

Characteristics of Differentiation



On-going assessment of student readiness and growth are built into the curriculum.



Teachers do not assume that all students need a "one-size-fits-all" approach. They assess students' needs and adjust instruction and materials to meet the needs of individual students.

Instruction is concept focused and principle driven -

Students have the opportunity to explore and apply the key concepts of the content. All students come to understand the key principles on which the study is based. Such an instructional approach enables struggling learners to grasp and use powerful ideas and, at the same time, encourages advanced learners to expand their understanding and APPLICATION of the key concepts and principles. Such instruction stresses understanding or sense-making, rather than retention and regurgitation of information. Concept-based and principle-driven instruction invites teachers to provide varied learning options. A 'coverage-based' (traditional) curriculum may cause a teacher to feel compelled to see that all students do the same work. In the former, all students have the opportunity to explore meaningful ideas through a variety of avenues and approaches (Tomlinson, C., 2014).

Characteristics of a differentiated classroom

There is no single image of what a differentiated classroom looks like, however there are some common characteristics of such classrooms. These shared characteristics reveal the nature of differentiation. They drive differentiation.

Four characteristics shape teaching and learning in an effective differentiated classroom:

- Instruction is concept focused and principle driven
- On-going assessment of student readiness and growth are built into the curriculum
- Flexible grouping is consistently used
- Students are active learners; teachers guide the exploration. (Tomlinson, C., 2014)





Student Agency

AGORA is committed to the development of a high-quality curriculum for all students that promotes excellence and equity in education.

All students are invited to explore, inquire and engage in LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES. From the moment they enter classrooms, students take ownership of the shape of their learning. Current focus of learning, examples, goals and interests and their outcomes, direct resources. The differentiated design of AGORA National Curriculum, connecting learning cases, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities, provides teachers with flexibility to cater for the diverse needs of students across Australia and to personalise their learning.

These detailed advice has been developed for schools and teachers on using the Australian Curriculum to meet diverse learning needs and to promote equity. Shared directly on the Australian Curriculum website (Australian Curriculum, 2014).



Characteristics of Differentiation



The ongoing assessment of students' readiness and growth are built into the curriculum.



Teachers do not assume that all students need a particular level of challenge, so they assess, and adjust, practice to meet individual needs and abilities, and consider every student when they plan or adapt their practice (Tomlinson, C., 2014).

Instruction is concept focused and principle driven -

Students have the opportunity to explore and apply the key concepts of the content. All students come to understand the key principles on which the study is based. Such an instructional approach enables struggling learners to grasp and use powerful ideas and, at the same time, encourages advanced learners to expand their understanding and APPLICATION of the key concepts and principles. Such instruction stresses understanding or sense-making, rather than retention and regurgitation of information. Concept-based and principle-driven instruction invites teachers to provide varied learning options. A 'coverage-based' (traditional) curriculum may cause a teacher to feel compelled to see that all students do the same work. In the former, all students have the opportunity to explore meaningful ideas through a variety of avenues and approaches (Tomlinson, C., 2014).

Characteristics of a differentiated classroom

- There is no single theory of what a differentiated classroom looks like. However, there are some common characteristics of such classrooms. These should characterize every school of differentiated teachers. They define differentiation.
- Four characteristics shape teaching and learning in an effective differentiated classroom:
 - Instruction is concept focused and principle driven
 - On-going assessment of student readiness and growth are built into the curriculum
 - Flexible grouping is continuously used
 - Students are active explorers, teachers guide by implication. (Tomlinson, C., 2014)



Student Agency

ACARA is committed to the development of a high quality curriculum for all Australian students that provides challenge and equity to students.

All students are entitled to quality, relevant and engaging LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES across the Australian Curriculum. Moreover, we have also ensured the range of our content 'covers' most of learning, thinking, skills and systems and some challenges where necessary. The three-dimensional design of the Australian Curriculum, comprising learning goals, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities, provides teachers with flexibility to meet the diverse needs of students across Australia and to personalise their learning.

More detailed advice has been developed for schools and teachers on using the Australian Curriculum to meet diverse learning needs and a number of the linked Strategy on the Australian Curriculum website (Australian Curriculum, 2014).

Characteristics of a differentiated classroom

There is no single image of what a differentiated classroom looks like, however there are some common characteristics of such classrooms. These shared characteristics reveal the nature of differentiation. They define differentiation.

Four characteristics shape teaching and learning in an effective differentiated classroom:

- Instruction is concept focused and principle driven
- On-going assessment of student readiness and growth are built into the curriculum
- Flexible grouping is consistently used
- Students are active explorers, teachers guide the exploration

(Tomlinson, C., 2014)



- **Instruction is concept focused and principle driven -**

Students have the opportunity to explore and apply the key concepts of the content. All students come to understand the key principles on which the study is based. Such an instructional approach enables struggling learners to grasp and use powerful ideas and, at the same time, encourages advanced learners to expand their understanding and APPLICATION of the key concepts and principles. Such instruction stresses understanding or sense-making, rather than retention and regurgitation of information. Concept-based and principle-driven instruction invites teachers to provide varied learning options. A 'coverage-based' (traditional) curriculum may cause a teacher to feel compelled to see that all students do the same work. In the former, all students have the opportunity to explore meaningful ideas through a variety of avenues and approaches (Tomlinson, C., 2014).



- **On-going assessment of student readiness and growth are built into the curriculum**

Teachers do not assume that all students need a given task. But continuously assess student readiness and interest, providing support when students need additional instruction and guidance, and extending student exploration when indications are that a student or group of students are ready to move ahead (Tomlinson, C., 2014).



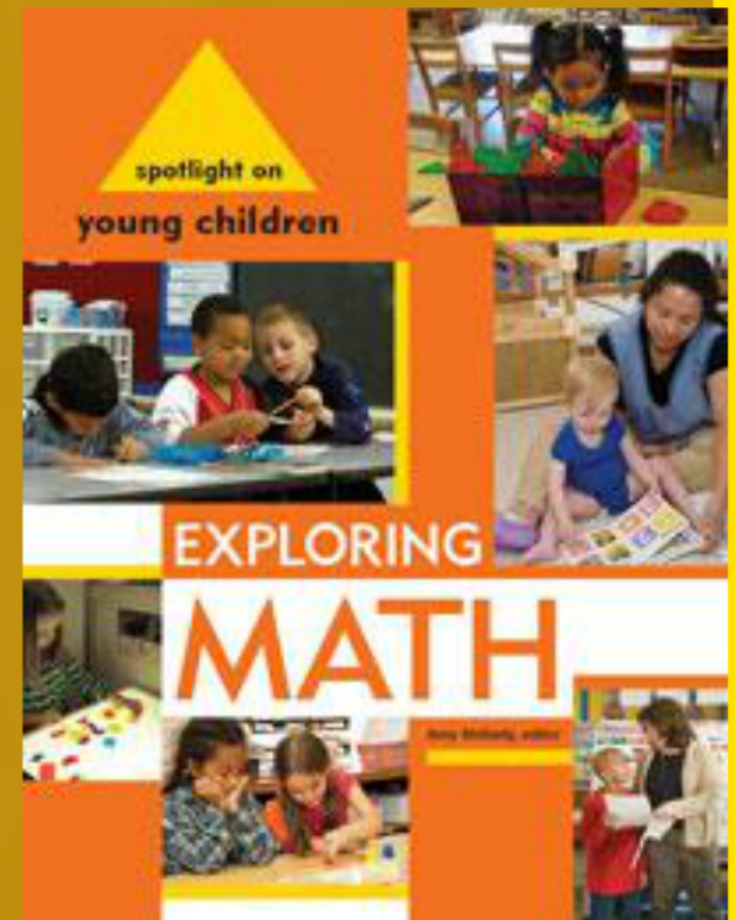
- **Flexible grouping is consistently used**

In a differentiated class, students work in many patterns. They may work alone, in pairs or in groups. Some tasks are readiness-based, some interest-based, some constructed to match learning style, while others a combination of readiness, interest, and learning style. In a differentiated classroom, whole-group instruction may also be used for introducing new ideas, when planning, and for sharing learning outcomes (Tomlinson, C., 2014).



- **Students are active explorers, teachers guide the exploration**

The teacher works as a guide or facilitator of learning than as a dispenser of information. This way students learn to be responsible for their own work. Not only does such student-centeredness give students more ownership of their learning, but it also facilitates the important adolescent learning goal of growing independence in thought, planning, and evaluation. Implicit in such instruction is (1) goal-setting shared by teacher and student based on student readiness, interest, and learning profile, and (2) assessment predicated on student growth and goal attainment (Tomlinson, C., 2014).



Student diversity

ACARA is committed to the development of a high-quality curriculum for all Australian students that promotes excellence and equity in education.

All students are entitled to rigorous, relevant and engaging LEARNING PROGRAMS drawn from the Australian Curriculum: Mathematics. Teachers take account of the range of their students' current levels of learning, strengths, goals and interests and make adjustments where necessary. The three-dimensional design of the Australian Curriculum, comprising learning areas, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities, provides teachers with flexibility to cater for the diverse needs of students across Australia and to personalize their learning.

More detailed advice has been developed for schools and teachers on using the Australian Curriculum to meet diverse learning needs and is available under Student Diversity on the Australian Curriculum website (Australian Curriculum, 2014).