Differentiation that keeps the thinking

Keep the goal clear. Change an unnecessary obstacle. Check what the learner can do next.

01 GOAL

What must be learned?

02 BARRIER

What blocks access?

03 SUPPORT

Choose one first move.

04 CHECK

Keep, adjust, or rethink.

01 Directions or ideas are hard to access

Model a process; leave a visual sequence; pair words and examples; clarify the goal; compare examples; use a reference chart.

First move: show one step, then ask the learner to show the next.

Check: can the learner act without repeating the whole explanation?

02 Language hides the learning

Preview key vocabulary; pair words and images; allow home-language rehearsal; offer a sentence frame; use partner rehearsal; vary response mode.

First move: connect one useful word to a visible action.

Check: is the concept visible even before English phrasing is fluent?

03 The starting point or sequence is unclear

Chunk the task; make a short checklist; offer a first-step choice; use a planning organizer; clarify transitions; hold a brief planning conference.

First move: make the first useful action visible and manageable.

Check: does the learner start and identify the next step?

04 Practice is not changing understanding

Use a diagnostic check; give one actionable feedback point; compare a worked example; retrieve prior learning; revisit over time; regroup temporarily.

First move: inspect a small sample before assigning more practice.

Check: does the next attempt address the actual misconception?

05 Participation has a narrow entry point

Offer private think time; vary participation mode; structure peer roles; use relevant examples; offer workspace options; teach predictable routines.

First move: make a contribution possible without public performance.

Check: whose thinking is represented, and whose is still missing?

06 Challenge is poorly matched

Pre-assess a specific skill; vary scaffolds; reduce repetition while retaining review; deepen the problem; offer bounded choice; set a short learning goal.

First move: change complexity or support using current evidence.

Check: is the learner thinking productively rather than just doing more?

One goal.
Several ways in.

A worked art example, followed by a reusable planning frame. These are illustrative choices, not classroom outcome claims.

LEARNING GOAL

Create a focal point and explain how a visual choice draws attention.

If directions vanish after the demo

Try: Leave a three-step illustrated sequence.

Look for: Ask the learner to point to the step they are using.

If cutting obscures the composition goal

Try: Offer prepared shapes or a more accessible tool.

Look for: Check the arrangement and the reason for it. If cutting is the target skill, this changes the evidence.

If English phrasing blocks the explanation

Try: Allow pointing plus home-language rehearsal, then support a short explanation.

Look for: Look for a connection between the visual choice and its effect, not English fluency alone.

PLAN ONE ADAPTATION

Goal and evidence:

Barrier in this task:

Support to offer and learner input:

What I will look/listen for:

When I will check; what I will keep or adjust:

Keep required accommodations and access tools. Reduce temporary scaffolds when they are no longer needed. A support working is not, by itself, a reason to remove it.

Use the evidence with care.

The chart is an original synthesis. The full toolkit links its strategies to research guidance or design frameworks.

CAST UDL Guidelines 3.0

An inclusive-design framework for anticipating barriers. A framework is not a guarantee that every activity produces an effect.

https://udlguidelines.cast.org/

EEF: Feedback and high-quality teaching for SEND

Use assessment to choose teaching moves, give actionable feedback, and check its use. Scaffolding and flexible grouping need responsive implementation.

https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/feedback

IES WWC: Organizing Instruction and Study

Recommendations for retrieval, spacing, worked examples, and other practices have different evidence ratings. The 2007 guide does not validate every art-room adaptation.

https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/1

IES WWC: English Learners

Evidence-informed guidance for academic vocabulary and integrating language with content in elementary and middle school.

https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/19

WIDA: Can Do Philosophy and Implementation Guide

Asset-based language-development resources. The 2023 Implementation Guide includes responsive sentence-frame examples (pp. 67-68); these are not isolated causal findings.

https://wida.wisc.edu/teach/can-do

2023 Implementation Guide (PDF), pp. 67-68

LEAVE THESE OUT

Fixed learning-style labels; left-/right-brain learner types; retention percentages; claims that six seconds resets the brain; generic sensory-diet or weighted-garment prescriptions.

Follow individual plans and specialist guidance. Judge the learning target rather than compliance, speed, handwriting, or English fluency when those are not the intended target.

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