

Supplemental Aids and Services: Decision Making and Planning

This section will explore the variety of considerations professional educators take into account when designing instructional opportunities for all students. The focus is on providing activities and instruction, and on utilizing learner's interests, readiness levels, prior experiences, and strengths to promote success and growth. Recognizing that students receive and use knowledge in various ways, you will find a variety of strategies and considerations to support you as you plan and implement instruction.

Assumptions:

Differentiating instruction and providing appropriate instructional supports and adaptations is critical to the success of all learners.

It is appropriate and desirable to implement instruction which is designed based on the knowledge of the diversity of learning styles inherent in any given classroom. Instructional adaptations and differentiated instruction demonstrate the professional educator's desire to provide success-laden opportunities for all students, from those who are skilled beyond the expected proficiencies to those who are challenged by the proficiencies.

Differentiated instruction and instructional adaptation must become the rule rather than the exception.

Instructional adaptation is not new. Educators differentiate instructional strategies, materials, assignments, routines, and expectations for individual student achievement, behavior and participation every day. The likelihood that learning will take place for all students in a classroom increases as educators gain skills in restructuring learning opportunities.

Collaborative planning is essential to support the needs of all learners.

Educators recognize that the rapidly increasing diversity represented in our classrooms requires colleagues to work together to effect positive outcomes for all students. Collaboration is an essential skill and tool in developing, implementing, and assessing instructional strategies. When team members meet and/or work together collaboratively, they learn from one another, thus enhancing their own skills while providing a richer learning environment for all students.

Instructional adaptation is neither prescriptive nor precise.

There are no cookbooks, magic wands, prescriptive methodologies or remedies that can give answers on how to support any one student. In settings where learners are encouraged to link prior knowledge to new experiences, teachers readily use their information about the students in the classroom to provide the variety of activities necessary to ensure participation of all students in respectful, challenging learning events. The learning environment supports the diverse styles, experiences, and strengths of all students. Consequently, instructional adaptation is not a divergent path, but rather the road to enhancing opportunities for children to build on their learning through experiences that are personalized. This does not require one-on-one instruction. It does require using flexible groupings and differentiated instruction.