



Differentiated Instruction for Quality Holistic Learning in Displacement Settings

Educator differentiates their instruction and assessment to support the diversity of learners in displacement settings.

Competency Info

Multilingual Guidance

L'enseignement différencié pour un apprentissage holistique de qualité dans les situations de déplacement

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توجيهات مختلفة لتوفير تعليم عالي الجودة في أماكن النزوح

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Key Method

The educator differentiates instruction within a lesson (or lesson series) and creates a choice board as a differentiated assessment to evaluate student learning around the lesson objective(s).

Method Components

Research shows that educators who differentiate their instruction offer greater inclusion, access, and success to all learners in their classrooms. Differentiated instruction both anticipates and addresses learner variability. Teachers can differentiate the lesson content, the learning process, the learning environment, and the final products according to students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles (Tomlinson, 1999).

Classrooms in displacement settings may have particular challenges, which educators need to consider as they choose differentiation strategies. First, class sizes may be large, with 50 or more students. Second, classrooms may have limited resources, especially related to technology. Third, students in the same class may have a significant range of experiences with formal schooling and may have experienced significant trauma. And fourth, students in displaced contexts may be learning in a new language. Differentiation in displacement contexts, therefore, requires strategies that not only consider the differences we typically see in classrooms, but also the available resources, the students' resilience and social and emotional needs, and the language demands of the curriculum.

Key Terminology

According to Carol Tomlinson (1997), **Differentiated Instruction (DI)** is a *responsive* teaching approach whereby the teacher "anticipates the differences in students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles and, as a result, creates different learning paths so that students have the opportunity to learn as much as they can as deeply as they can."

Learner variability is "a term to describe all students who enter the classroom and bring with them a unique constellation of abilities and experiences that matter when it comes to learning" (Pape, 2018). Learners can vary in any number of ways including in their (new) language proficiency levels, literacy levels, cultural backgrounds, family dynamics, schooling expectations/past experiences, interests, and goals.

Quality holistic learning refers to a pedagogical approach that takes into account the learner in all their aspects: academic, emotional, social, physical, and psychological. A quality holistic learning program will allow all learners to develop their knowledge, competencies, values, and social skills.

Displacement settings refer to education contexts where learners have been "forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters" (International Organization for Migration).

Core Components

Educators will use the Submission Checklist (found at the beginning of the Resources section below) to submit **two components** for this micro-credential. The *first* will demonstrate how an educator in a displacement setting can differentiate their lessons, and the *second* will demonstrate how the educator can differentiate their assessments.

The submission will include the following **two components**:

1. **Demonstrate your ability to differentiate your lessons.**
 1. The educator will plan a lesson (or series of lessons) with a clear learning objective. In this lesson, the educator will differentiate *at least two* of the following three aspects of the lesson:
 - 1) the **content** of the lesson
 - 2) the **process** the students use for learning
 - 3) the **learning environment** itself.
 2. The educator will try the lesson with their students.
 3. The educator will explain how each differentiation strategy supported or did not support specific students in their classroom/context, considering both students' strengths and needs in the written explanation.

2. **Demonstrate your ability to differentiate your assessments.**
 1. The educator will design a choice board that gives students *at least two* options for demonstrating their competency(ies) around the lesson's objective(s).
 2. The educator will explain how each product option on the choice board can support their specific students' unique strengths, preferences, and needs when it comes time to demonstrate and assess learning.

Supporting Rationale and Research

Supporting Rationale

The number of forcibly displaced people has nearly doubled in the last five years, with an estimated 103 million forcibly displaced people as of mid-2022 (UNHCR, 2022). Forty percent or more of these displaced people are children under the age of 18. This dramatic change in student populations in displaced settings has posed an extra challenge for teachers. Many of the displaced students have experienced trauma as well as interrupted formal education, which results in academic challenges

such as lower levels of numeracy and literacy (Gottlieb, 2006). However, refugee and displaced learners are strong and resilient. They come to schools with many attributes including, but not limited to, a strong desire to learn, multilingualism, and many varied and rich life experiences. Differentiated instruction is one way in which educators can adapt their teaching practice to meet the needs and build on the talents and hopes of their diverse learners.

A QHL Fellow from Niger (2023) teaching in a displaced setting observed that “Differentiated instruction is important to meet...student needs because students do not progress at the same speed, because they do not have the same repertoire of behaviors, because they are not motivated to achieve the same goals. It can enable each student to master knowledge and skills...and can fight against school dropout and also bring each student to the maximum of his or her potential.”

In sum, “Differentiated instruction recognizes and celebrates students’ varied backgrounds, experiences, and assets, which can support the development of a more inclusive and inviting learning environment. Ultimately, differentiated instruction is essential because it ensures that all students get the resources and assistance they require to achieve” (Kassab, 2023, QHL Senior Fellow in Lebanon).

Supporting Research

- Bahanshal, D. (2013). [The effect of large classes on English teaching and learning in Saudi secondary schools](#). *English Language Teaching*, Vol. 6(11), 49–59.
- Fitzsimons, S. et al. (2020). [Context matters: Adaptation guidance for developing a local curriculum from an international curriculum framework](#). *Research Matters*, 30, 12–18.
- Newcomer, S. N., Ardasheva, Y., Morrison, J. A., Ernst-Slavit, G., Morrison, S. J., Carbonneau K. J., & Lightner, L. K. (2021). [“Whoa... Welcome to America!”: Supporting refugee background students’ socioemotional well-being, English language development, and content area learning](#). *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 35(3), 417–437.

In this article, researchers describe similarities and differences in two elementary teachers’ approaches to support the social-emotional well-being and learning of refugee students.

- New Zealand Ministry of Education (n.d.). [Learner variability matters](#). *Inclusive Education*. Retrieved April 20, 2023
- Niño Santisteban, L. (2014). [The effects of differentiated instruction on the literacy process of learners with interrupted schooling](#). *GIST – Education and Learning Research Journal*, (9), 31–49.
- Pape, B. (2018). [Learner variability is the rule, not the exception](#). *Digital Promise Global*.

- Tieso, C. (2005). [The effects of grouping practices and curricular adjustments on achievement](#). *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 29(1), 60–89.
- Tomlinson, C. A. (1999). *The differentiated classroom responding to the needs of all learners*. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. Scientific Research Publishing.
 - [Chapter sample](#)
 - [Worldcat Library](#)
- Tomlinson, C. A. (2017). *How to differentiate instruction in academically diverse classrooms* (3rd ed.) Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
 - [Chapter sample](#)
 - [Worldcat Library](#)

Resources

Submission Checklist for this Micro-credential ([pdf](#) or [google doc](#))

Templates for PART 2 Submissions

- Lesson plan template ([pdf](#) or [google doc](#))
- Choice board template ([pdf](#) or [google doc](#))

Examples of Differentiation in Lessons

- by Content ([pdf](#) or [google doc](#))
- by Process ([pdf](#) or [google doc](#))
- by Learning Environment ([pdf](#) or [google doc](#))

Examples Differentiation in Assessments/Products

- Differentiating Products in Displacement Contexts ([pdf](#) or [google doc](#))
- [Choice Boards: A Powerful Way to Engage and Assess Your Students](#)
- [Choice Boards: Benefits, Design Tips, and Differentiation](#)
- [Five Choice Boards with Free Templates](#)

General Differentiated Instruction Resources

- More [Lesson Plan Templates](#) from CPL’s Differentiated Instruction in Displacement Context Workshops (2023)
- [“Differentiated Instruction in Displacement Settings”](#) Short Course by the Center for Professional Learning at Childhood Education International
- VIDEO: [Introduction to Differentiation: Responsive Teaching](#) (Tomlinson, 2016)
- VIDEO: [Differentiation and the Brain](#) (Tomlinson, 2013)
- VIDEO: [Differentiating Instruction: A guide for teaching English language learners](#) (Ferlazzo and Synieski, 2019)

- GRAPHIC: [“Differentiation by Content, Process, Product and Environment”](#) (CPL, 2023; adapted from Resilient Educator)
- [Differentiation Strategies and Examples Handbook: Grades 6–12](#) (TN Dept of Education)
- [Teaching a Classroom with Big Ability Differences](#) (Finley, 2017)
- On Grouping Practices:
 - [Differentiation and Diversity and Inclusion/Grouping Practices](#) (Lindner et al., 2021)
 - [Flexible Grouping in Differentiation](#) (WI DPI, 2011)
- On Managing Large Class Sizes:
 - [Tools for Teaching: Managing Large Class Sizes](#) (Edutopia, 2015)
 - [12 Sanity-Saving Tips for Managing Large Class Sizes](#) (Mulvahill, 2021)
 - [What to Consider when Teaching English in Large Classes](#) (Anderson, 2016)
 - From [the Education in Emergencies Toolkit](#), here is a two-page [Sample Teacher Workshop: Large Class Size](#) with differentiation strategies (INEE, n.d.)
- On Differentiated Instruction and Inclusion/Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
 - [UDL and Differentiation and How they are Connected](#) (NZ Ministry of Ed, n.d.)
 - [Understanding UDL vs Differentiated Instruction](#) (Vahey & Benedikit, 2022)

Submission Guidelines & Evaluation Criteria

To earn the micro-credential, you must receive a passing evaluation in Part 1 and Part 3. In Part 2, you will need to earn a “Proficient” score for ALL criteria.

Part 1. Overview

Your context

(300-word limit)

Please use your own words. If you do include information from another author to support your ideas, please put their words in quotation marks and cite your source (give the author credit).

Provide a brief but detailed description of yourself as an educator working with students in a displacement context. Answer *all* of the following questions to help paint a clear picture for the assessor.

1. What is your role?
 2. How long have you been in this role?
 3. What makes your teaching and learning context a “displacement setting”?
 4. In your perspective, how is teaching in a displacement setting different from other education contexts?
 5. What strengths do you bring to your role as an educator?
- **Passing:** The educator clearly describes their role and strengths as a teacher in a displacement context.

The Need for Differentiated Instruction in Your Context

(300-word limit)

Please write about your class and students specifically. Please use your own words. If you do include information from another author to support your ideas, please put their words in quotation marks and cite your source (give the author credit).

1. For this micro-credential, you will be designing and teaching a lesson that uses differentiated instruction. Briefly describe the class and students that you will teach for this lesson. Include the following information:
 - name/subject of class
 - expected language(s) of instruction
 - grade/age range of students in this class
 - number of students in this class
 - students’ countries of origin

- students' first languages
 - anything else about this specific class that will help the assessor understand your context for this lesson.
2. Please describe how the student differences *in this class* create a need for differentiated instruction strategies *in this lesson*.
NOTE: You do *not* need to talk about *all* student differences. Instead, focus your brief, but detailed, response on the differences among your students that require you to differentiate instruction. Differences can include students' assets/strengths alongside their challenges/needs.
- **Passing:** The educator clearly describes the class they will be using for this micro-credential and also describes the students who are members of this class. The educator highlights the student differences that most necessitate differentiated instruction in lessons and assessments for this class.

Part 2. Work Examples / Artifacts

To earn this micro-credential, please submit evidence of your competency in the area of differentiated instruction by describing how you differentiate both your instruction (lessons) and your assessments. You must complete both component 1 (differentiated lesson) and component 2 (differentiated assessment) and include all required documents for each component.

Note: *While you may work with a colleague to get ideas, you must turn in original work. If your submission is identical to another educator's, it cannot be scored.*

1. Differentiated Lesson: Content, Process and Learning Environment

You will turn in **two pieces of evidence** for this component: 1) a lesson plan that includes at least two clearly differentiated elements (a template is linked in the Submission Checklist and in the Resources section), and 2) an explanation of how your differentiation strategies supported or did not support specific student strengths and needs when you implemented the lesson plan.

Directions:

1. Write the **learning objective(s)** at the top of your lesson plan. What will your students know or be able to do after they complete this lesson? This may include both content knowledge/skill and social-emotional learning.
2. **Create a two-column chart.** (See a template in the Submission Checklist and in the Resources section.)
 - In the *left column*, outline your lesson – its beginning, middle, and end. Include a brief description of important activities,

student configurations, and materials you will use during this lesson.

- In the *right column*, describe how you will differentiate at least two elements of your lesson. You can differentiate your lesson **content**, the way your students **process** the lesson, or something about the **learning environment** itself. (See the Resources section for examples of each type of differentiation.)
3. **Try the lesson** with your students.
 4. **Write a description analyzing your implementation of the lesson.** Describe the impact of differentiation in that lesson on student **holistic learning outcomes (academic achievement and/or social-emotional learning/psychosocial wellbeing)**. Specifically, evaluate how your differentiated elements for content, process, and/or learning environment supported inclusion, access, and success for all learners in your class (or how they didn't). Give clear examples of how each differentiated element supported specific students' strengths and needs or why you think they didn't work. *Please do not include students' real names in your analysis and reflection. Instead, use student initials or fake names.*

2. Differentiated Assessment: Product Choice Board

You will turn in **two pieces of evidence** for this component: 1) a choice board, and 2) a written explanation of the rationale behind your product options on the choice board. A template is included in the Submission Checklist and in the Resources section.

Directions:

1. Thinking of the learning objective(s) from your lesson, **design a choice board** with *at least two options* for students to show their learning around the objective(s). (There is a template linked in the Submission Checklist and in the Resources section, along with examples of choice boards.) Be sure that your choice board options are understandable for students, with a clear title and brief description. Many choice boards also include pictures to help clarify the assignment.
2. **Write a brief explanation** of how each product (assessment choice) on the choice board gives different types of students in your class an opportunity to show learning in a way that acknowledges their unique strengths and needs.

Criteria	Proficient	Almost There	Not Yet	Missing
1. Differentiated Lesson: A lesson outline that includes two differentiated elements (for content, process and/or learning environment)	The educator provides a clear lesson outline AND The educator clearly describes at least two elements of the lesson that they will differentiate.	The educator provides a clear lesson outline AND The educator clearly describes only one element of the lesson that they will differentiate.	The educator provides a lesson outline, although the progression and/or objective(s) are unclear AND/OR The educator names but does not describe elements of instruction that they will differentiate.	The educator does not include a lesson plan AND/OR The educator does not identify any elements of the lesson to be differentiated.
2. Differentiated Lesson: Written evaluation of differentiated elements including: - An analysis of <i>why</i> each differentiated element succeeded in including and supporting students or <i>why</i> it may have failed - Specific examples	<i>After</i> implementing the lesson, the educator clearly evaluates the success or failure of at least two differentiated elements of instruction in the lesson.	<i>After</i> implementing the lesson, the educator clearly evaluates the success or failure of one differentiated instruction element of the lesson.	<i>After</i> implementing the lesson, the educator discusses the lesson but fails to clearly evaluate the differentiated instruction elements.	The educator does not include a post-lesson discussion or evaluation.
3. Differentiated Assessment: Choice Board, including - At least two options - A title for each product option - A brief explanation of each product option	The choice board includes at least two clear options for students to show their learning on the lesson objective(s).	The choice board includes at least two options for the students to show their learning on the lesson objective(s), but one of the options may not be clear.	The product options on the choice board are incomplete or unclear.	The educator does not include a choice board.
4. Differentiated Assessment: Explanation of Product Choices	The educator clearly explains why each product option on the choice	The educator clearly explains why one of their product options will give different	The educator does not clearly explain why these product options will support different types of	The educator does not include an explanation of the product choices.

	board will give different types of students a way to show their learning. The educator describes why specific students might choose one product or another.	types of students a way to show their learning. The educator may or may not describe why specific students would choose this option.	students in showing their learning.	
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Part 3 Reflection

(500-word limit or 5-min max. audio/video recording)

Reflect on your personal experience designing differentiated instruction and assessments for your diverse learners.

Please write about your own teaching strategies, growth, class, and students. Please use your own words. If you do include information from another author to support your ideas, please put their words in quotation marks and cite your source (give the author credit).

You must address **all** questions below.

- What did you learn from this process in general and, more specifically, about how to use differentiated instruction effectively in displacement settings?
- When considering the diverse learning needs of your students, what do you find challenging, and how will you continue to learn and grow in your practice as an educator?
- How does differentiated instruction contribute to holistic learning, especially for your students of refugee backgrounds and other vulnerable populations in displacement settings?
- How do you plan to use differentiated instruction in your classes in the future?
- **Passing:** Reflections clearly connect theory to practice. Educator critically addresses their experience differentiating instruction for a specific lesson/unit in their particular teaching and learning context. Educator reflects on their own strengths and learning in this process, and considers how learning about differentiated instruction will continue to impact their work as an educator in displacement settings.