

Strategies-At-a-Glance

Chapter	Differentiated Instruction Strategy or Practice	Conventional Classroom Focus	Differentiated Instruction Classroom Focus	Technology Features
1	Overview and Principles	Use of paper and pencil or low-tech tools to learn or extend learning	Use of computer and Internet technology to learn or extend learning	Personalisation, privacy, collaboration, organisation, authentic learning
2	Interest	Not often assessed, sometimes ignored	Built on student interests and passions, interest centres and groups, new forms of expression; link interests with curriculum; share interests	I-Search, WebQuests, Jigsaw groups, group investigations, Internet
3	Readiness	Sometimes used with reading and maths groups (high, middle, low)	Flexible groups based on readiness, Equaliser tool, scaffolding, tiered assignments	Flexible groups, tiered assignments created with technology tools
4	Learning Profile	Not often assessed, sometimes ignored	Learning style preferences assessed and honoured; learning environment considered; multiple intelligences, culturally-influenced and gender-based preferences considered and sometimes the structure for learning activities	Assessment tools created in technology applications, teacher anecdotal records stored in handhelds or Word documents
5	Content	Teacher + textbooks	Flexible group learning; non-text resources; variety of resources based on readiness, interest and learning profile; curriculum compacting; learning contracts	Content software, Internet sites, multimedia, video streaming
6	Process	Teacher-driven	Student choices, multiple intelligences, interest groups and centres	Student choices, choice board, interactive sites and software

continued

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7	Product	Non-digital tools such as crayons and paper, dioramas, handwritten reports by individuals	Group reports, projects and authentic artefacts using non-digital tools	Digital tools for authentic product creation and sharing of information (Publisher, PowerPoint, Word, Paint, Internet)
8	Encore Subjects	Often whole-class, teacher-driven activities, with exception of pairing or grouping; use of other DI strategies and technology dependent upon teacher knowledge and availability of funds for tech resources	Flexible grouping, learning centres or stations, interest centres or stations, group reports or projects, tiered instruction, authentic documents, varied printed texts and traditional audiovisual resources, skills-based differentiation	Tech-driven flexible grouping, learning centres or stations, interest centres or stations, and tiering; interactive/virtual sites and software; digital tools for authentic documents and product creation; WebQuests and R.A.F.T.s; podcasts, labs, student handhelds and multimedia; student choice and choice boards
9	Assessment	Student assessment after completing a unit or chapter	Use of a wide range of pre-, ongoing and post-assessment tools	Software, online and teacher-made assessments
10	Management	Teacher-driven whole group	Flexible groups, frequent feedback, both oral and written	Voice/email, talking text, student-managed projects, discussion groups, electronic feedback

Web Research Tools

How web research tools will be used in the activity: In the lesson plan below, students will use web resource tools to find facts that they need to generate a biographical summary for their final products. Minimally, students must be able to use kid-safe search engines to hunt by keywords to track down historical information. You can assist your students by guiding them to some useful websites and by modelling how to collect and organise information.

Implementation challenges: When using the web, there's always a possibility that a website might be down, under repair or nonexistent. Computer servers and other equipment may impact Internet connection speed and performance. If your school has filtering software, sites that you or your students may wish to access could be blocked, depending on content. More challenged readers might move more slowly as they scan the sites to search for useful information.

Resources for Web Research Tools

Description	Search engines, dictionaries, encyclopedias, online databases, library catalogues, websites, and other online resources that enable you to locate information based on keywords, dates or topics.
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Where to find software	There are countless resources on the web.
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Where to get help	Paint has a built-in help feature with searchable contents. If you can't find the answer to your question, check the resources below.
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Kids' Tools for Searching the Internet

www.rcls.org/ksearch.htm

Ask for Kids

www.askforkids.com

CyberSleuth Kids

www.cybersleuth-kids.com

KidsClick!

www.kidsclick.org

NoodleQuest

www.noodletools.com/noodlequest/

Kids Online Resources

www.kidsolr.com/reference/

Thinkfinity Search

<http://thinkfinity.org/StudentHome.aspx>

Draw and Paint Software

How draw and paint software will be used in the activity: In the lesson plan below, students must know how to create a picture with draw and paint software (Paint or Kid Pix) and be able to insert it into the word processing or publishing software template.

Implementation challenges: Even children with little experience seem to warm up very quickly to draw and paint software. It takes some practice to become familiar and adept with the drawing tools, and it doesn't allow for much fine detail.

Resources for Draw and Paint Software	
Description	Programs that allow you to simulate the action of drawing and painting via computer. Drawing and painting tools are housed in a toolbox.
Where to find the software	Programs such as Paint normally come with your computer.
Where to get help	<p>Paint has a built-in help feature with searchable contents. If you can't find the answer to your question, check the resources below.</p> <p>Lakewood Public Library's Microsoft Paint Tutorial www.lkwdpl.org/classes/MSPaint/paint.html</p> <p>How to Use Microsoft Paint www.teachers.ash.org.au/geparker/how_to_use_microsoft_paint.htm</p> <p>Microsoft Paint Tutorial www.lesley.edu/faculty/ahunt/MSPttutr.htm</p>

Differentiating by Readiness

Differentiating by readiness means tuning into your students' varying degrees of ability in order to create activities that match their skills and levels of understanding. At the same time, you want to challenge them to move beyond their learning comfort zones to even greater successes.

Based on this definition, you might be asking yourself how differentiation by readiness today is any different from our strategies of days past. It seems that prior to differentiated instruction, teachers often delivered one level of instruction to the whole group of students in nearly every subject area except reading. Do you recall the reading groups named for colours or animals that were popular in primary school? After the first few weeks, how many times did students move out of the groups they started in at the beginning of the year, indicating progress had been made? Not often. While consistency is key, particularly in primary years, teachers must also be attuned to students' shifting needs when changes occur.

Assessment and observation are important tools that help us determine students' readiness levels. We'll talk in more depth about assessment in chapter 9. Teachers who practice DI evaluate the results of pre-, ongoing and post-assessment instruments and then contemplate how they're going to teach their students in ways that meet their academic needs while encouraging them to forge ahead to the next stage of growth. DI theory is founded on the premise that instructors not only recognise the importance of adjusting tactics to better suit ever-changing classroom dynamics, but they also follow through with those modifications.

You may already differentiate by readiness in your classroom by means of one of the following tools or strategies:

- Tiering or tiered assignments (the focal point of this chapter)
- Curriculum compacting (coming in chapter 5)
- Graphic organisers
- Our favourite tool—technology!

Before we move to tiering, the strategy that's the main focus of this chapter, let's pause for a moment to recap the power of graphic organisers and technology in readiness differentiation.

It's easy to underestimate the effectiveness of graphic organisers (GOs) because we rely upon them so regularly. Mark Twain was right when he penned, "Familiarity breeds contempt". This saying might not be accurate all the time, but there's certainly some truth to it. In addition to high frequency of use, it takes just the push of a button to download a template with a GO from the Internet, or to insert a CD with graphics-based software, such as Inspiration or Kidspiration.