

Differentiated teaching

Differentiation approaches drive teaching and learning by putting supports in place to help the student progress to a stronger understanding and independence in the learning process. As the student's knowledge, skill and understanding increases the teacher can fade or remove some of the supports so the learning process is then shifted to the student rather than the teacher. Examples of scaffolding include

- Cueing
- Prompting
- Modelling
- Questioning
- Telling
- Mnemonics, or
- Discussing.

Focused Instruction

Focussed instruction is a four-step approach. Step 1 is to establish a purpose. A purpose will ensure the students are informed about what they will be learning and how they will be applying this learning. Additionally, clear objectives will be established and assist in developing the purpose. Step 2 is modelling and demonstrating. These skills are similar as they both show the student how to complete a task. However, the teacher needs to provide a narrative when demonstrating how to complete the task. This narrative will explain what it is that the teacher is doing, how to do it, when and where to use this skill, and how to know that you are doing it correctly. Step 3 is 'think-aloud'. A 'think-aloud' is where the teacher uses first person and describes how to make decisions, implement skills, activate the problem-solving approaches, and evaluates if success has been achieved. During a 'think-aloud' the teacher needs to keep the focus, pay attention to his/her own thinking, use an authentic voice with "I" statements, think like an expert, and use the vocabulary and cognitive processes that are being taught. Step 4 is noticing. This step involves the teacher noticing and interpreting the students' thinking. This step allows the teacher to determine the effectiveness of the instruction and aids in subsequent instructional decisions. Formative assessments can be used as an aid in this step as well.

Small Group Instruction/Collaborative Learning

Small group methods include think-pair-share; partner work; small group; peer tutoring; I do, We do, You do approach.

Concept Maps

Concept maps present information visually allowing students to see the relationship between the ideas. Concept maps organise ideas in a hierarchy from the most general information to the most specific. The concepts are written in boxes or circles and then arrows link the boxes/circles. On the arrows, linking words are written so students can see the relationship between the concepts.

Mind Map

Mind mapping presents information visually. A mind map consists of a central word or picture that's written/placed in a central box or circle. There are five or more smaller boxes/circles branching off the central box/circle for ideas associated with the central word/picture.

Guided Practice

Guided practice is when the teacher demonstrates how to solve the problem or complete the task. The teacher can do this through modelling and 'think aloud' (talking aloud as they solve the problem) for example. Students then spend additional time rephrasing, elaborating, and summarizing the new material for them to be able to store this new information into working memory and then long-term memory. Rehearsal and practice are very important for retrieval of information.

Check for Understanding

Checking for understanding is important throughout and at the end of the lesson. This allows the teacher to check if the students have understood the skill or if it needs to be retaught, or if students are ready to move to more complex skills. There are many different strategies that can be used to check for understanding:

- ask questions
- have students be the teacher and explain how to do something
- partner work – students will check their partners work and help make any corrections
- student tells one skill from the lesson that they feel confident they understand and one skill they are still having difficulty with.
- ticket out the door – student must answer a question, or state one thing they have learned from the lesson, explain something, identify an error.

Brainstorming

Brainstorming is the process for generating new ideas. Brainstorming can be used at the beginning of a unit to introduce the topic. For example, in maths the students can be given a new maths problem and asked to solve it. The students will then come up with various methods to solve the problem. Or the students could be given a topic and they must list or say everything they know or think they know about the topic. This method allows the teacher to determine what the students know prior to the beginning of a unit.

Word Splash

Word splash is a comprehension and vocabulary strategy. It is used at the beginning of a unit to introduce important terminology or key concepts. The words can be 'splashed' on the SMART board and the students must brainstorm how to connect the words or phrases. The students can also predict how the words relate to the main topic of the unit. This strategy can also be used in maths to teach terminology. The students guess what each term means and how they relate to one another. The teacher can display the 'splashed' words on a board in the classroom, so they can be referred to throughout the unit.

Play Based Learning

Play-based learning allows students to have fun and to work at their own pace and their own way. Play based learning allows students the opportunity to develop their fine and gross motor skills. Play also allows students to develop their imagination and creativity, as well as their social skills. Teachers can ask questions, interact, and participate with the students during play-based learning. For example, a nature walk allows students to walk outside and collect various objects found in nature that they may have been learning about in science. Once back in the classroom students can talk about what they have collected and create a project based on the objects

Key factors for effective explicit teaching

- giving clear, short instructions and directions with communication supports as needed
- implementing evidence-based, student-focussed adaptive and augmented communication skills teaching, supports and resources
- developing and implementing clear instructional goals and sharing those with the student
- applying consistent behavioural requirements
- supporting and expecting compliance with instructional supports so students learn the behaviours required
- assessing compliance and modality supports required and implementing adjustments and accommodations
- managing and supporting transitions
- managing and supporting 'start' and 'end' of activities, lessons, etc.
- using and fading contextual cues
- using visual representations to foster learning and behaviour
- ensuring ways so that the student knows they are succeeding
- implementing strategies so students access and work towards permanence
- recognising cause and effect recognition
- specifically teaching how to participate in least preferred activities and environments
- specifically teaching how to know and to ask for help, say when finished, say when bored, say when tired etc.
- specifically teaching how to recognise and communicate anxiety, fear, boredom etc.