

Inclusionary Practices and Systems:

DIFFERENTIATED CURRICULUM PLANNING

WHAT IS DIFFERENTIATED CURRICULUM PLANNING??

Differentiated curriculum planning involves teachers proactively creating a variety of ways for students to acquire content, process ideas, and develop products that match their strengths, needs, and interests. This type of planning is deeply tied to strong and varied assessment practices. Assessment is planned to occur throughout the unit and is used routinely to determine student readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles.

WHY IS DIFFERENTIATED CURRICULUM PLANNING IMPORTANT? WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES?

Differentiated curriculum planning takes a student-centered lens through which teachers create engaging, relevant, and interesting lessons. This type of planning recognizes the importance of designing curriculum that is rigorous, while ensuring that the level of rigor is appropriate for students. Additionally, differentiated curriculum planning requires teachers to design lessons that help students take increasing responsibility for their learning, as students are tasked with active decision making, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation.



IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- Establish clear goals.
- Create a variety of goal-aligned assessments to occur routinely.
- Maintain high expectations for all students by creating supports and scaffolds.
- Keep a strengths-based lens when planning.
- Prioritize making lessons relevant
- Plan to teach students routines, expectations, and values for engaging successfully during differentiated instruction.



CASE STUDY: Mark Twain Elementary School

Teams at Mark Twain Elementary in the Lake Washington school district work diligently to create opportunities for all students to access core instruction. Through their “core plus more model,” they aim to engage all students in core instruction by collaboratively planning and implementing differentiated access points to the general education curriculum. In addition to accessing core, all students engage in differentiated Power Groups, data-driven blocks of intervention, reteaching and/or extension.



n the context of Twain’s hybrid learning model, teams have pivoted to plan instruction that maintains their vision for differentiated and accessible instruction. They have recognized the importance of engaging with families as partners in this work. In order to maintain consistent communication with families, Twain’s teams send home detailed learning plans each week that include several access points. Families are able to use these access points to engage their children in differentiated instruction that is responsive to their particular child. Below is a snapshot of the Kindergarten team’s learning plan for families:

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| Math | 9:40-10:30 | Envision Topic 4.5 Repeated Reasoning. | <p>Guided practice together, pages 55 and 56 in your workbook. Try the Independent Practice online on your own! Check out the Math Menu to practice more skills learned in class!</p> <p>Extra Support 1: <i>When using the number sequence, write it out on a big piece of paper. Sometimes seeing it larger helps students</i></p> <p>Extra Support 2: <i>Use more preferred manipulatives to model problems in your workbook (i.e. cars, stuffies, etc.)</i></p> <p>Extra Support 3: <i>If still working to master greater than, or less than within 10, work on this skill with manipulatives. Grownups, you can make this into a fun game to increase motivation. With your student, you each make a block train however long you want (within 10) then you show each other your block trains. Whoever has the greater block train gets a point!</i></p> |
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Please visit our website, ipdemosites.org, to learn more about the work at Mark Twain Elementary School and to view or download additional artifacts from their inclusive education journey.

RESOURCES

1. **Tomlinson, C.A.** (2001). *How to differentiate instruction in mixed-ability classrooms*. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ACSD).