

## Teaching Strategies for Differentiating Instruction to Meet the Learner's Needs

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### General Classroom Tips for Meeting Diverse Learning Needs

(Selecting and using some of these approaches on occasion can add variety to your teaching and assist learners toward mastering the concepts of a lesson.)

- Relate class to personal real life skills and experiences.
- Limit expectations to two or three concepts per unit.
- Evaluate projects rather than doing traditional testing.
- Concentrate on student strengths and bring those strengths into the lesson.
- Use concise written and oral directions (spoken, written, and oral).
- Use short answers rather than long essay.
- Create small group activities
- Provide lecture outlines. Pre-teach concept vocabulary, draw pictures, use concept mapping, webbing, organizers, simplify vocabulary.
- Be aware of academic levels so that reading, vocabulary, and problems can be addressed.
- Model assignment expectations, show an example of the product.
- Use multiple intelligences approaches to teaching the same lesson.

### Some Adaptations to Meet Students Needs in Specific Skill Areas

(These suggestions may be useful with more specific kinds of learning needs, but are beneficial to many other students in the same classroom.)

#### When your student experiences difficulty with *reading*...

- allow partner reading.
- use peer tutoring.
- use taped materials (text or study guides).
- use videos with advanced organizer.
- use computer games, e.g., Oregon Trail, Carmen San Diego.
- allow students to quietly read aloud (sub-vocalization).
- teach self-questioning.
- paraphrase key points and have students paraphrase.
- summarize key points and have students summarize.
- use graphic organizers.
- sequence key points.
- identify main ideas.
- identify 5 W's—who, what, when, where, why.
- allow highlighting of texts, passages, key words, or concepts.
- preview units, chapters, etc.
- use visual imagery.
- use prereading and post reading activities to pre-teach or reinforce main ideas.
- explain idioms that appear in reading passages.
- allow silent prereading
- use preparatory set—talk through what a reading passage is about using new vocabulary and concepts.

#### When your student experiences difficulty with *writing*...

- dictate ideas to peers.
- shorten writing assignments.

- require lists instead of sentences.
- use Post-It notes for organization.
- provide note takers.

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- allow student to use a tape recorder to dictate writing.
- allow computer for outlining, word-processing, spelling and grammar check.
- provide fill-in-the-blank form for note taking.
- allow visual representation of ideas.
- allow collaborative writing.
- provide a structure for the writing.
- provide model of writing.
- allow use of flow chart for writing ideas before the student writes.
- narrow the choice of topics.
- grade on the basis of content, do not penalize for errors in mechanics and grammar.
- use of different writing utensils and paper.
- allow choices of manuscript, cursive, keyboarding.
- allow different position of writing paper and/or surface.

### When your student experiences difficulty with *speaking*...

- give sentence starters.
- use visuals.
- use graphic organizers to organize ideas and relationships.
- allow extra response time for processing.
- say student's name, then state question.
- use cues and prompts to help student know when to speak.
- use partners.
- phrase questions with choices embedded in them.
- use choral reading or speaking.
- use rhythm or music.
- allow practice opportunities for speaking.

### When your student experiences difficulty with *attending*...

- use preferential seating.
- use proximity to measure on task behavior.
- build-in opportunities for movement within a lesson.
- use self-monitoring strategies.
- provide a structure for organization.
- help the student set and monitor personal goals.
- provide alternative work area.
- decrease distractions.
- use active learning to increase opportunities for student participation.
- provide opportunities to change tasks or activities more frequently.
- have small, frequent tasks.
- provide reminder cues or prompts.
- use private signal to cue appropriate behavior for more difficult times.
- teach skills of independence, i.e., paying attention.
- provide definite purpose and expectations especially during unstructured activities.
- prepare the learner for changes in routine.
- use computer.
- use graphic organizers.
- reduce assignment length.



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### When your student experiences difficulty with *hearing*...

- provide preferential seating.
- use visual cues (overheads, drawings, maps, demonstrations, visual samples of new vocabulary).
- face student directly when speaking.
- emphasize key points (don't "information overload").
- repeat or rephrase what other students say (often hearing what other students say is difficult for hearing impaired students).
- highlight texts/study guides.
- provide note-taking assistance during lectures to allow hearing-impaired student to concentrate on the teacher.
- use peer tutoring.
- use study sheets to organize information.
- pre-teach vocabulary.
- use captioned videos, films, etc.
- show videos, etc. before presenting information to provide a knowledge base for students.
- use alternative testing methods.
- minimize background noise.
- simplify vocabulary.
- use pre-printed outlines of material.

### When your student experiences difficulty with *seeing*...

- describe what you are doing.
- provide preferential seating.
- provide material in large or braille print.
- use "books on tape."
- be aware of lighting requirements.
- use black on white printed handouts.
- use tactual materials (contact a vision consultant for assistance with designing those) to represent concepts.
- stand away from window glare when talking to the student.
- give student an individual copy of visual information presented to the group.
- allow extra time to complete tasks.

### When your student experiences difficulty with *following classroom rules*...

- teach rules/expectations; model/role play situations.
- post rules/expectations.
- teach skills of independence.
- be consistent.
- use proximity.
- have students set personal goals.
- use self-monitoring strategies.
- use positive correction prompts.
- teach the use of positive and negative consequences.

**When your student experiences difficulty with understanding *new concepts* ..**

- pre-teach new concepts.
- identify priority learning.
- provide adequate time.
- provide meaningful practice, review, repetition.

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- connect previous learning to new information.
- use multiple means of learning the same material (visual, auditory, tactile).
- have students set personal goals.
- use flow charts.
- use multiple intelligences.
- use peer tutors.
- use cooperative learning.
- provide cues.

### **When your student experiences difficulty with *retaining and retrieving information...***

- use multi-modalities (visual, auditory, tactile) to teach the same concept.
- teach vocabulary in context.
- use cues, prompts.
- use graphic organizers.
- use frequent repetition of key points.
- break down instructional units into smaller steps.
- show relationships among concepts through graphs, outlines, and webbing.
- highlight important information.
- use color coding to show concepts and relationships.
- use peer tutors.
- teach mnemonics as a memory tool.
- teach visual imagery.
- use rhythm, music, and movement.
- use lists.
- use matrix to organize information.
- use pictographs.

### **When your student experiences difficulty with *representing new learning in assessment....***

- use of variety of authentic assessments.
- teach test taking strategies.
- teach the format of an upcoming test.
- allow adequate time.
- allow paper-pencil tests to be taken in a different space.
- allow a variety of ways to respond, i.e., orally, pictorial, tape record, etc.
- establish criteria and expectations prior to instruction.
- give choices.
- assess learning over time.
- use rubrics.
- use self-assessment.

### **When your student experiences difficulty with *motor skills/mobility/posture maintenance/manipulation of materials...***

- use concrete examples.
- use models.
- provide adaptive equipment.
- position materials for individual use.
- allow different postures.
- allow adequate time.

- allow alternatives to writing.



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- be aware of the impacts of room arrangement.
- be aware of the impacts of the physical positioning of the individual.
- use peer tutors.
- use physical cues.
- use bold outlines on maps, charts.
- be aware of tasks that require eye movement from one plane to another.
- be aware of fatigue level.
- maintain all participants at same eye level during small group discussion.

### **When your student experiences difficulty with *organizing...***

- use graphic organizers.
- use semantic mapping.
- use planners and calendars.
- teach time management skills.
- post sequence of events.
- teach use of folders, notebooks.
- teach how to clean desk, locker.
- use assignment sheets.

### **Tips for working with *high ability learners...***

- give choices.
- use compacting.
- allow making independent plans for independent learning.
- use theory of Multiple Intelligences.
- use mentoring or Apprenticeship with Professionals.
- teach entrepreneurship.
- teach scientific method.
- allow tutoring/peer coach.
- use Socratic questioning.



