Differentiated instruction is a cyclical process of finding out about the learner and responding by differentiating.

When we know the learner’s strengths and needs (readiness, interests and learner preferences), we can respond by differentiating:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What students learn about and where they begin learning (e.g., topic, entry point)</th>
<th>CONTENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The ways we help students learn—through instruction and assessment (e.g., researching a topic at a learning centre, participating in a jigsaw, identifying similarities and differences)</td>
<td>PROCESS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ways students demonstrate their learning—through assessment and evaluation (e.g., creating a product from a choice board, oral or written presentation)</td>
<td>PRODUCT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditions for learning (e.g., quiet or busy, alone or with others)</td>
<td>LEARNING ENVIRONMENT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Responding by Differentiating involves:

- Using appropriate, evidence-based strategies for instruction, assessment and evaluation;
- Using structures or ways of organizing that facilitate student learning; and
- Providing choice, respectful tasks, a shared responsibility for learning and flexible learning groups (key features of differentiated instruction).
### 1. Flexible Learning Groups

**Sample Indicators:**
- Groupings are based on prior assessment of student learning, interests and/or learning preferences
- Groupings are sometimes determined by the students, sometimes by the teacher and sometimes randomly
- Students are comfortable working in groups and follow collaborative group norms
- Students are grouped and regrouped, frequently and flexibly, based on their:
  - Readiness to learn a concept
  - Interest in a concept
  - Learning preferences in working with or thinking about a concept

### 2. Choice

**Sample Indicators:**
- Choices provided are based on prior assessment of student learning, interests and/or learning preferences
- Students are taught how to make choices (e.g., assignment, learning centre task, resources) based on their readiness, interests, and learning preferences
- Students have opportunities to make choices (e.g., assignments, learning centre tasks, resources) based on their readiness, interests, and learning preferences
- Students have opportunities to select preferred conditions for learning (e.g., individually, in a quiet location away from others, in an active area of the room, as part of a group)
- All choices address the same curriculum expectations (Some tasks, designed for students on an IEP, may address modified curriculum expectations)
- All choices are designed to take approximately the same amount of time
- The amount of choice being offered is reasonable, not overwhelming

### 3. Respectful Tasks

**Sample Indicators:**
- All choices/tasks are interesting and engaging
- All choices/tasks require the students to work at the edge of their current readiness
- All choices/tasks are based on the same learning goal
- All choices/tasks can be assessed using the same success criteria, which have been identified, shared with, and understood by students
- Students having difficulty with a concept are engaged in learning opportunities that are just as interesting and appealing as those of other students

### 4. Shared Responsibility for Learning

**Sample Indicators:**
- Students have opportunities to think/talk about/identify the ways they learn best
- Students have opportunities to think/talk about/identify their interests
- Students can articulate the learning goal
- Students co-construct the criteria for assessment with the teacher
- Students are taught how to self-assess
- Students are provided with opportunities to self-assess
- Students advocate for conditions that support their learning
- Students seek feedback and respond to suggestions