

Differentiation for engagement and learning

Teachers who differentiate know how to draw on data about what students know and what they are prepared to learn next. Differentiated instruction is my way of tailoring what I am teaching to take the skills and knowledge of all the students in every class from where they came from. The goal of differentiation is to improve the learning of every student – both those behind and those who are ahead of year level.

Differentiation is favourable to students from all stages of the learning spectrum including highly able and gifted students. To differentiate my teaching to different students' needs, I apply many methods to entrain students to own and engage with their learning. Differentiated teaching provides students who are at risk of disengagement with real learning.

What is effective differentiation? Those teachers who differentiate do a great job, I believe, with all these data points they find out what the students know and what they want to learn. Data allows me to design carefully scaffolded curricula, where all my students can gain entry.

Learning-intervention gaps can also be found in student data that might be used to pinpoint knowledge and skills deficits. Examples of possible data sources are classroom observations (and the other teachers' observations, nice to have an interdepartmental department), formative assessments, and student and parent/carer feedback.

Based on the data, I know what to differentiate instruction based on:

Content: What Students should learn.

Instruction: how I will give it, and students will go through/ do it. This means looking at what kind of lesson the teacher was teaching and what they were doing.

End-product: what the students can show.

Classroom: the actual, efficient feel of the room. Classes must be fun and learn-intensive and spaces where children can feel they are appreciated, safe and allowed to risk themselves for their own development. I use classroom interventions to help differentiated teaching. I am using evidence available to evaluate student learning needs and abilities.

To use differentiated interventions to address student needs and strengths,

I: Reflect on information that I already know about students as learners and other social, emotional and behavioural factors I need to take into account when deciding how to structure the learning and teaching programme. These are some things to think about when designing a differentiated learning strategy: the curriculum, the learning space, classroom management, formative learning assessments and student-centred teaching strategies. I base interventions on data about student

readiness, preferences and learning histories. If I want to get a message out about my lessons, I consider:

1. Students who are disabled or from disadvantaged backgrounds might require further accommodations of varying complexity to make themselves in the classroom at the same level as others.
2. I ask colleagues and other professionals for assistance in developing different types of teaching strategies to accommodate learning outcomes and learning needs.
3. I emphasise student agency and participation through giving students choice and involvement in what is learned and allowing them to set challenging, attainable goals.
4. I conduct formative assessments to track students' learning progress to and beyond learning objectives, and then revise my learning plan in light of this formative feedback.
5. I take individual interventions to add to the lessons for clusters of students in trouble. Such interventions might be designed with Learning Specialists.

The following are questions to ask if you are going to differentiate. What can I measure about previous experience? How do I keep a continuous formative assessment tool on my desk for students? How well do I work with students to co-develop the right goals to get them through the learning? What can the classroom do for my students? Where are we on the High Impact Teaching Strategies 10: Differentiated teaching practice continuum? What career development will enable me to grow in practice?