The Complexity of Instruction

To address the diverse needs of all learners, educators consider varied components of instruction to refine their practice. Recent research (e.g., Leithwood, Hattie) investigating the learning and teaching process makes frequent reference to the importance of each of the components illustrated in the graphic below. Responsive, effective and coherent practice includes all of the following components:

**INQUIRY STANCE** that includes:
- **Evidence-informed thinking** about the current state, the ideal state, how to bridge the gap, and how to gauge progress along the way
- **Seeking feedback** on impact of teaching to inform next steps

**DIFFERENTIATED RESPONSE** that addresses the needs of different learners:
- **Know the Learner** - assess to gather information about student readiness, interests and/or learning preferences, and
- **Respond** to the particular needs of different groups of learners by differentiating ways of learning and ways to demonstrate learning

**LEARNING ENVIRONMENT** that is culturally responsive and based on:
- **A belief** that all students can learn;
- **An understanding** of ‘how we learn’
- **Our needs** as we learn: affirmation, relationships, challenge, contribution, power and autonomy, purpose, student voice

**PEDAGOGICAL CONTENT KNOWLEDGE**
- Knowledge of the learner, curriculum and program within and across subject disciplines: content and pedagogy (e.g., organizing and connecting content, cognitive and metacognitive skills), and related learning skills and work habits

**INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES** that are engaging and strategic - based on where learning needs to go and targeted to the level of support required.
- Educators use a repertoire of instructional strategies that are responsive to the student learning interests, preferences and assessed needs.
- **Practice should be adaptive** – selecting and fine-tuning strategies based on what works - for the student, the context and the intended area of learning.
- **Educators ask themselves**: Why this learning, with this student at this time, in this way? What is the impact?

**DESIGN FOR LEARNING** that is based on the concepts of universal design for learning and an understanding of how learning happens:
- **Focus and engage** students by activating prior knowledge and experience, helping generate questions and discussing current understandings related to the learning goals
- **Engage in learning opportunities** that are relevant, authentic and appropriate to needs, monitor progress, adapt or extend the learning with opportunities for shared, guided and independent practice
- **Consolidate, connect and reflect** on the process as well as the new learning and understandings

**ASSESSMENT** to inform instruction and learning by identifying learning goals, success criteria and providing effective feedback as part of assessing for, as and of learning
- **EVALUATION** based on varied evidence (e.g., observations, conversations and products) documented over time, and on achievement of overall expectations to determine a grade

References


[Universal Design for Learning concepts: Universality and equity, Flexibility and inclusion, Appropriately designed space, Simplicity, Safety]

