

DIFFERENTIATION GUIDES AND RESOURCES

From the CPS Office of Teaching and Learning

Chicago Public Schools Office of Teaching and Learning
<http://www.chicagoteachingandlearning.org/tl-cross-content/cps-rti-toolkita-guide-to-implementation/b-high-quality-instruction.html>

B1: Differentiation strategies: content, process and product

The following are examples of differentiation strategies, defined by lesson variable. These strategies are adapted from work by Carol Ann Tomlinson. Consider using these strategies when planning lessons, selecting instructional strategies and determining topics for professional development, and exploring new differentiation strategies.

Lesson Variable	Example Differentiation Strategies
<p>Content</p> <p>What knowledge or skills do students need to learn?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with small groups to re visit an idea or skill for struggling learners or to extend the learning of advanced learners • Compacting lessons to focus only on what students need to know based on pre-assessments and individual learning profiles • Supporting background context through scaffolding to help students work and learn at their current zone of proximal development and move up to grade-level expectations • Varying levels of spelling and/or vocabulary lists • Providing multiple examples of content (ex. different examples of ways to identify seeds) • Highlighting critical information (e.g. reiterating broad concepts both orally and through other media, utilizing graphic organizers) • Monitoring student understanding of critical information throughout the lesson with frequent checks for understanding
<p>Process</p> <p>In what activities will the student engage in order to access, make sense of, and master the content?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presenting content through multiple media and formats (e.g. auditory and visual means, computer access, text materials on tape, handouts) • Using reading materials at varying reading levels • Developing guided notes for students to follow along with during lessons • Providing opportunities to practice with support in small groups, pairs, or independently • Pairing students (with the same or different reading/readiness levels) • Varying activity questions based on previous learning and abilities • Modeling/explaining multiple process examples (e.g. different examples of how students can find appropriate texts to complete the assignment) • Planning the most complex learning activity first (one that would challenge the most advanced learner in the class) then modifying that activity for students at lower levels • Using tiered activities through which all learners work with the same important content, but proceed with different levels of support, challenge, or complexity • Using small group activities/stations to target individual/small group areas of need or enrichment • Providing interest stations that encourage students to explore subsets of the class topic of particular interest to them • Offering on-going, relevant feedback during guided and independent practice • Developing task lists written by the teacher and containing both in-common work for the whole class and work that addresses individual needs of learners; can be completed during the lesson or as students complete other work early • Offering manipulatives or other hands-on supports • Varying the length of time a student may take to complete a task in order to provide additional support for a struggling learner or to encourage advanced learners to pursue a topic in greater depth
<p>Product</p> <p>What culminating projects do students need to complete in order to show what they have learned?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving students options of how to express their learning in multiple ways (e.g. create a skit, write a letter, develop a 3-D model) • Varying questions based on previous learning, interest, and abilities • Using rubrics that match and extend students' varied skills levels • Allowing students to work alone or in small groups on their products • Encouraging students to create their own product assignments that meet required expectations

Tool B1: Differentiated Instruction Rubric

Why this tool is important: Differentiated instruction is used to address students' diverse learning needs. Differentiated instruction recognizes differences in student background knowledge, experiences and interests; intentional planning is needed to attend to student needs in the classroom. Research has demonstrated that effective differentiated instruction incorporates many of the elements listed in the rubric. This rubric provides a way to assess evidence of differentiated instruction in the classroom. It is divided into two sections. NOTE: This rubric is based on Tomlinson's (2010) Differentiated Instruction Model (see Toolkit references for complete citation).

1. Practices that can be observed in the classroom
2. Elements of lesson planning that can be reviewed

How to use this tool: This tool can be used by individual teachers to self assess or by other individuals at the request of the teacher to provide peer feedback. One should not expect to see (or use) all of the elements listed on this rubric in any one lesson, but, over time, evidence related to all sections should emerge. Complete the items below by providing a rating (0 = not evident, 1 = minimally evident, 2 = partially evident, 3 = fully evident) for each section. After completing this rubric – on one occasion or multiple occasions (to increase data points) – information can be used to guide discussions about excellent differentiation skills and any areas needing improvement.

PRACTICES THAT CAN BE OBSERVED IN THE CLASSROOM		
HIGH QUALITY CURRICULUM	0 1 2 3	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Big ideas, or essential questions, and/or lesson objectives are clearly identified so students can understand why the concepts are important. 		
RESPECTFUL TASKS / TEACHING UP	0 1 2 3	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are presented with tasks that are appropriately challenging (e.g., questioning, student work). • Students are actively engaged in tasks that are appropriately challenging. 		
FLEXIBLE GROUPING	0 1 2 3	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are grouped in a variety of ways (e.g., whole group, small groups, partners). 		
CONTINUAL ASSESSMENT	0 1 2 3	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher interacts with all students during the lesson to check understanding and provide feedback. • The teacher conducts different types of assessments throughout the lesson (e.g., informal checks, questions, assignments). • The teacher uses assessments that are used to monitor students' learning in relation to essential questions/lesson objectives. 		
BUILDING COMMUNITY	0 1 2 3	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All students are respected and supported; positive and encouraging language is used. • Individual and group achievements are celebrated. 		

ELEMENTS OF LESSON PLANNING THAT CAN BE REVIEWED – TEACHER PRACTICE		
CONTENT	0 1 2 3	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lesson plan is based on big ideas, or essential questions, that identify what students should know and be able to do. The lesson plan differentiates content based on what each student has mastered and he/she needs to learn next. 		
PROCESS	0 1 2 3	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The plan includes different methods by which students gain access to the content (e.g. audio, visuals, guided notes, technology). The plan includes varied instructional strategies to assist students in accessing content (e.g., varied and intentional groupings based on student readiness, interest, and/or learning profile). 		
PRODUCT	0 1 2 3	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The plan includes various performance tasks, or activities, to assess students' mastery of lesson content. Products are differentiated based on students' readiness, interest and/or learning profile (e.g., tiered assessments, choice of culminating products). 		
AFFECT	0 1 2 3	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teacher considers students' learning experiences (e.g., potential struggles students may have with content, peers with when they work). 		
LEARNING ENVIRONMENT	0 1 2 3	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teacher considers classroom arrangement when planning lessons (e.g., spacing, access to materials). 		
ELEMENTS OF LESSON PLANNING THAT CAN BE REVIEWED – STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS		
READINESS	0 1 2 3	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lesson considers students' performance levels, including their ability to take on new challenges and the emergence of skill deficits. 		
INTEREST	0 1 2 3	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lesson considers students' interests – both individual interest and group interests (e.g., age). The lesson considers relevance to students' lives (current events, community, culture). 		
LEARNING PROFILE	0 1 2 3	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lesson considers students' learning styles (i.e., how students best access the content). The lesson considers students' learning needs to access (i.e., performance level). 		

Tool B2: Differentiated Instruction Tool

The Differentiated Instruction Tool is a compilation of evidence-based practices for responsive teaching. The tool was designed originally as a component of the Office of Special Education and Support (OSES) Snapshot Tool to identify differentiated instructional methods that support student success access to content, engagement in learning processes, and application of what is learned. The tool was enhanced and field-tested within Area 27 for formative uses that included ongoing professional development. Tool uses and benefits: 1) Identification of evidence-based classroom practices focused on differentiated instruction; 2) Teacher self-assessment and reflection; and 3) Facilitation of data oriented feedback and professional development.

INDICATORS	SUB-INDICATORS	RATING	COMMENTS
Lesson Plans	Current lesson plans are accessible in the classroom for review.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
	Lesson plans align to age-appropriate Illinois Learning Standards.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
	Plans contain instructional strategies (including accommodations and modifications) and address students' varied learning styles.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
	Lesson plans include measurement of student outcome.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
	Plans include materials and content aligned to the standards being taught.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
	Lesson plans are rigorous and include opportunities for student growth.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Scaffolding Gradual Release Model	Teacher models how to perform a task or skill rather than telling students.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
	Teacher guides/coaches the student as they practice.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
	Students are given independent practice for application.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
	Teacher provides feedback that explains to students where they are and what to do next.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
	Student self assessment is included.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Tiering Assignments	Assignments are designed to instruct students at different levels.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
	Complexity, abstractness and open-endedness vary.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
	Content standards stay the same.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
	Teacher allows students to move forward when ready (gradual release model).	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

INDICATORS	SUB-INDICATORS	RATING	COMMENTS
Flexible Pacing	Teacher adjusts time for students to think/process and respond.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Flexible Grouping	Students work as part of many groups (homogeneous or heterogeneous) depending on task and skill.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
	Determination of dynamic groups is based on skill.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
	Students can articulate specific goals.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Explicit Instruction	Teacher uses learning tools (e.g., visuals, graphic organizers, reminders).	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
	Teacher provides specific feedback explaining student performance.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
	Teacher provides feedback explaining to students what to do next.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Interaction	Teacher sets clear expectations around teacher-to-student interactions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
	Teacher responds with specific feedback to guide students.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
	Teacher sets clear expectations around student-to-student interactions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
	Teacher sets clear expectations around student-to-teacher interactions.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Tool B4: Differentiated Instruction Rubric

Why this tool is important: Differentiation is used to accommodate the range of student abilities that exist within a single classroom. This ensures all students receive meaningful and relevant instruction that connects to their prior knowledge and addresses their individual needs. Research has demonstrated that effective differentiated instruction incorporates many of the elements listed in the rubric. The rubric provides a way to assess evidence of differentiated instruction in the classroom. Some elements of this rubric are based on the work of Carol Ann Tomlinson (see references and resources).

How to use this tool: This tool can be used by individual teachers to self-assess or by other individuals at the request of the teacher to provide peer feedback. One should not expect to see (or use) all of the components listed on this rubric in any one lesson, but, over time, evidence related to all sections should emerge. Complete the items below by providing a rating (0 = not evident, 1 = minimally evident, 2 = partially evident, 3 = fully evident) for each section. After completing this rubric – on one occasion or multiple occasions (to have increased data points) – information can be used to guide discussions about excellent differentiation skills and any areas needing improvement.

KNOWLEDGE-CENTERED CLASSROOM	0 2	1 3	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lesson is based on clear objectives (based on learning goals and content standards), and all students are supported to meet those objectives. Students are presented with tasks that are appropriately challenging (e.g., from questioning, student work) and focused on achieving the learning objectives. 			
LEARNER-CENTERED CLASSROOM	0 2	1 3	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teacher demonstrates an understanding of individual student skills and characteristics. The classroom instruction and classroom environment are culturally sensitive. 			
PACING	0 2	1 3	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teacher provides adequate time to gauge student prior knowledge. Students have sufficient time to meet the lesson objectives given different learner needs. 			
GROUPING	0 2	1 3	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teacher utilizes varied instructional groupings (whole group, small groups, partners, heterogeneous, and homogenous groups). The teacher interacts with all of the different groups during the course of the lesson. The teacher circulates among the groups to ensure students are learning and provide feedback. 			
MATERIALS	0 2	1 3	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The materials in the classroom environment allow for all learner needs (i.e., materials at different levels, allow for multiple learning styles.) The materials are accessible by students. 			

PROACTIVE PLANNING AND INSTRUCTION	0 2	1 3	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lesson plan reflects potential struggles students may have with content. The lesson is differentiated on one or more of the following variables: 			
CONTENT	0 2	1 3	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teacher has prioritized what content students are expected to learn (e.g. essential material vs. incidental facts/enrichment). 			
PROCESS	0 2	1 3	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teacher has differentiated the method by which students gain access to the content (e.g. audio, visuals, guided notes, technological assistance) The teacher has planned for different activities by which students can engage in or make sense of the content (based on student interest, need, learning style, etc.) 			
PRODUCT	0 2	1 3	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teacher has planned various performance indicators for students to demonstrate evidence of learning (tiered assessments, choice of culminating products, etc.) 			