

Planning Strategies to Consider

Inclusive Classroom Strategies for Differentiated Instruction

Learning Environment

The learning environment is the overall layout of the classroom, the way you use that space, and elements such as lighting. Even minor tweaks can help ensure the classroom is supportive and comfortable for all students.



Consider:

- Learning can occur anywhere in the classroom
- That a well-organized space helps with student independence
- Arranging your classroom to support scaffolded instruction (whole-class, small group & independent learning)
- Planning a physical space for any students with special needs to ensure accessibility
- Establishing classroom routines & overall environment that make students feel safe & supported
- Allow the students to choose a quiet work area (if they need it)
- Use headphones, modified lighting, alternative desks, etc.
- Vary seating arrangements based on student need
 - Ensure that despite flexible seating arrangements, no students are isolated
- Ensure easy access to materials (with icon/image prompts for non-readers)
- Vary the environment where learning occurs (outside, laboratory, field trip etc.)

Routines

- Establish routines for various 'transition' times of the day (including first thing in the morning)
- Establish routines for
- Materials Management
 - work in progress – where does it go?
 - completed work – where does it go?
 - consider assigning classroom jobs – what can the students manage on their own?
 - establish what goes in student's desks and what doesn't
 - colour-coded work folders
 - baskets for each curricular area (icon based for non-readers)
 - student portfolios
 - filing cabinets

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Learning Activities

Learning opportunities should be varied to ensure all students get opportunities to explore concepts in different ways. Time needs to be flexible. Flexible time gives teachers opportunities to address different needs and speeds.



Consider:

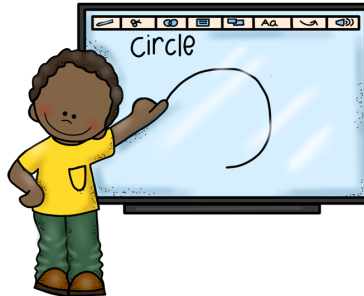
- Use a combination of individual, paired, small group and whole class activities & vary how pairings/groups are chosen
- Provide opportunities for a range of skills such as discussion, writing and viewing
- Alternate quiet and active times
- Plan transitions to ensure a smooth flow from one activity to the next
- Allow some students more time to complete assignment
- Identify which students require structure, and provide them with detailed schedules and advanced warning of major changes to routine
- Build in time to respond to student needs for re-teaching and/or extension
- Consider ways to activate, clarify and extend prior knowledge, and to help students make connections between what they know and what they will be learning
- Consider extension activities that allow students to reinforce, extend and apply their learning in a variety of contexts
- Identify in advance alternative activities to use if students need a change in pace or a refocusing of attention

Suggestions for Groups & Group Work

- Use flexible groupings – students should not remain in the same groups for long periods of time
 - **Grouping decisions** can be based on:
 - student learning profile (including readiness to learn)
 - interest
 - student need
 - student choice
 - random groupings
 - homogeneous (organizing by ability)
 - heterogeneous (or multi-level/mixed ability)
 - **Managing group work** can include:
 - giving each group their own set of instructions (eliminates the whole group receiving multiple directions)
 - record directions for small group work (audio or written)
 - use task cards to break down directions into smaller chunks
 - assign/have students volunteer to be helpers for their peers
 - students wear “ask me” hats or visors
 - “expert” of the day
 - consultants

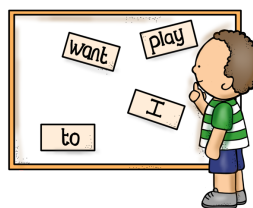
Presentation

How you present information and ideas is vital for differentiation. Presentation styles should be varied to meet the different abilities and learning styles of students in the classroom.



Consider:

- Make use of opportunities for collaboration & co-teaching
- Provide material in manageable chunks
- Repeat instructions and provide them orally, in writing & with visual supports
- Have students repeat instructions
- Create a storyboard of words and pictures
- Make use of diagrams, illustrations, concrete materials and multimedia technology to explore and illustrate concepts
- Use computer projector to display information, images, videos etc. in large format for the whole class
- Use different colours – pens, chalk, index cards, on flipcharts, on written documents, etc.
- Identify key concepts, words and questions and present them in a variety of different formats
- Introduce and reinforce concepts in a varied manner:
 - write key concepts/words in large print
 - display and label important images or diagrams
 - highlight important words or passages in large print
- Use students in your demonstrations - get them involved!



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Resources and Materials

Vary teaching tools to respond to student needs. This may include varying the formats, the reading level of the materials, or the use of technology.



Consider:

- Allow students to have access to the same materials, just at different reading levels
- Use both printed and non-printed materials (audio, video, images, etc.)
- Use both teacher resources and resources the students have created
- Engage in the use of community resources (library, radio station, fire station, newspaper, local experts)
- Allow for the use of adapted materials, as needed. For example:
 - scribe
 - audio recordings
 - drawing pictures
 - enlarged print
 - computer/mobile device
 - manipulatives
 - line indicators, graph paper, adapted lined paper etc.
 - erasable highlighters or small flashlight for line tracking
 - adapted worksheets for additional room for 'thinking space', colour-coded directions, highlighted keywords etc.
- Allow students to use educational technology
 - Computers – with varied applications for word processing, drawing and creating work (video, audio, graphic organizers, online posters, etc.)
 - Mobile devices – with varied applications
 - Audio books or instructions in CD or MP3 format



Student Creation & Assessment

The 'final result' or product can vary when you differentiate assessment. Vary the difficulty and format to allow students to demonstrate their learning. Allow students to choose how they demonstrate their knowledge. It is important to differentiate the type of tasks, not just the quantity.



Consider:

- Provide assignment options - individual or group:
 - different endings to stories
 - displays or models
 - comic-strips
 - dramatic presentations
 - visual timelines
 - puppet shows
 - trading cards
 - dioramas
 - puzzle creator
 - create a video
 - create a podcast
 - letter exchange – pen pals, authors, members of the community
- Provide additional time for work to be completed, as needed
- Provide options for demonstrating knowledge and understanding:
 - orally
 - with a scribe
 - have students answer fewer questions
 - write questions at varying reading levels
 - different format (see assignment options above)
- Allow students to complete assignments using technology

Adapted from:

- [Differentiated Instruction - Learn Alberta](#)
- Differentiating Instruction in the Regular Classroom - Diane Heacox

Images from:

[Educlips](#)