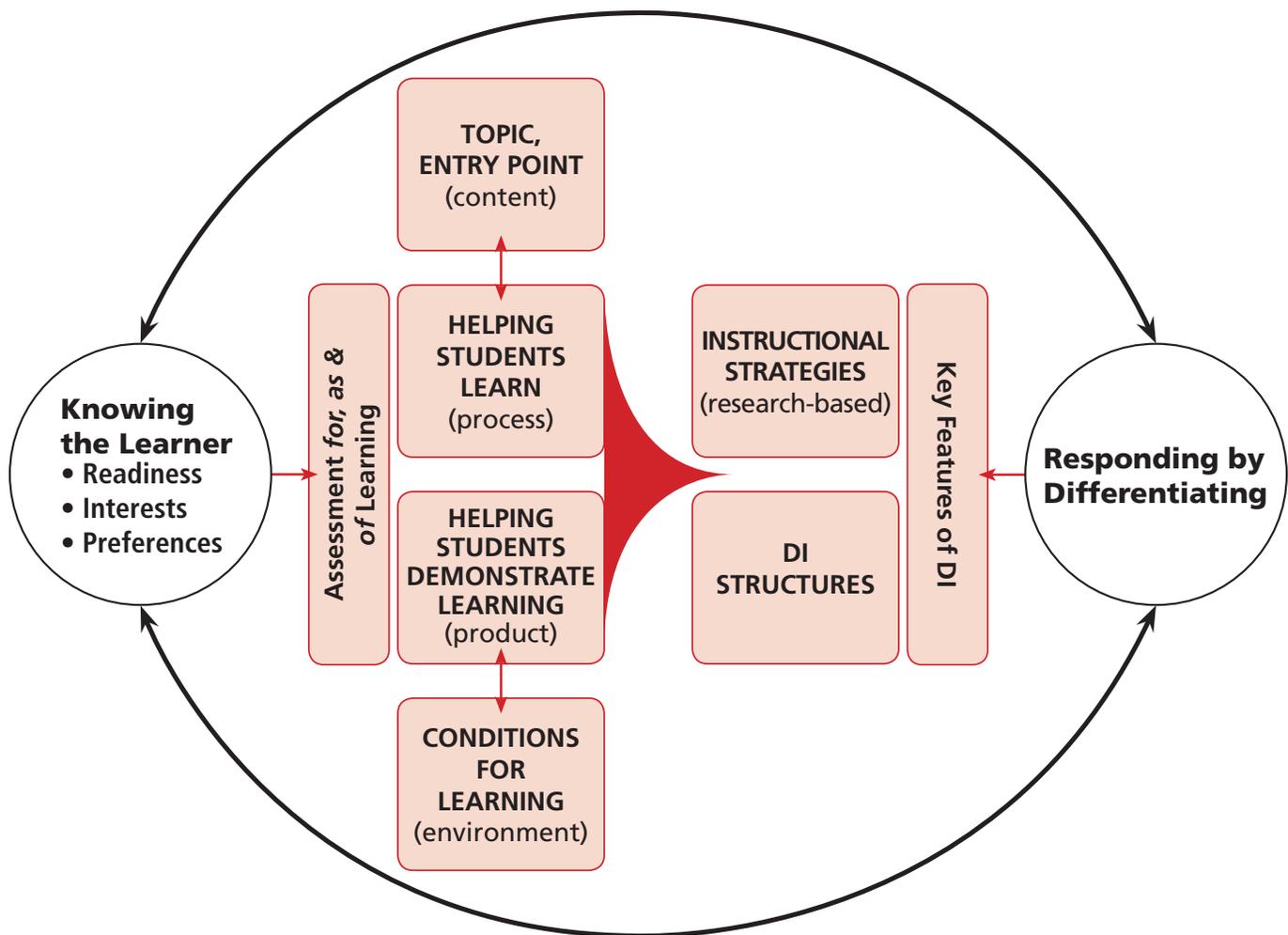


**See Reference Cards:
Principles of Differentiated Instruction**



DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teachers consider many aspects of instruction as they move from knowing the learner to responding by differentiating. The Differentiated Instruction Framework for Teaching and Learning captures the variety of elements, including strategies and structures, that constitute a differentiated approach to instruction, assessment and evaluation.



Differentiated instruction is effective instruction that is responsive to the learning preferences, interests and readiness of individual learners. Differentiated instruction is best thought of as an organizing structure or framework for thinking about teaching and learning.



**See Reference Cards:
Differentiated Framework for Teaching and Learning**

DEFINITION OF DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION



Differentiated instruction is...

... effective instruction that is responsive to the learning preferences, interests and readiness of the individual learner.

... best thought of as an organizing structure or framework for thinking about teaching and learning (see page 2).

... not individualized instruction; it is responding to varying student needs by providing a balance of modelled, shared, guided, and independent instructional strategies.

When we respond to student needs, we differentiate, to some extent, some of the time. For optimal success, we need to be aware of the decisions that we make and take deliberate action to meet the needs of all learners. Ultimately, our aim is to shape the learning experience so that it is appropriate to the learning preferences, interests and/or readiness of each student.

“Differentiation is an organized yet flexible way of proactively adjusting teaching and learning to meet kids where they are and help them to achieve maximum growth as learners.”

Carol Ann Tomlinson, 1999



DEFINITION OF DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

DI means...	DI does not mean...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible, short-term groupings that allow students to work with a variety of peers with the same or different strengths and interests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labelling students or grouping by ability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging and interesting tasks (that address the same skills) for all learning preferences, interests and levels of readiness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confining some students to low level, repetitive or rote tasks while others engage in higher-order thinking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A reasonable number of well-constructed choices that address identified needs/ strengths of students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unlimited freedom for a student to choose whatever they would like to do on any day
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students working on the same curriculum expectations in various ways with common criteria for success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different students working on different expectations with varying success criteria (e.g., different rubrics)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students learning about themselves to help them make effective and informed choices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers assuming the responsibility for making all decisions regarding student choice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Routines, procedures, and classroom agreements are in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A chaotic or unstructured classroom environment

“When teachers recognize diversity in their students, in terms of how and what they identify with and how they learn, and when this recognition is reflected in how teachers teach, students are free to discover new and creative ways to solve problems, achieve success, and become lifelong learners.”

(Ferguson et al., 2005)

WHY DIFFERENTIATE?



...To help all students learn

...We differentiate our instruction because doing so allows us as teachers to grow in our ability to “read our students” and then to adapt our practice so we effectively teach all students.

...To increase student motivation and achievement

...We differentiate our instruction because when our students receive the appropriate levels of challenge and support, they are engaged, motivated and their achievement improves.

...To connect with adolescent learners

...We differentiate our instruction because doing so allows us to forge strong connections between our subject and our students, and that improves student learning.

...To help adolescents become independent learners

...We differentiate our instruction because when students find out about themselves as learners, they become more independent, and when they work as responsible members of a community, respecting and affirming the diversity of others, discipline problems decrease.

...To increase teacher satisfaction and efficacy

...We differentiate our instruction because some of the enthusiasm and pleasure we feel in teaching is renewed when we are working creatively and efficiently.



THE DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION CONTINUUM— EXAMINING YOUR PRACTICE

The first step in differentiating instruction is to examine current practice. The chart below describes effective teaching that ranges from whole class instruction to sustaining a differentiated instruction culture in the classroom. Consider where you are now and the steps you could take to increase your effectiveness and your responsiveness to learners' needs.

Little differentiation ————— Much differentiation

A Differentiated Instruction Implementation Continuum			
Same for All Students			
	Teachers	Students	Examples
Developing Instructional Routines and Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design instruction, assessment, evaluation, and the learning environment for the class as a whole based on curriculum expectations and my own strengths and preferences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn and demonstrate their learning in the same way all or most of the time 	Anticipation guide, exit card, graphic organizers, supplementary materials
Expanding Instructional Routines and Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design instruction, assessment, evaluation, and the learning environment based on curriculum expectations and a general sense of the learning needs of the class. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience, over time, a variety of ways to learn and/or ways to demonstrate their learning. 	Activities for all that address different learning styles or intelligences on different days Multiple entry points for all over time Varied supplementary materials
Different Options for Different Students			
Developing the Routines, Habits and Skills for Differentiated Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design instruction, assessment, evaluation, and the learning environment based on curriculum expectations and a general sense of the learning needs of the class. Try to design a variety of options for students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a choice of ways to learn and/or ways to demonstrate their learning on an ongoing basis. 	Differentiation structures that offer choice (e.g., Learning Centres, Choice Boards, RAFTs*) Choice of supplementary materials <i>* Role, Audience, Format, Topic</i>
Sustaining a Differentiated Instruction Culture in the Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design instruction, assessment, evaluation, and the learning environment based on curriculum expectations and on the specific learning needs of the students in the class. Try to ensure that the learning experiences provided are a "good fit" for each student. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are routinely provided with, or choose when appropriate, ways to learn and/or ways to demonstrate their learning that are designed for their particular learning needs. 	Differentiation structures such as RAFT* and tiered assignments designed in response to student needs Student choice of supplementary materials based on their strengths and needs <i>* Role, Audience, Format, Topic</i>

THE DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION COMMITMENT

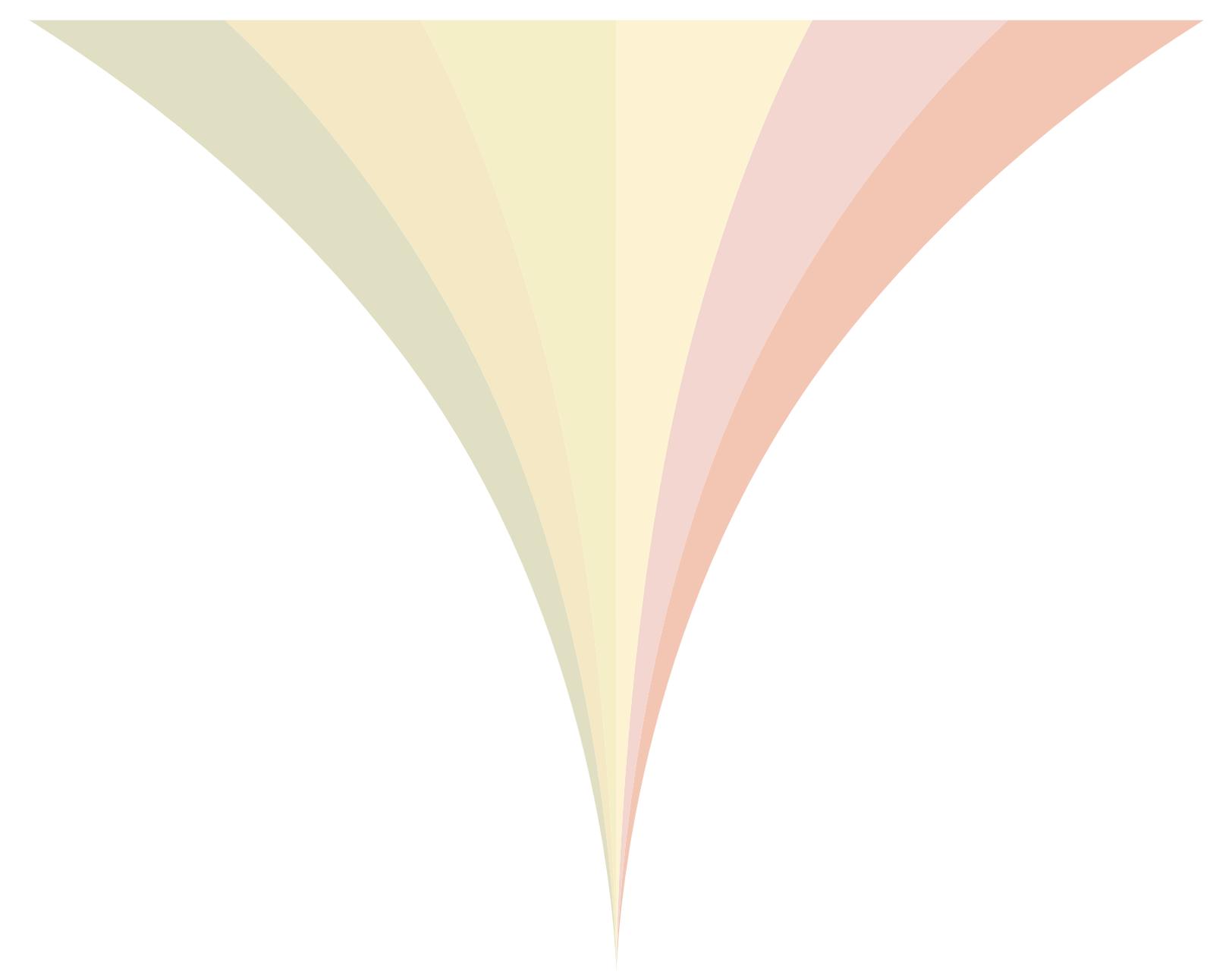


A commitment to implementing differentiated instruction is a pledge to engage in the achievement of students, professional development and a collaborative process that ensures learning and success for all. Committing to differentiated instruction involves:

- Using assessment to gather information about students' readiness, interests and learning preferences
- Using this information to differentiate the learning environment, instruction, and assessment and evaluation
- Selecting from a varied repertoire of strategies to meet the particular needs of students

“When I am able to have a choice in how to learn, I know that I am going to do better....”

DI Project School Student





Knowing the **Learner**

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1. Knowing the Learner

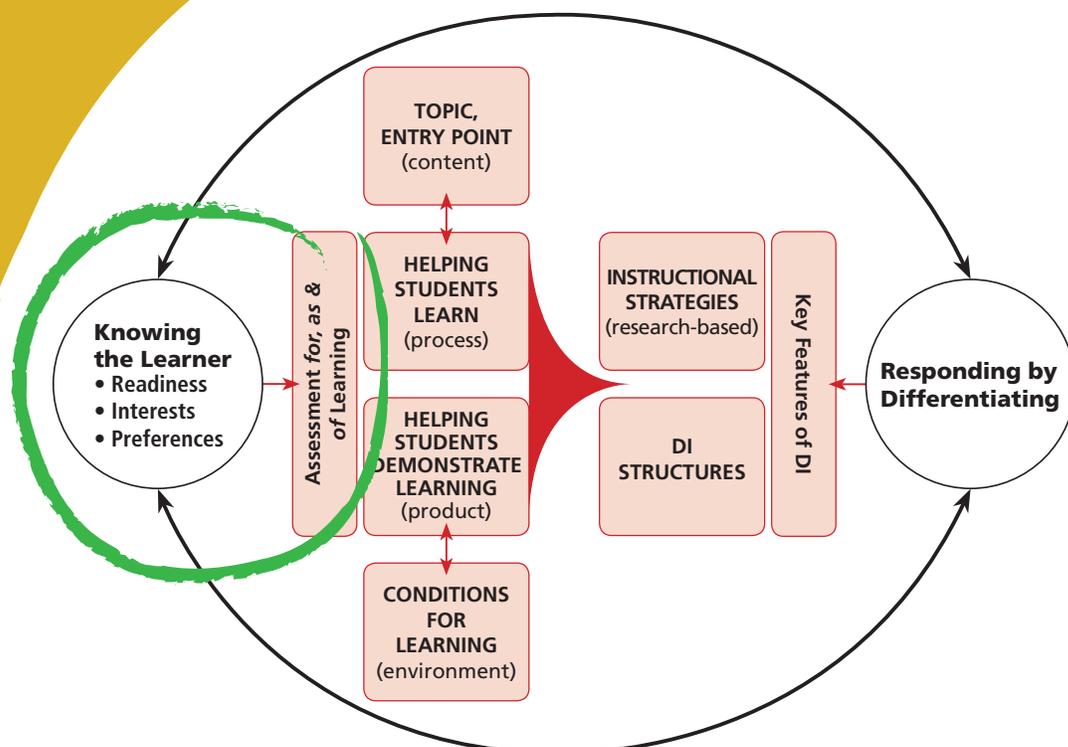
- Student Readiness
- Student Interests
- Student Learning Preferences
 - Learning Style Preferences
 - Intelligence Preferences
 - Environmental Preferences
 - Other Learning Preferences
- Learning Preference Inventories

2. Assessing to Inform Differentiated Instruction

- Assessment *for* Learning
- Assessment *as* Learning

3. Developing Learner Profiles

- Class Profiles
- Student Profiles



KNOWING THE LEARNER



When we find out who our students are, we can support them in their learning.

Differentiated instruction involves using assessment to gather information about student:

- Readiness
- Interests
- Learning preferences

Differentiated instruction is teaching with student differences in mind. It requires us to have an understanding of our students as learners so that we can purposefully plan instruction, assessment and evaluation to best meet their diverse needs.

When students and teachers work together to find out about readiness, learning preferences and interests, students come to know themselves better. Students who have a clearer understanding of themselves are prepared to make more informed choices when differentiated options are available.

“... it is paramount to be able to discover where students are at in terms of their understanding of the subject material ... in order to be able to tier assignments.”

Teacher—Student Success Differentiated Instruction
in Action Survey (2008–09)



Student Readiness

Knowledge of a student's readiness to learn a particular concept is critical when preparing to differentiate instruction. For example, some students may be ready to work with complex fractions; others may require more practice with simple fractions before moving on. Readiness is different from ability and much more helpful to our work. If we have some prior knowledge, a point of connection, or even a positive feeling about the new material, our potential to learn is enhanced. Readiness varies for each of us whenever we are learning something new.

When we know a student's readiness for a particular concept, we can introduce and work with that concept according to student need. When we differentiate tasks according to a student's readiness, we are creating tasks that are a closer match to the student's skill level and understanding of the topic than we would be if we assume that all students come to a new concept with the same background knowledge.

To determine students' readiness for a concept, we assess for learning (i.e., diagnostic and formative assessment). We might administer a quick pre-assessment to determine what our students understand about the topic or we may observe students as they brainstorm or complete a carousel activity. Other options include examining student work such as prior assignments, anticipation guides or concept maps. We may use exit cards (e.g., an index card or sticky note) to simply ask students what they know and can do or to provide a response to an assessment question.

"The primary benefit that we've seen in our classrooms through the readiness activities, is that the students are able to self-assess... the students are engaged in their learning and on a day-to-day basis they come to class and are excited."

DI Project School Teacher

KNOWING THE LEARNER— STUDENT READINESS



We can use the results of assessment to create short-term flexible learning groups that allow each student to develop new understandings about the topic from his or her point of readiness. When differentiating by readiness, it is important to ensure that all tasks are interesting, engaging and respectful of all learners.

Some ways we can differentiate based on readiness include varying the:

- Pace
- Level of complexity
- Degree of independence
- Amount of structure provided

We may also choose to have some students start at a different entry point (e.g., reviewing for some and extending learning for others).

“We know that learning happens best when a learning experience pushes the learner a bit beyond his or her independence level.”

L.S. Vygotsky, *Mind in Society*, 1978

“Administering a variety of assessments before learning unveils the student’s prior knowledge and experiences...to determine the individual’s readiness level and to identify the appropriate entry point for instruction.”

Chapman and King, 2005



KNOWING THE LEARNER— STUDENT INTERESTS

Student Interests

A second piece of information that helps us in our teaching is knowledge of our students' interests so that we can plan for engaging and meaningful learning opportunities. Attending to students' interests ignites their motivation to learn. Meaningful learning happens when new ideas are personally relevant, and relevance occurs when new information links to something the student already knows.

Student interests are relatively easy to determine. Questions asked before a new unit of study allow us to group students according to aspects of the unit that are of particular interest, and beginning of year or semester interest questionnaires will help us guide students when they are selecting material for personal and project-based investigations.

Other ways to find out about the interests of students include surveys, exit cards, partner introductions, asking questions, and asking students to connect their interests with topics of study. Some examples of differentiating by interest include providing a choice of topic, novel, or context for application (e.g., problem-solving in sports, design, or construction).

When teachers consider the interests of their students and provide relevant connections to the learning, students feel that their diversity is recognized and valued.



See Differentiated Instruction Scrapbook: Knowing the Learner—Student Interests

“Attention to students’ interests enhances the relevance of learning by linking new information to students’ experience and enthusiasm.”

DI Project School Teacher

KNOWING THE LEARNER— STUDENT INTERESTS



“Our schools should be places where students not only learn about diversity but experience it. We know when students see themselves reflected in their studies, they are more likely to stay engaged and find school relevant.”

Ministry of Education, *Realizing the Promise of Diversity, Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy*, 2009 (p.15)

“There is absolutely no need to teach a concept in eight or nine different ways. At the same time, it is equally unreasonable to expect that all students will learn all concepts through the two intelligences that dominate our educational system, namely verbal-linguistic and logical-mathematical.”

Student Success Differentiated Instruction Teacher's Guide,
Grades 7 & 8 (2007)



KNOWING THE LEARNER— STUDENT LEARNING PREFERENCES

STUDENT LEARNING PREFERENCES

Learning preferences refer to tendencies towards particular ways of processing what is to be learned. They include learning styles as well as intelligence and environmental preferences. This knowledge of our learners gives us the information we need to provide individual students with experiences that are ideally suited to their learning preferences.

When students have opportunities to think and talk about the ways they learn best, they become aware of their strengths and are better able to assume responsibility for learning.

Learning style preferences describes how we prefer to acquire, process, and remember new information. We often think of learning style preferences according to the senses – we may be predominantly visual, auditory or kinesthetic learners, we may choose different styles for different tasks, or we may opt to use a combination of styles.

As teachers, we need to think about how we present information and learning opportunities for our students. Try sorting a couple of days of activities into whether they were predominantly visual, auditory, kinesthetic, or a combination of styles. If there is one style that is receiving less emphasis than others, experiment with adding some whole-class activities in the missing style.

Intelligence preferences are based on the multiple intelligences work of Howard Gardner and the triarchic intelligences work of Robert Sternberg (2001). While learning styles are how we like to work with information, intelligences are what Gardner calls the formats in which our mind thinks. (For further information on intelligence preferences, see *Differentiated Instruction Scrapbook—Knowing the Learner*.)

Environmental preferences involve the conditions in which students learn best. Some students prefer silence when working; others prefer sound. Some prefer a structured, brightly lit environment; some prefer a casual corner with subdued lighting.

Other learning preferences: Preferences may also be influenced by gender or culture. However, as much as there may be patterns that emerge within particular groups, there is always great variance as well. For this reason it is important to develop an understanding of the students that we teach so that we can create a classroom flexible enough for them to work in ways in which they are most productive.

LEARNING PREFERENCES INVENTORIES

A number of inventories are available by simply typing “free learning style inventories” or “free multiple intelligences inventories” into a search engine. However, talking with students and observing their responses as we provide different whole-class activities also gives us accurate and useful information.



See *Differentiated Instruction Scrapbook: Knowing the Learner—Learning Preferences and Learning Preferences Inventories and Surveys*

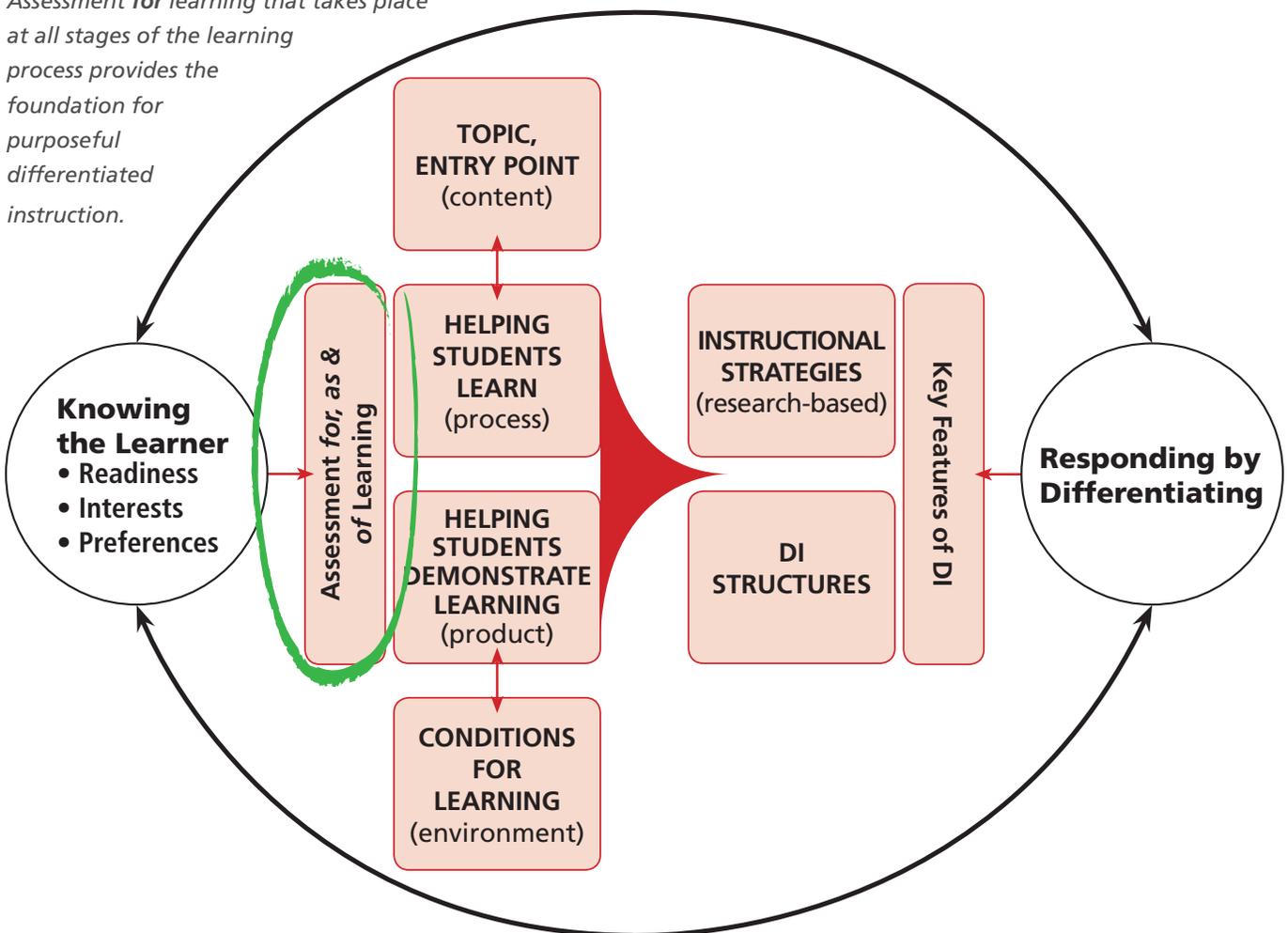


ASSESSING TO INFORM DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

Differentiated instruction depends on the ongoing use of assessment to gather information about student readiness, interests and learning preferences. Teachers use this information to differentiate the learning environment, their instruction and their assessment and evaluation.

If teachers have accurate, timely and reliable information about what their students know and are able to do, and about optimal conditions that will foster and support their learning, then teachers can adjust the instructional process to help students learn effectively.

Assessment for learning that takes place at all stages of the learning process provides the foundation for purposeful differentiated instruction.





ASSESSING TO INFORM DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

Assessment for Learning

Assessment **for** Learning is designed to give teachers information to adapt and differentiate teaching and learning activities. It acknowledges that individual students learn in unique ways, but it also recognizes that there are predictable patterns and pathways that many students follow. It requires careful design on the part of teachers so that they use the resulting information to determine what students know as well as how, when, or whether students apply what they know.

Teachers use this information to streamline and target instruction and resources and to provide feedback to students to help them advance their learning. Assessment for Learning occurs before and during learning.

“The Exit Cards were of benefit because I used them to change my lesson plan for the next day, to gear it towards problems the students were having and the questions they were asking on the cards. The students could voice their opinion and ask questions without feeling singled out.”

DI Project School Teacher

Assessment **before** instruction (diagnostic assessment) provides teachers with information about students' readiness to learn new knowledge and skills and about their interests and attitudes. This information establishes the starting point for the new learning and helps teachers to plan differentiated learning tasks and assessments that meet students' needs, interests and learning preferences. Teachers and students use this information to set appropriate learning goals

Examples:

- Students complete a mind map or exit card to demonstrate their prior learning for a particular concept.
- Groups create a graffiti board of various concepts related to a topic or of ways to solve a particular mathematics or physics problem.

ASSESSING TO INFORM DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION



Assessment **during** instruction (formative assessment) is intended to give teachers and students precise and timely information so teachers can adjust instruction in response to individual student needs and students can adjust their learning strategies or set different goals. This use of assessment differs from assessment **of** learning in that the information gathered is used for the specific purpose of helping students improve while they are still gaining knowledge and practising skills. The emphasis is on feedback and suggestions for improving. Teachers who view assessment as integral to learning engage students as collaborative partners in the learning process.

Example: Think-Pair-Share, group demonstrations

Examples:

- *Students summarize their learning in a Think, Write, or Sketch-Pair-Share. As pairs share, the teacher clarifies and provides feedback as needed.*
- *Groups of students complete a task (e.g., presentation, demonstration, or illustration) and share with the class for feedback and clarification.*

Assessment as Learning

Assessment **as** Learning is a process of developing and supporting metacognition (i.e., thinking about our thinking). Assessment **as** learning focuses on the role of the student as the critical connector between assessment and learning. It occurs when students monitor their own learning and use the feedback from this monitoring to adjust, adapt, or change what they understand.

Teachers help students develop, practise and become comfortable with critically analyzing their own work and with reflection. When students are taught how to self-assess and provided with opportunities for self-assessment, they learn to articulate and advocate for the conditions that support their learning.

Examples:

- *Students use a written log or a mini-voice recorder to reflect on their work.*
- *Students use a checklist to self-assess their work, based on previously established criteria.*



DEVELOPING LEARNER PROFILES

Two tools designed to facilitate planning for differentiated instruction are the class profile and the individual student profile. Class and student profiles are ways to organize the ongoing collection of information about your students. Profiles are “living documents” in that they are both a reference tool for planning as well as a tracking tool to monitor progress, record additional information and plan subsequent instruction. Profiles can be updated as the school year, semester, or term progresses.

Class Profiles

A class profile provides the teacher with a snapshot of the strengths, needs, interests and/or readiness of the students in the class. It is a resource for planning that conveys a great deal of critical information at a glance.

Examples:

- *Class profiles can capture a single aspect (e.g., multiple intelligences) or a range of achievement data and characteristics.*

Class Profile 1: Learning Preferences

Student	Learning Preferences		
	Learning Style	Multiple Intelligences	Environmental
A	visual, kinesthetic	visual-spatial, logical-mathematical	works best in small groups
B	visual, kinesthetic	verbal-linguistic, interpersonal	works best individually or in pairs
C	visual	logical-mathematical, intrapersonal	works best individually
D			
E			

DEVELOPING LEARNER PROFILES



Class Profile 2: Markbook or Spreadsheet Highlighting Mark Distribution

	UNIT: Mark Distribution—Highlighted for Trends (majority are level 1 and 2)		
Student	Task 1 Test	Task 2 Project / Demonstration	Task 3 Report / Presentation
A	55	65	50
B	75	70	68
C	95	90	90
D	40	40	55
E	60	58	55
F	68	65	60

Below Level 1
 Level 1
 Level 2
 Level 3
 Level 4

Class Profile 3: Secondary Sample Class Profile

Student	Learning Profile	Strengths/ Areas of Need	Instructional/ Assessment Strategies and Resources; Accommodations	Evidence of Improved Learning	Adjustments in Instruction/ Other Intervention, if Needed	Available Supports and Resources	Other Relevant Information
A							
B							

(Adapted from *Learning for All, K–12* (draft), June 2009, p. 31, Ontario Ministry of Education)



DEVELOPING LEARNER PROFILES

Student Profiles

An individual student profile is a tool for compiling information that provides a comprehensive and precise picture of an individual student's strengths and needs, as well as of the assessment and instruction that best suit the student's learning preferences, interests and readiness. A profile may include items such as report card information, EQAO results, learning style inventories, reading level assessments, and credit summary.

Student profiles are commonly used for students as they make the transition from Grade 8 to Grade 9.

Student Profile: Sample Grade 8 to 9 Transition Student Profile

Grade 8 to Grade 9 Transition				
Student:	D.O.B.:	Elementary School:	Secondary School:	
Transition Planning Team:		Date:		
STUDENT'S STRENGTHS	STUDENT'S CHALLENGES	INTERVENTIONS TO DATE	Suggested Future Interventions (school)	Suggested Future Interventions (classroom)
<input type="checkbox"/> Attendance/Punctuality	<input type="checkbox"/> Attendance/Punctuality	<input type="checkbox"/> Attendance counsellor	<input type="checkbox"/> Attendance counsellor	<input type="checkbox"/> Class seating
<input type="checkbox"/> Submitting assignments	<input type="checkbox"/> Submitting assignments	<input type="checkbox"/> Remedial support	<input type="checkbox"/> Student Success Team	<input type="checkbox"/> Clear expectations
<input type="checkbox"/> Learning skills and work habits	<input type="checkbox"/> Learning skills and work habits	<input type="checkbox"/> Peer mentor	<input type="checkbox"/> Peer mentor	<input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring of homework
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(Adapted from *Grade 8 to 9 Transitions, Resource Materials and Working Documents for Student Success Board Teams*, Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006)

Samples of student profiles are available in:

- *Grade 8 to 9 Transitions, Resource Materials and Working Documents for Student Success Board Teams*, Ministry of Education, 2006
- *Learning For All, K–12* (draft). Ontario Ministry of Education, June 2009 (comprehensive student profile)

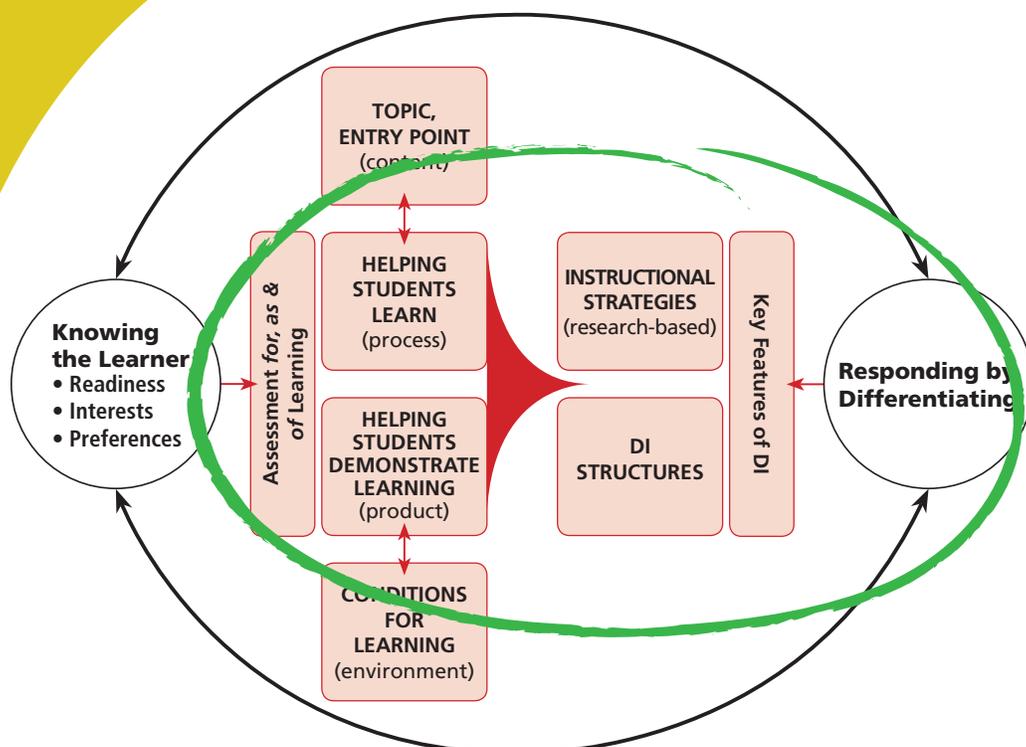
Note: A student profile template may have been previously developed at your school or in your board for teacher use and adaptation.



Responding by **Differentiating**

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5. Getting Started
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 - One Step at a Time
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 - Creating an Environment to Support Differentiated Instruction
 - Providing Choice
 - Making the Most of Planning Time



RESPONDING BY DIFFERENTIATING



The What and How of Differentiated Instruction

When we know the learner's strengths and needs (readiness, interests and learner preferences), we can respond by differentiating:

What students learn about and where they begin learning (e.g., topic, entry point)	CONTENT
The ways we help students learn—through instruction and assessment (e.g., researching a topic at a learning centre, participating in a jigsaw, identifying similarities and differences)	PROCESS
The ways students demonstrate their learning—through assessment and evaluation (e.g., creating a product from a choice board, oral or written presentation)	PRODUCT
Conditions for learning (e.g., quiet or busy, alone or with others)	LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Responding by Differentiating involves:

Using appropriate, evidence-based strategies for instruction, assessment and evaluation;

Using structures or ways of organizing that facilitate student learning; and

Providing choice, respectful tasks, a shared responsibility for learning and flexible learning groups (key features of differentiated instruction).



**See Reference Cards:
Principles of Differentiated Instruction**

PLANNING FOR DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION



Core Questions

The following questions guide our decision-making as we plan instruction to meet the learning needs of our students.

The Learning Environment

- How can I set up the classroom for differentiated instruction?
- What elements of the learning environment can I differentiate to help all of my students learn?

Instruction and Assessment

- How can I differentiate the ways that I help students learn new concepts?
- How can I differentiate the ways I assess student progress towards their learning goals?

Evaluation

- How can I differentiate the ways that students demonstrate what they understand and can do?

The questions serve to focus our thinking as we plan a differentiated approach—for a single instructional activity, a lesson or an entire unit.

BEGINNING WITH THE END IN MIND



When we plan for teaching and learning, whether we are planning for differentiation or not, it is critical to ensure that the focus for instruction, assessment and evaluation is aligned with the knowledge and skills related to the curriculum expectations chosen for that particular lesson or unit.

Wiggins and McTighe, in *Understanding by Design*, provide a sequence of questions as part of their framework for designing instruction, assessment and evaluation:

- What do I want students to learn?
- How will I know they have learned it?
- How will I design instruction and assessment to help them learn?

This up-front planning of evaluation tasks is essential to the design of differentiated instruction and assessment. These evaluation tasks include:

1. Clear descriptions of “what it looks like when students demonstrate the intended learning”, as well as,
2. Criteria that help us judge how well students demonstrate this learning.

Although demonstrations of learning may differ from student to student in a differentiated classroom (e.g., one student may demonstrate understanding of a concept through an oral presentation; another through a written summary), the curriculum expectations on which they are based and the criteria on which the demonstrations are judged are the same.

“Beginning with the end in mind” guides the overall design of instruction, assessment and evaluation for a unit or lesson.

“Students’ keeness to have choice and options is very helpful and motivational. Ultimately we collectively come up with a more enriched assignment/performance task for the student.”

Teacher—Student Success Differentiated Instruction
in Action Survey (2008–09)



DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION UNIT PLANNER

What helps us differentiate instruction, assessment and evaluation is the knowledge we have acquired about our students' learning preferences, interests and readiness to learn new concepts.

"We believe that it is our students who are the starting point for lesson planning, not the course content or textbook. We try to live that belief by getting to know our students, their learning needs and preferences, and then responding to that knowledge through the opportunities we provide."

DI Project School Teacher

The differentiated instruction unit planner is a template that guides teachers through the process of beginning with the end in mind to design differentiated instruction based on selected curriculum expectations and a knowledge of their students.

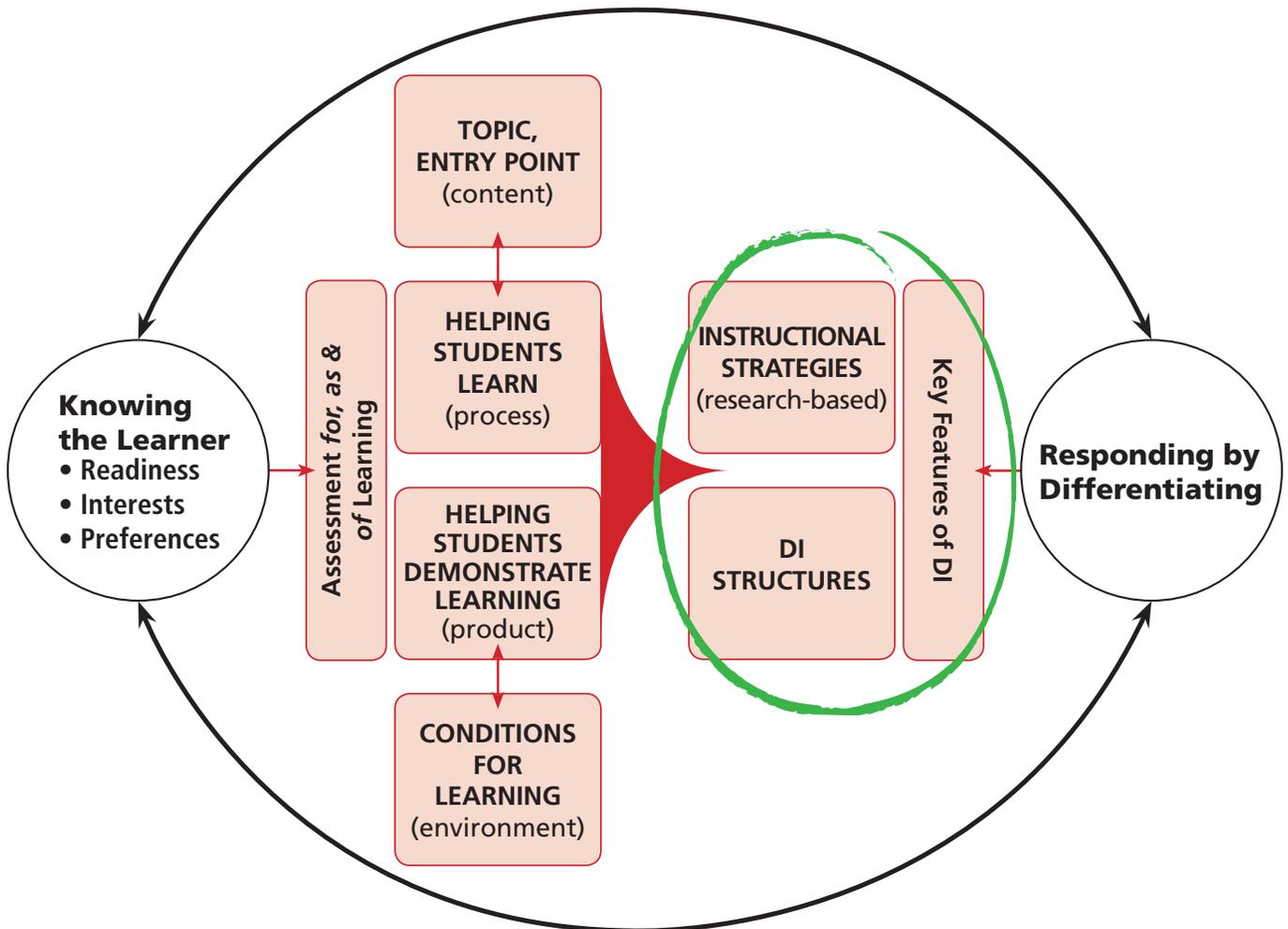
Differentiated Instruction Unit Planner		HOW WILL WE DESIGN INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT TO HELP STUDENTS LEARN?	
Subject/Course Code/Title/Curriculum Policy: Duration: Number of X-minute periods		DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION DETAILS Knowledge of Students Differentiation based on student: <input type="checkbox"/> Readiness <input type="checkbox"/> Interests <input type="checkbox"/> Preferences: <input type="checkbox"/> Styles <input type="checkbox"/> Intelligences <input type="checkbox"/> Other (e.g., environment, gender, culture)	
WHAT DO WE WANT STUDENTS TO LEARN? Overall Expectation(s)/Specific Expectation(s): <i>Students will:</i>		Need to know: • Students' ... How to Find Out • ... • ...	
PRIOR LEARNING Prior to this lesson, students will have: •		Differentiated Instruction Response <input type="checkbox"/> What to learn: Topic, entry point (content) <input type="checkbox"/> Ways of learning (process) <input type="checkbox"/> Ways of demonstrating learning (product) <input type="checkbox"/> Learning environment	
HOW WILL WE KNOW STUDENTS HAVE LEARNED IT?		POSSIBLE LEARNING EXPERIENCES: Whole Class or Groups: ➔ Learning Experience—Strategy and/or Structure	
Assessment/Success Criteria <i>Achievement Chart Category</i> • ... criterion • ... criterion	Assessment Tool(s) (i.e., checklist, rubric, rating scale, anecdotal comments, marking scheme)	NOTE: THE DI THREE-PART LESSON PLANNER MAY BE USED HERE TO OUTLINE INDIVIDUAL LESSONS.	
Evaluation: Culminating Task(s)		Materials and Resources—Teacher	Materials and Resources—Student



**See Differentiated Instruction Scrapbook:
Differentiated Instruction Unit Planner**



Instructional strategies such as questioning, anticipation guides, graphic organizers, jigsaws, and simulations serve a variety of functions in the teaching and learning process. They can be used to introduce, assess and consolidate learning and to gather evidence to evaluate learning. Instructional strategies can be used the same way for all students or they can be used in a differentiated way so that students have options (e.g., think-pair-share orally or think-pair-write).





RESEARCH-BASED INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Research-based Instructional Strategies

Robert Marzano reviewed 35 years' worth of educational research studies using a statistical technique called meta-analysis, which allowed him to combine the results of a number of studies and determine the impact of specific instructional strategies (Marzano, 2003). What he and his colleagues found were nine categories of instructional strategies with a significant, positive and demonstrable impact on student achievement.

Think about your own instructional practice. You probably have some favourite strategies that you use more regularly than others (because they work!) such as think-pair-share, mind maps, jigsaw or Venn diagrams. Examine Marzano's nine categories of instructional strategies below, then see if you can find a category for some of your favourite strategies.

Marzano's review of the research also noted that for instructional strategies to have a positive, visible impact on student achievement, it was necessary to provide students with ongoing explicit instruction in the strategy.

In a differentiated classroom, one can provide instruction in a strategy for the whole class and then provide students additional experiences with the strategy in their flexible learning groups.



See Differentiated Instruction Scrapbook:

- **Students, Structures and Strategies**
- **Instructional Strategies Cards**



See Reference Cards:

- **Students, Structures and Strategies**



Categories of Instructional Strategies that Impact Student Achievement

	Category of Instructional Strategies	Sample Strategies
1	Identifying similarities and differences	Venn diagram, metaphors
2	Summarizing and notetaking	Reciprocal teaching, outlines, webs
3	Reinforcing effort and providing recognition	Goal-setting with teacher and peer feedback
4	Homework and practice	Application of learning (e.g., in simulations, problem-solving)
5	Nonlinguistic representations	Graphic organizers (e.g., concept maps, pictures, physical or kinesthetic models, for example role play)
6	Cooperative learning	Think-pair-share, jigsaw, three-step interview
7	Setting objectives and providing feedback	Rubrics or checklists with clear learning goals and previously established assessment criteria
8	Generating and testing hypotheses	Inquiry processes (e.g., labs, problem solving, decision-making)
9	Questions, cues and advance organizers	Anticipation guides, exit cards, teaching vocabulary, thinking routines

(Adapted from Marzano, Pickering and Pollock 2001:7)



WAYS OF ORGANIZING FOR DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION STRUCTURES

While there are no approaches or processes that belong to differentiated instruction exclusively, there are a number that work especially well when differentiating. The DI structures outlined below allow teachers to easily vary the complexity or the form of the task for different learners. It is important that students and parents understand that all tasks are designed to address the same learning goals.

Some of the more common differentiation structures include:



CHOICE BOARDS—A choice board is a common differentiation structure used to provide students with choice. It is sometimes called a Tic-Tac-Toe assignment because of its design.

Choice Boards can be used to help students learn (i.e., instruction and assessment) or as a way for students to demonstrate their learning (i.e., evaluation). When designing a choice board and any other differentiated instruction structure, all choices must address the same learning goal and may be based on interest (e.g., sports, music, art) or learning preferences (e.g., learning styles or multiple intelligences). Each choice is assessed or evaluated against the same assessment criteria.



CUBING—Students roll a cube and do the activity on the side that comes up. We can differentiate a cube according to any of student readiness, learning preference, or interest.

So that the cubing is truly differentiated, it is important to provide some opportunities for choice with each roll such as two or more options per side, or the choice of consulting the group or a partner prior to responding.

Cubes can be designed for specific activities such as perspectives on a novel or different aspects of a history unit. Different cubes can be given to different groups and the activities varied to support readiness or learning preference. We can make cubes and write the activities on the sides, or we can simply use a standard die accompanied by a set of index cards with the matching numbers and activities recorded on the cards.



LEARNING CENTRES OR STATIONS—Centres provide different activities at various places in the classroom or school. Learning centres are not a differentiated structure if all students go to all centres and everyone does the same thing at a centre. In order to be differentiated, learning centres either need to be attended only by students who need or are interested in the work that is at the centres, or the work at the centre needs to be varied according to student readiness, interest or learning preference.

WAYS OF ORGANIZING FOR DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION STRUCTURES



LEARNING CONTRACTS—Teacher and student make a written agreement about a task to be completed. The agreement includes the learning goals and criteria for evaluation in student-friendly language, the format of the work, how it will be assessed, and organizational details such as the deadline and check in points.



RAFT—A RAFT is an acronym for Role, Audience, Format, Topic. These headings are written across the top of a grid and a number of options are created. Students choose an option or the teacher selects it for them. Students read across the columns to learn the role they are going to assume, the audience they will address, the format in which they will do the work, and the topic they are going to explore. For example, a student might assume the role of a historical figure addressing an audience of a particular era. The student might develop a speech or an essay on a topic relevant to that point in history.

RAFTs can be created to address student interests (especially in the “topic” and “role” columns), student learning preferences (in the “format” column) and various readiness by altering the difficulty of some of the rows or creating separate RAFT assignments for different groups of learners.



TIERING—When we tier an assignment, we are creating more than one version of a task so that we can respond to students’ varied levels of readiness. To create a tiered assignment, choose or create an activity that is what you would normally provide for your grade level, then create additional versions of that activity to meet the readiness needs you identified through pre-assessment. Remember that all tasks need to be respectful—engaging, interesting and challenging for all learners.



See Differentiated Instruction Scrapbook:

- **Students, Structures and Strategies**
- **Differentiated Instruction Structures Cards**



See Reference Cards:

- **Students, Structures and Strategies**



KEY FEATURES OF DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

Key Features

1. Flexible Learning Groups

Provide students with opportunities to work in a variety of groups that vary over time based on student readiness, interests and learning preferences

2. Choice

Provides students with personalized opportunities to connect with their prior knowledge, interests and learning preferences, allowing for a sense of ownership, self-motivation and a commitment to their own learning

3. Respectful Tasks

Are equally engaging, promote high expectations and optimal achievement for all students and are assessed using the same assessment criteria

4. Shared Responsibility for Learning

Develops when students are supported in developing the knowledge and skills required for them to self-assess and learn independently

1. Flexible Learning Groups

In a differentiated classroom, students are grouped and regrouped, frequently and flexibly based on their:

- Readiness to learn a concept
- Interest in a concept
- Learning preferences in working with or thinking about a concept; or
- Environmental or social sensitivities

Flexible, short-term groups are sometimes determined by the teacher, sometimes by the students, and sometimes they are random, all depending on the purpose for grouping. When students learn in a variety of short-term groupings, they become comfortable working with all members of the class and a supportive community develops.

KEY FEATURES OF DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION



2. Choice

We give students choice in their learning because choice, as brain researchers confirm, is a great motivator. We cannot know all that students bring to our classrooms, so choice provides students with personalized opportunities to connect with their prior knowledge, interests and learning preferences. When students, particularly adolescents, have some choice, they feel a sense of ownership for and commitment to their learning that is not possible when it is being directed by us.

Choice-based differentiation needs to be carefully constructed so that all choices address the same curriculum expectations (with the exception of students on an Individual Education Plan (IEP) whose task may focus on modified curriculum expectations), take approximately the same amount of time, and require all students to work at the edge of their current readiness. It is far more important to develop a few high-quality choices than to provide students with lots of choice. Too many choices are time consuming for to create, monitor and assess and can prove to be overwhelming and confusing for students.

3. Respectful Tasks

In a differentiated instruction classroom, all students focus on their learning goals and learn in ways that are motivating and challenging. Tasks are respectful when students are engaged in learning opportunities that are just as interesting and appealing as those of other students. Respectful tasks support risk-taking in students at a time when they may be reluctant to take chances in learning for fear of appearing foolish in front of their friends. Students are more likely to feel secure in beginning and persevering with a task when everyone in the class is working on something that they find personally demanding and challenging.

4. Shared Responsibility for Learning

As educators, we not only have a responsibility to help our students achieve curriculum expectations, we also need to support students in developing the knowledge and skills required for them to learn independently. Students who are aware of how they learn best and who know how they are progressing towards a particular learning goal can inform our next steps as teachers. In addition, they develop a sense of responsibility for their own learning and for the conditions that support their learning.

It makes sense, especially in a differentiated classroom that is based on responding to student learning needs, that we help our students develop the skills and habits they need to be their own best assessors—by presenting and modelling opportunities for students to assess themselves.



KEY FEATURES OF DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

Any assessment opportunity requires knowledge of the learning goal and a set of criteria to help gauge progress towards the goal. It is important that students be involved in the development of assessment criteria so that they understand what a “quality demonstration” looks like and so that they “own” the results.

Once the criteria are determined, a variety of strategies can be used to gather the assessment information from students such as exit cards, journals, checklists or simply listening to students share self-assessments after a think-pair-share.

The reflective learning skills and the knowledge of their own thought processes (i.e., metacognition) that students develop by self-assessing not only serves to inform our instruction but helps students clarify and advocate for their learning needs. A shared responsibility for learning is fostered and students become increasingly independent in their learning.



**See Differentiated Instruction Scrapbook:
Key Features of Differentiated Instruction**



**See Reference Cards:
Key Features of Differentiated Instruction Card**

THREE-PART LESSON DESIGN



Three-Part Lesson Design

The three-part lesson design template helps us:

- Plan with the end in mind
- Determine the elements of the lesson that will be differentiated
- Outline the strategies and structures that will focus the teaching and learning

Once the expectations and criteria for success have been determined, most frameworks for lesson planning converge on three main parts:

- An initial phase to focus and engage students by activating prior knowledge and experience (Minds On)
- A middle phase to introduce or extend learning (Action)
- A final phase to consolidate learning and provide opportunities for reflection (Consolidation and Connections)

The length of the lesson may vary from one to a few periods. Differentiated instruction can be built into any phase of the lesson.

The Differentiated Instruction Lesson Planner is a template to guide teachers through the process of beginning with the end in mind as they plan differentiated instruction based on their knowledge of students. The template is not intended to be restrictive or sequential but suggests the steps in the DI planning process.

Differentiated Instruction Lesson Planner		SUBJECT/COURSE CODE/TITLE/CURRICULUM POLICY DURATION: NUMBER OF X-MINUTE PERIODS
		1. (strategies* and structures**) 2. 3. 4.
<small>*Marzano's Categories of Instructional Strategies (See Resources, below.) **Differentiated Instruction Structure</small>		
DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION DETAILS		
Knowledge of Students Differentiation based on student: <input type="checkbox"/> Readiness <input type="checkbox"/> Interests <input type="checkbox"/> Preferences: <input type="checkbox"/> Styles <input type="checkbox"/> Intelligences <input type="checkbox"/> Other (e.g., environment, gender, culture)		
Need to know *Students: ...		
How to Find Out * ...		
Differentiated Instruction Response <input type="checkbox"/> Topic, Entry Point (content) <input type="checkbox"/> Ways of learning (process) <input type="checkbox"/> Learning environment <input type="checkbox"/> Ways of demonstrating learning (product)		
CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS		
Overall Expectation(s): * ...		
Specific Expectation(s): * ...		
Learning Goal(s):		
ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION		
Assessment/Success Criteria Achievement Chart Category * ... criterion etc.	Assessment Tool(s): (i.e., checklist, rubric, rating scale, anecdotal comments, marking scheme):	
PRIOR LEARNING		
Prior to this lesson, students will have: * ... * ... * ...		
MATERIALS AND RESOURCES		



See Differentiated Instruction Scrapbook:
Differentiated Instruction Lesson Planner



LESSON DESIGN

Consider each of the Core Questions when developing differentiated instruction lesson plans.

Core Questions

 How can I set up the classroom for differentiated instruction?

 What elements of the learning environment can I differentiate to help all of my students learn?

 How can I differentiate the ways that I help students learn new concepts?

 How can I differentiate the ways I assess student progress towards their learning goals?

 How can I differentiate the ways that students demonstrate what they understand and can do?

Sample Three-Part Lesson Design Framework

1. Minds On

- establish a positive learning environment
- connect to prior learning and/or experiences
- set the context for learning

2. Action

- introduce new learning
- provide opportunities for practice and application of learning

3. Consolidation and Connections

- provide opportunities for consolidation and reflection



Implementing Differentiated Instruction

One Step at a Time...

The first step in differentiating instruction is to start with examining your current practice. This means examining how well you are providing challenge and variety in learning, identifying who among your students is best served by the current plans, and modifying those plans as needed so that more students may be successful learners.

Begin planning your approach to differentiated instruction by referring to the Differentiated Instruction Implementation Continuum (Differentiated Instruction Scrapbook, p. 25). Consider where you are now and the steps you could take to increase your effectiveness and your responsiveness to learners' needs.

A Differentiated Instruction Implementation Continuum			
Same for All Students			
	Teachers	Students	Examples
Developing Instructional Routines and Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design instruction, assessment, evaluation, and the learning environment for the class as a whole based on curriculum expectations and my own strengths and preferences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn and demonstrate their learning in the same way all or most of the time 	Anticipation guide, exit card, graphic organizers, supplementary materials
Expanding Instructional Routines and Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design instruction, assessment, evaluation, and the learning environment based on curriculum expectations and a general sense of the learning needs of the class. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience, over time, a variety of ways to learn and/or ways to demonstrate their learning. 	Activities for all that address different learning styles or intelligences on different days Multiple entry points for all over time Varied supplementary materials
Different Options for Different Students			
Developing the Routines, Habits and Skills for Differentiated Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design instruction, assessment, evaluation, and the learning environment based on curriculum expectations and a general sense of the learning needs of the class. Try to design a variety of options for students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a choice of ways to learn and/or ways to demonstrate their learning on an ongoing basis. 	Differentiation structures that offer choice (e.g., Learning Centres, Choice Boards, RAFTs*) Choice of supplementary materials <i>* Role, Audience, Format, Topic</i>
Sustaining a Differentiated Instruction Culture in the Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design instruction, assessment, evaluation, and the learning environment based on curriculum expectations and on the specific learning needs of the students in the class. Try to ensure that the learning experiences provided are a "good fit" for each student. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are routinely provided with, or choose when appropriate, ways to learn and/or ways to demonstrate their learning that are designed for their particular learning needs. 	Differentiation structures such as RAFT* and tiered assignments designed in response to student needs Student choice of supplementary materials based on their strengths and needs <i>* Role, Audience, Format, Topic</i>

Little differentiation ————— Much differentiation



GETTING STARTED

Much differentiation — Little differentiation

Developing Instructional Routines and Skills

Identify your own learning preferences and those of your students by using inventories, observations in a variety of learning situations and discussion. Deliberately plan part of a lesson so that it appeals to a learning preference that you do not usually address.

Expanding Instructional Routines and Skills

Determine ways of learning that motivate your students the most. Over several days, provide the class with learning experiences that introduce them to different ways of learning and allow you to observe which opportunities work for which students. For example, using a multiple intelligences approach, engage students in learning that is primarily visual-spatial, follow up with opportunities that are kinesthetic and interpersonal, and then provide experiences that focus on logical-mathematical, intrapersonal and verbal-linguistic intelligences. This may be done using a centres approach in which all students have experiences at all centres over a period of several days.

Developing the Routines, Habits and Skills for Differentiated Instruction

Begin by providing a single alternative to a standard assignment, making sure that each alternative is equally respectful, takes roughly the same amount of time, and satisfies the same expectations. Later, provide a few alternatives/options, supporting students as necessary as they work at their choices. Create an assessment that will allow you to give meaningful feedback to the student regardless of the choice made, and the student to engage in meaningful assessment as learning.

Sustaining a Differentiated Instruction Culture in the Classroom

Routinely encourage student reflection and involve students in activities that require them to engage in assessment as learning. Talk with students about times they will want to use areas of strength. Challenge students to stretch beyond their comfort zone and experiment with other ways of learning when they are working on concepts that they understand. Along with your students, reflect on what helps to engage them and respond by refining your instructional approaches.

CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT TO SUPPORT DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION



Do I see:

- Thoughtful use of space so that desks and tables can be quickly and easily grouped in various configurations?
- Spaces where people can sometimes work alone if they prefer?
- Various resources—a classroom library, interesting objects and images that students have contributed and small group sets of a variety of texts?
- Spaces/shelves that are well-labelled for organization, flow of traffic and developing learner independence?
- Visible and clear instructions or directions for group or individual tasks?
- Appropriate use of technology, including assistive technology?

Is my classroom:

- Welcoming, inviting and engaging?
- A place where all learners have agreed upon ways of working and learning together?
- A place where all learners know what is expected of them—in their learning and in their interaction with others?
- A place where people obviously enjoy each other's company and work productively together?
- A place where the teacher attends over time, to individuals, small groups, and the whole class, and is always aware of everyone in the room?
- A place where students have choices in their learning?
- A place where all learners respect and value individual differences?



**See Differentiated Instruction Scapbook:
Creating an Environment to Support Differentiated Instruction**



PROVIDING CHOICE

Manageable Choice Is the Goal

All learners want to feel they have some control over their lives and will make more of an effort when their desire for choice is addressed. It is important that educators clearly define and model choices so that neither students nor educators become overwhelmed.

“Choice builds confidence and fosters independence. Choice tells students their interests are important and allows them to demonstrate responsibility.”

Hume, 2008

Students benefit from practice and experience working with a prescribed range of choices before they are able to make informed choices independently—when learning or when they demonstrate their learning.

Teach students to make informed choices...

- Explicitly teach students the skills necessary to work effectively in a group or with a partner.
- Help students know their learning strengths and preferences.
- Encourage and provide opportunities for students to reflect on the outcome of their choices, so they can get better at making good ones. For example, use learning centres to have all students try all choices, then ask, “Which one helped you to learn?” instead of “Which did you enjoy the most?”
- Introduce choices in small ways at first:
 - Ask if students prefer to work individually or with a partner.
 - Let them decide the order of completion when multiple tasks need to be done.
 - Allow them to answer one of the test questions by writing or by drawing.

“I gave them a choice—I had more students hand in their work and more students were excited and enthusiastic about their products. The learning and their achievement improved.”

DI Project Teacher

MAKING THE MOST OF PLANNING TIME



As educators, we have very real concerns about finding the time to deal with all curriculum expectations under any circumstance, never mind in a differentiated classroom where we recognize the importance of approaching and working with concepts using a variety of strategies and structures. In order to have the time we need and to more easily differentiate our lessons, there are a number of actions we can take when planning a unit:

- Identify the big ideas or essential understandings of the unit; clustering the specific expectations to the related overall expectations. Overall expectations in Ontario’s curriculum policy documents describe, in general terms, the knowledge and skills that students are expected to demonstrate by the end of the grade. They speak to the big ideas or essential understandings at the core of the discipline. When we cluster curriculum expectations from the curriculum policy documents and identify the big ideas of the unit, we can focus on those big ideas rather than on a list of specific expectations.
- Plan collaboratively, in interdisciplinary or cross-curricular teams as often as possible.
- Take an inquiry-based approach to learning whenever possible. When students inquire, they read, experiment, research and discuss, constructing knowledge by pursuing what Wiggins and McTighe (2005) call “essential questions” based on the big ideas. Inquiry learning is particularly useful to differentiated instruction because students automatically use multiple entry points and demonstrate their learning differently when they inquire.

“When all is said and done, the purpose of differentiation is to work smarter as teachers so that our students work smarter as students. The point is not to become overwhelmed by a myriad of instructional and assessment strategies but to be selective and purposeful in our use of them. In this way, we can provide opportunities for our students to take more responsibility for how they learn and in turn, what they learn.”

Student Success Grades 7 & 8 Differentiated Instruction Teacher’s Guide (2007)



MAKING THE MOST OF PLANNING TIME

- Pre-assess students' understanding, knowledge, skills, and/or attitude prior to planning the unit to know where to start. This is particularly important to help surface any misconceptions students may harbour. Research shows that misconceptions, left uncorrected, will seriously hamper understanding (Wiggins & McTighe 2005).
- Be flexible in the unit design—plans will need to be adjusted based on assessment data gathered during instruction to support students who are struggling and those who learn more successfully than anticipated.
- Continue to use favourite lesson plans, refining them based on the Core Questions (page 22), the three-part lesson design framework and the knowledge acquired about students.

Finding Your Way:
**Differentiated
Instruction
Resources,
Supports and
References**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Student Success Differentiated Instruction Professional Learning Strategy Resources, Grades 7–12
2. Differentiated Instruction Project Site Resources
3. Ministry of Education Related Resources and Publications
4. Frequently Asked Questions
5. Annotated Bibliography



**Student Success Differentiated Instruction Professional Learning Strategy Resources,
Grades 7–12**

Reach Every Student through Differentiated Instruction Brochures

Student Success Grades 7 & 8 Differentiated Instruction Educator's Package (2007)

- Includes Teacher's Guide, Poster, Strategy, Structure and Student Cards, DVD and Facilitator's Guide

Differentiated Instruction Grades 7 & 8 Educator's Package Enhancements

- Includes Facilitators' Guides and Strategy Cards for Mathematics, Literacy and Assessment for Learning

Student Success Differentiated Instruction Educator's Package (2010)

- Includes Teacher's Guide, Reference Cards, Differentiated Instruction Scrapbook and CD

Secondary Differentiated Instruction DVD and Facilitator's Guide (2010)

Differentiated Instruction Teaching/Learning Examples (2009–10) for:

- The Arts, Grades 7 and 8
- Business Studies, Grades 9 and 10
- Civics, Grade 10
- Computer Studies, Grade 10
- Cooperative Education, Secondary
- Geography, Grades 8 and 9
- Guidance and Career Education, Grades 7-10
- History, Grades 7 and 10
- Language/English, Grades 7-10
- Mathematics, Grades 7-10
- Science, Grades 9 and 10
- Science and Technology, Grades 7 and 8
- Technological Education, Grades 9 and 10

NOTE: See www.edugains.ca to access these resources and other current information on the Differentiated Instruction Professional Learning Strategy.



DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION PROJECT SITE RESOURCES

As part of the Differentiated Instruction Professional Learning Strategy, there are elementary (grades 7 and 8) and secondary school differentiated instruction (DI) project sites in each of the province's six regions. These sites have provided footage of differentiated instruction in action and resource material in a variety of subject areas to support implementation of differentiated instruction. The DI Project Site resources may be found at www.edugains.ca.

The resource material includes lesson plans, instructional activities, samples of DI Structures, assessment strategies and student work. The project sites have also produced professional learning resources such as slide presentations for teachers and administrators. Many of the materials link to the classroom examples on the Secondary Differentiated Instruction DVD.

The DVD of Grades 7 and 8 classroom examples with Facilitator's Guide is available in the Student Success Grades 7 & 8 Differentiated Instruction Educator's Package (2007). The 2010 DVD of secondary classroom DI examples consists of 16 clips from 10 subjects. The DVD is packaged in a Facilitator's Guide designed to support differentiated instruction professional learning.

Overview of the 2010 Secondary DVD

Region/Board	School	DI Focus	Subject
Barrie			
Peterborough, Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board	St. Mary's Secondary School	Readiness: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tiering • Self-assessment 	Mathematics
London			
Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board	Delta Secondary School	Readiness: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tiering 	Mathematics
		Interests and Learning Preferences: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RAFT 	Understanding Canadian Law
		Learning Preferences: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choice Board 	History
		Learning Preferences: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Centres 	Science

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION PROJECT SITE RESOURCES



Overview of the 2010 Secondary DVD (cont.)

Region/Board	School	DI Focus	Subject
Ottawa			
Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board	Centennial Secondary School	Learning Preferences: • Choice Board	Career Studies
		Learning Preferences: • Learning Centres	Mathematics
Sudbury/North Bay			
Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board	St. Joseph-Scollard Hall Catholic Secondary School	Learning Preferences: • Choice	Food and Nutrition
		Learning Preferences: • Choice Board	Religious Education
		Learning Preferences: • Choice of Product	Visual Arts
		Readiness: • Exit Card	Mathematics
Thunder Bay			
Lakehead District School Board	Westgate Collegiate and Vocational Institute	Learning Preferences: • Learning Centres	Technological Education
		Learning Preferences: • Learning Centres • Choice Board	Visual Arts
Toronto			
Wellington Catholic District School Board	Bishop Macdonell Catholic Secondary School	Readiness: • Learning • Centres Tiering	Science
	St James Catholic Secondary School	Readiness: • Learning Centres • Tiering	Geography
	Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Secondary School	Learning Preferences, Interests and Readiness: • Tiering • Choice of group size and question	Mathematics



Leading Math Success—Mathematical Literacy Grades 7-12—The report of the Expert Panel on Student Success in Ontario

www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/reports/numeracy/index.html

Learning for All (Draft 2009)

Many Roots, Many Voices: Supporting English Language Learners in Every Classroom—A Practical Guide for Ontario Educators

www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/manyroots/manyroots.pdf

Me Read? No Way! A Practical Guide to Improving Boys' Literacy Skills

www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/brochure/merread/merread.pdf

Me Read? And How! Ontario Teachers Report On How To Improve Boys' Literacy Skills (2009)

www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/meRead_andHow.pdf

Realizing the Promise of Diversity; Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy (2009)

cal2.edu.gov.on.ca/april2009/EquityEducationStrategy.pdf

Supporting Student Success in Literacy, Grades 7–12—Effective Practices of Ontario School Boards

www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/brochure/literacy/literacy.pdf

Student Success/Learning to 18 Implementation Training and Evaluation Branch Grade 8 to 9 Transitions Regional Training Session Resource Materials and Working Documents for Student Success Board Teams

<http://community.elearningontario.ca>

Think Literacy Library

www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/studentsuccess/thinkliteracy/library.html

TIPS4RM Targeted Implementation and Planning Supports for Revised Mathematics

www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/studentsuccess/lms/tips4rm.html

Ontario Ministry of Education—Teachers

www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teachers/

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Q: *I teach six classes and it is difficult to know all of the students. If I just provide activities geared to different learning styles or intelligences as often as I can, will I be differentiating?*

A: Addressing different learning styles with all students over a period of time or rotating all students through multiple intelligences centres is not differentiated instruction. However, whenever we provide the same rich range of experiences to all students, we are increasing the likelihood of student achievement and enhancing our own understanding of learner preferences. This gives us the information we need to provide individual students with experiences that are ideally suited to their learning preferences, which is differentiated instruction.

Some ways to start—make a grade or subject-wide decision to share learning preferences information among teachers. A teacher might set up a simple database that would allow all teachers to create flexible short-term groups for learning based on learning style or intelligence preference.

Q: *Some of my students who excel in class always choose the alternatives to writing just so they will finish quickly, yet they are capable of so much more. When should I limit a student's choice? Am I being unfair to students if I limit their choice of options?*

A: Differentiation is about extending every student's learning a bit beyond where they are comfortable. That space, the difference between what they can do now and what they could do with a little pressure and support, is called the zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978) and it is the place where learning happens. When students stay with what is comfortable, they can practice, consolidate and feel good about themselves, but they do not learn. When they are pushed too far into work they can't manage even with support, they will reach a frustration point. No learning occurs there either; it is the place where students, again particularly young adolescents, shut down in order to protect their sense of self.

You are being unfair to a student if you allow them to coast. Encourage students to choose differently and re-examine your selection of activities. In a differentiated classroom, all activities are respectful of learners. This means all activities take approximately equal amounts of time and they all require students to demonstrate understanding or skill to equally high levels. If your writing assignments take longer to finish than anything else, you need to think about how you can craft them so they are appealing and not onerous.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

In addition, some tasks may be non-negotiable because the topic, way of learning or way of demonstrating learning is specifically required as part of curriculum expectations.

Q: *Are we being fair to students when we give them choice in how to complete an assignment and know they are not always going to have that choice?*

A: If our students know who they are as learners, they will be better able to prepare for final evaluation tasks of all types. As adults, we know what works for us and we automatically do what works when we are in a situation that requires our best. Our students are still learning about their strengths yet and need opportunities to discover what works for them. This information is important throughout their educational career and beyond as they enter the world of work.

Q: *How do you ensure that assessment is fair when students are performing different tasks?*

A: Curriculum expectations are the same for all students, or are appropriate to the individual in the case of a student with an IEP. Think of the different tasks as being different routes to the same destination. It does not matter if individual students took the scenic route or the highway as long as they end up in the same place. The key is to be very clear about the expectations and the specific knowledge, skills or understandings a student will demonstrate in achievement of them, and then create a common assessment tool that measures those three. That way one student can build and describe a three-dimensional model of a cell, another can create a slide presentation and a third can write a report. As long as they are all assessed using the same criteria, the assessments will be fair.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY



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Tomlinson, Carol Ann and McTighe, Jay (2006). *Integrating Differentiated Instruction and Understanding by Design: Connecting content and kids*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

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Provides a thorough explanation of backward design, essential questions and the difference between knowledge and understanding; includes templates and helpful classroom examples