

Differentiated instruction paper

[Education](#), [Teaching](#)



Differentiated Instruction Differentiated instruction is a process to approach teaching and learning for students with differing abilities in the same class. The intent of differentiating instruction is to maximize each student's growth and individual success by meeting each student where he or she is assisting in the learning process (Polloway, Patton, and Serna, 2005). It's an individualized instructional method. It is used to help students with diverse needs learn using a general curriculum. There are several approaches to using differentiated instruction when teaching learners with cultural or special needs.

Every student has different learning styles, behaviors, and interests. It is up to teachers to meet state and district standards when teaching different learners no matter their needs. There are several ways to make sure students meet these standards. Kapusnick and Hauslein (2001) list the most common instructional strategies as acceleration, curriculum compacting, independent study, flexible grouping, independent-learning centers, complex questions, tiered activities, and contracts. Students who show mastery of instructional material through preassessment can learn at their own pace, acceleration.

Curriculum compacting condenses learning and allows students to move ahead of material already learned while staying on grade level. During independent study, students progress at their own pace until they master a task by a due date agreed upon by the teacher. Teachers use flexible grouping based on students' needs, interests, and abilities to allow students with similar capabilities to work together. Independent-learning centers

provide students with remediation opportunities by investigating a topic in depth.

In a differentiated classroom, the teacher asks complex questions that are open-ended, appeal to higher-order thinking skills, allow adequate wait time for answers (more than the traditional 1-3 seconds), and provide opportunities for peer discussions and follow-up questions. Additionally, tiered activities are used to promote success because the student chooses his or her own level of accomplishment (Kapusnick and Hauslein, 2001). And contracts are used as an agreement that allows students to take responsibility for completing tasks. Kapusnick and Hauslein, in an inclusive environment, students at all levels of understanding can learn more effectively if teachers adjust instruction for individual learning style and needs (2001). Vygotsky and Gardner's theories of instructional practices are ways to assist teachers with presenting information to their learners. Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences asserted that students learn better and more easily when teachers use a variety of delivery methods, providing students with learning experiences that maximizes their strengths (Kapusnick and Hauslein, 2001).

Vygotsky's zone of proximal development supports the notion that effective education facilitates development by assisting the progression to each stage through student-teacher interactions and opportunities to discuss and share ideas (Kapusnick and Hauslein, 2001). This theory requires teachers to help students with special needs by making accommodations to meet their needs. Teachers assist them until they reach their comfort zone of

completing tasks independently or with minimal assistance. Students are taught the using the same curriculum, with different methods.

The variation of activities provided during instruction should reflect the needs of the students. During differentiated instruction, teachers help students make sense of learning. The steps to using differentiated instruction are content, process, and product. Content is what we teach, process includes how we teach and how students learn, and product is the way our students demonstrate what they have learned (Levy, 2008). In order to find out the students' abilities, teachers must first assess their skills. This lets the teacher know what levels the students are on.

Assessments are used for various reasons. They are used to monitor progress, review abilities, and evaluate students' strengths and weaknesses. They are an essential part of the decision-making process of determining what a student needs remediation with. Assessment results compare students individually and show differences among other peers. They are used to classify students for ability, or flexible, grouping, which identifies them for placement in special programs and groups. Assessments allow teachers to plan and adjust lessons to accommodate all learners.

Grouping students according to their abilities by noting their ability levels, learning styles, and interests are ways teachers can plan for their students.

Ability level groups allow teachers to place all students who may need remediation together to receive additional help, or challenging work.

Students interpret instruction by what they hear, see, what they can do, and what they say. Some students pay attention to what the teacher says or

reads; auditory learners, while others focus on what the teacher writes on the chalkboard, overhead projector, or smart board.

Other students must do something hands-on or discuss it using more detail in order for them to grasp an understanding of a lesson. Once a teacher knows the students in the classroom and their learning styles, flexible grouping can be implemented. Students are likely to cooperate and work together as they build upon information of new knowledge. Differentiated instruction provides students with an organized instruction system consisting of basic skills and instruction. Teachers may present whole-class conversations of content big ideas followed by small group or pair work.

Thoroughly explaining, demonstrating, and providing student with different interactions are skills teachers use to reach the learners. Student groups may be taught from within or by the teacher to complete assigned tasks. In differentiated instruction, the grouping of students does not have to be permanent, and can vary based on the information or tasks presented, the project, and constant evaluations. Classroom management also plays a role in differentiated instruction. Teachers must be consistent with the expectations of all the students academically and behaviorally.

Along with classroom management, continuous assessment of students' progress and therapy should also be maintained. Classroom guidance is another source of providing differentiated instruction. Guidance and school counselors assist students by counseling them to find out their needs and interests. They also inform students about educational opportunities by providing them with information on transition strategies and techniques used

for dealing with unwarranted behaviors of school peers. Just like classroom instruction, counselors can use group or individual counseling sessions to support students.

Depending on the students' needs, the counselors can hold sessions in their office or in the students' classroom. Akos, Cockman, and Strickland (2007), said through the last century, school counseling evolved from a position, to a set of services, to a multifaceted developmental program where skills needed to facilitate classroom guidance encompass a wide range of abilities, and the curricular nature of classroom guidance requires planning and delivery skills similar to those demanded of teachers.

Therefore, whether for academic or social developments, school counselors plan hands-on activities and carry out classroom guidance sessions. English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with special needs may need additional assistance when learning new material. Differentiated instruction with these learners may require certain strategies when addressing curriculum factors and teaching for cultural reasons. It is important for teachers to know the cultural proficiency of their learners when taking into account differentiated instruction.

According to Hoover and Patton (2005), language function, acculturation, conceptual knowledge, thinking abilities, cultural values and norms, and teaching and learning styles are curricular factors for concern with ELLs. Language function can be the conversations and social development skills the student makes. The goal is to get ELLs to use elevated language by talking more with friends, family members, and anyone they have

constant communication with. It will help student focus on interpreting meanings for unfamiliar words while developing fluency skills.

Acculturation is the process where one cultural group assumes traits of another cultural group (Hoover and Patton, 2005). In acculturation, students may respond with signs of withdrawal due to lack of communication and understanding. Conceptual knowledge is the new information gained from prior knowledge. It provides students with connections to the content being taught. ELLs need to apply their thinking capabilities to interact and learn the new curriculum. This is using their higher-order thinking skills. One's cultural values and norms are their experiences and lifestyles they bring to the classroom.

Differentiated instruction provides adaptations so the students can be educated using the appropriate grade level curriculum. This is again where teaching and learning styles play a role in educational developments. It focuses on the conditions the students learn under. Students with special needs or disabilities, in all grade levels, may feel as if they don't have the same skills as non-disabled students for obvious reasons. Students with disabilities, as do many other students, may require significant practice, application, and generalization of relevant skills and concepts (Mastropieri et al. 2006). As a future educator, I have learned that it is our responsibility to educate all learners. Differentiated instruction involves just this, to teach students in the best way they could learn. Teachers plan instruction based on the readiness levels, interests, and educational needs of their students. They use multiple content, process, and product methods to promote

academic and behavioral skills. Once teachers become familiar with the learning styles of the students and comfortable with their teaching methods, learning opportunities for the students expand. References Akos, P.

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