When we plan for teaching and learning, whether we are planning for differentiation or not, it is critical to ensure that the focus for instruction, assessment and evaluation is aligned with the knowledge and skills related to the curriculum expectations chosen for that particular lesson or unit.

Wiggins and McTighe, in *Understanding by Design*, provide a sequence of questions as part of their framework for designing instruction, assessment and evaluation:

- What do I want students to learn?
- How will I know they have learned it?
- How will I design instruction and assessment to help them learn?

This up-front planning of evaluation tasks is essential to the design of differentiated instruction and assessment. These evaluation tasks include:

1. Clear descriptions of “what it looks like when students demonstrate the intended learning”, as well as,
2. Criteria that help us judge how well students demonstrate this learning.

Although demonstrations of learning may differ from student to student in a differentiated classroom (e.g., one student may demonstrate understanding of a concept through an oral presentation; another through a written summary), the curriculum expectations on which they are based and the criteria on which the demonstrations are judged are the same.

“Beginning with the end in mind” guides the overall design of instruction, assessment and evaluation for a unit or lesson.

“Students’ keenness to have choice and options is very helpful .... and motivational. Ultimately we collectively come up with a more enriched assignment/performance task for the student.”

Teacher—Student Success Differentiated Instruction In Action Survey (2008–09)