

ADDRESSING EACH LEARNER'S NEEDS THROUGH DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

by:

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Differentiated learning, often referred to as differentiated education, is a method of teaching and learning that takes into account all of a student's requirements, interests, and talents in order to help them learn as much as possible. It is based on the understanding that every student is unique and has varying learning styles, preferences, and strengths. Therefore, differentiation aims to provide a customized and flexible learning experience that caters to the individual needs of each student.

One of the key principles of differentiated learning is the recognition of students' various learning styles. It acknowledges that learners have different preferences for acquiring and processing new information. Some students may benefit from visual aids and graphic organizers, while others may learn better through auditory or kinesthetic approaches. Consequently, differentiated instruction employs a variety of teaching strategies and resources to engage students and help them access the curriculum in a way that is most effective for them.

Differentiated learning also takes into account students' readiness levels. Students enter classrooms with different prior knowledge, experiences, and skills, and teachers must adjust their teaching accordingly. In a differentiated classroom, students are provided with different levels of complexity and challenge based on their readiness. This may involve offering additional support and scaffolding for struggling learners, or providing enrichment activities and extended learning opportunities for advanced learners. The goal is to ensure that all students are appropriately challenged and engaged in their learning.

Another important aspect of differentiated learning is the consideration of students' interests and preferences. When students are allowed to explore topics that are personally meaningful to them, their motivation and engagement in learning significantly increase. By incorporating students' interests into the curriculum, teachers can create a more relevant and engaging learning environment. For example, a science teacher may provide students with a choice of research topics related to an upcoming unit, allowing them to pursue areas they are passionate about.

Differentiated learning can also be manifested through flexible grouping strategies. Students are frequently grouped based on their learning needs and abilities, allowing for targeted instruction. Flexible grouping may involve small group instruction, one-on-one support, or collaboration among peers. By grouping students accordingly, teachers can provide focused instruction and support to individual or small groups of students, ensuring that their specific needs are met.

One of the greatest benefits of differentiated learning is its ability to promote inclusivity and accommodate diverse learners. Students with special educational needs, English language learners, and gifted students often require tailored support and accommodations to fully participate in classroom activities. Differentiated instruction can help create an inclusive learning environment where all students have equal opportunities to succeed.

In conclusion, differentiated learning is a student-centered approach to teaching and learning that recognizes and responds to the diverse needs, interests, and abilities of students. By taking into account different learning styles, readiness levels, interests, and preferences, teachers can effectively engage and support students in their learning journey. Differentiated learning promotes inclusivity, fosters engagement, and maximizes the learning potential of all students, creating a dynamic and effective classroom environment.

References:

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