

## Video Transcript : LDatSchool - The Differentiated Instruction

Teaching today can be a major challenge for educators due to the diverse learning needs of students. Educational policies and human rights rulings on inclusive education ensure that the right to learn of all students is recognized. However, this can leave educators overwhelmed. In order to meet the needs of the diverse learners in the classroom, educators can use the theory of differentiated instruction (DI).

What is differentiation? Differentiating does not mean creating unique lesson plans for 25 different students. Rather, it means regularly examining our practices to respond to students learning needs while considering alternatives that will enhance and deepen their learning. Developed by researcher Carol Anne Tomlinson, differentiated instruction is a flexible form of instruction that allows educators to vary the content, structures, processes, and products of learning. Differentiate content. This means making changes to what students are going to learn and when.

For example, a student who struggles with reading may be given a novel that is written at their reading level. This might create the ability to explore similar themes found in novels other students are reading. This allows a student with LD to fully participate in class discussions and assignments. Other examples of content differentiation include presenting ideas through both auditory and visual means, using reading buddies, meeting with small groups to reteach an idea or skill for struggling learners, or to extend the thinking or skills of advanced learners using spelling or vocabulary lists at readiness levels of students. Differentiate the learning process. This means making changes to the types of tasks and activities students are expected to complete. Students with LD may use text to speech technology to read a book that is above their reading level. This approach allows the student to focus on comprehension instead of decoding words. In mathematics, students may use manipulatives or have their work broken into steps by the teacher.

Other examples of differentiating the learning process include providing different levels of support, challenge, or complexity. 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 an advanced learner to pursue a topic in greater depth. Considering graphic organizers, speech to text or audiobooks or digital manipulatives. Differentiate the product. This means making changes to the ways in which students demonstrate learning, rather than assigning a single option for all students, such as an essay. Students might be encouraged to show learning in a way that highlights their strengths, such as a video, a dramatic performance, or other creative means.

Other examples of differentiating the product include using rubrics that match and extend students varied skill levels, allowing students to work alone or in small groups on their products, and encouraging students to create their own product assignments as long as the assignments contain required elements. Differentiate the environment. This means making changes to the context and environment in which students learn and demonstrate learning to work optimally. Some students require the classroom to be quiet and without distraction. Others

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need to move around to learn and prefer collaborative work environments. Help students understand their own ideal learning environments and that others may need different things.

Other examples of differentiating the environment include providing materials that reflect a variety of cultures and home settings, setting out clear guidelines for independent work that matches individual needs. Developing routines that allow students to get help when teachers are busy with other students and cannot help them immediately, using differentiated instruction can help educators respond to the specific needs of students while keeping high expectations and standards. The learning objectives remain the same for all students in your class. What changes is simply the way the students both access and show their learning. By removing barriers to learning, you are also making school a more equitable place.

This helps create an atmosphere where every student feels welcome, respected and rightfully appreciated so that they can fully participate in their learning to the best of their skills and abilities. Students achieve better results when we plan appropriately and find ways to capitalize on strengths, while addressing the diverse needs of students in our classrooms.

To learn more about differentiated instruction, visit [LDatSchool.ca](http://LDatSchool.ca)