
Differentiated Instruction and — Personalization —

Let's get our terminology straight...

Differentiated instruction is tailoring instruction to meet individual needs. Whether teachers differentiate content, process, products, or the learning environment, the use of ongoing assessment and flexible grouping makes this a successful approach to instruction.

Personalized instruction or **personalization**, refers to a diverse variety of educational programs, learning experiences, instructional approaches, and academic-support strategies that are intended to address the distinct learning needs, interests, or aspirations of individual students.

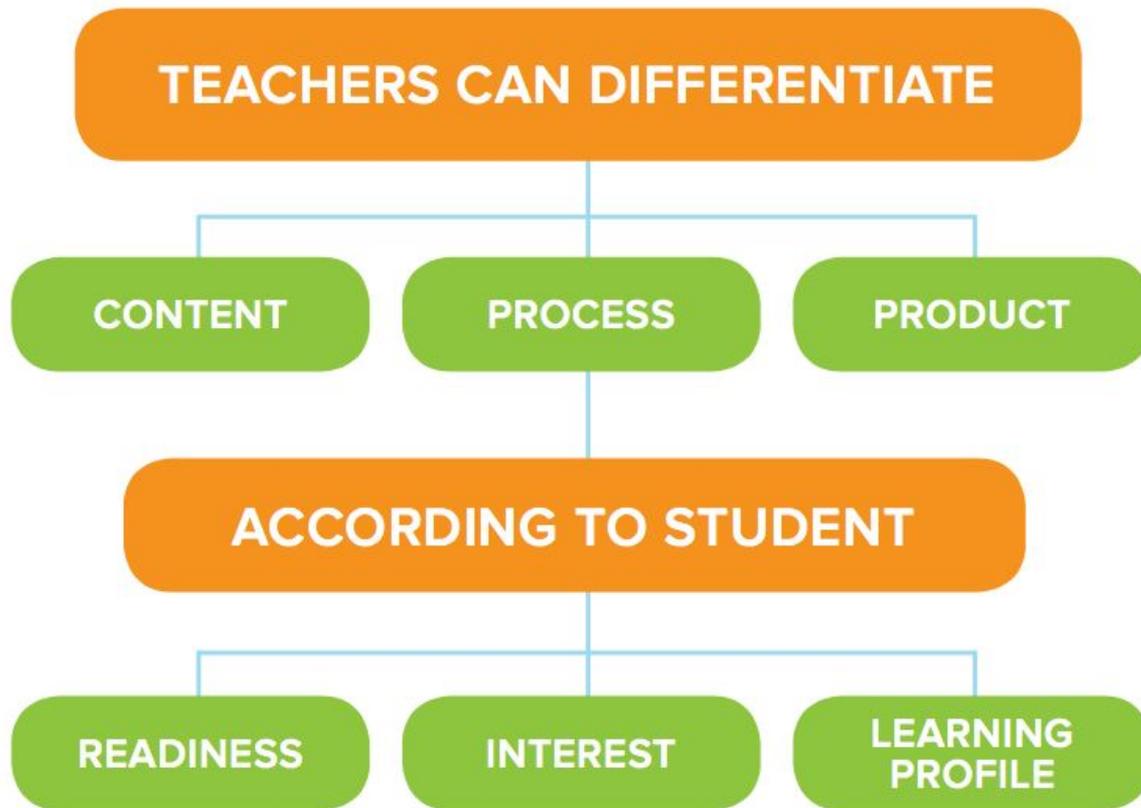


FIGURE 1: DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION GRAPHIC ORGANIZER (TOMLINSON & IMBEAU, 2010)

According to Carol Ann Tomlinson, teachers should consider...

1. Who are you as learners? (Are you all alike or are there important differences?)
2. Given the differences we see, how should I teach you?
3. If our classroom is going to work for all of us, what will it be like? (How will it need to function? What roles will each of us play?)
4. How can I learn more about your starting points, interests, and best ways of learning?
5. If we have a differentiated classroom, can it be fair? (What will —fair mean in this room?)
6. What will success in this class mean? (How will I know if you're succeeding? How will you know?)

Create the relationship

- I want to know you as a person because you're interesting to me.
- I need to know you as a student so that I can determine what your next steps in learning are.
- I will watch you as you work in class as closely as I can because what I learn will help me plan better for you individually and for the class as a whole.
- You'll see me take notes while you work and while we discuss things in class. This helps me learn more about how learning works for you. In the first few days of school, I'll ask you to do some things that will give me a reasonable sense of your starting points this year and about who you are as a learner.
- Throughout the year, I'll often ask you to share what you're learning so I can help you take your next step as a learner. I'll often invite you to tell me how you're feeling about your work and what is going well or poorly for you in class. I hope you'll always feel free to honestly tell me those things.

The Baseball Card

Students from upper elementary and middle school classrooms are asked to create a baseball card that has their picture on the front (these can be school pictures or photos that are taken in class) and “statistics” that reveal something about the student (e.g., family information, hobbies, goals) on the back. Use the cards to learn more about each student and to randomly call on students to respond. This can be done in a variety of exciting ways, such as how a professional card player would draw a card.

Know your students...

Teachers need to truly KNOW their students, their interests, fears, strengths, weaknesses

In an effectively differentiated classroom, ongoing assessments informs every important instructional decision a teacher makes.

Routines ensure that students understand...

- how to enter the classroom
- how the class will begin and end
- how to get and put away materials
- how to keep records of their work
- how to move around the classroom in acceptable ways
- how to use time wisely
- how to figure out where they should be and what they should be doing at a given time
- where to put work when they finish
- how to get help when the teacher is working directly with others

DON'T ASSUME ANYTHING AND REMIND, REMIND, REMIND

Be a “Warm Demander”

Warm Demanders: show students that they are important enough to be pushed, disciplined, taught, and respected.

Pretest

To differentiate well, we have to fully understand what our students know and what they don't know. This can be done a number of ways, one simple way to pretest. Once it is clear as to what a student knows and does not know, we can then begin to think about grouping, materials, resources, and instruction.

Be ready to group!

- TEXT TEAMS: Reading pairs composed of students with similar reading levels
- THINK TANKS: Mixed-readiness writing idea generator groups of four or five
- SYNTHESIS SQUAD: Groups of four with varied learning strengths (e.g., visual, performance, writing, metaphorical, analytical)
- DIP STIX: Groups of six with varied learning profiles, used by the teacher to do quick —dip stick checks for progress and understanding

Grouping and the difficult student

- Provide a —way out for students who cannot succeed in a group at a given time. In other words, a student should not have to continue working in a group if it becomes apparent that the individual or the group will suffer as a result.
- It is vital that students and teachers in a differentiated classroom engage in ongoing, open, and honest dialogues about what differentiation is and why it occurs in their classroom.

Extension Activities or projects

Activities that students can move to once they are finished with their work. Watch that this does not become *extra* work. This should take learning a new direction.

Personalized Learning

The Learning Path

- Required tasks, labs, projects
- Optional resources and activities
- Extension projects and activities

Resources

ASCD - <https://activate.ascd.org/> Differentiated Instruction

How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms by Carol Ann Tomlinson

Differentiation by Rick Wormeli

How to Personalize Learning by Barbara Bray and Kathleen McClaskey