



the art of education
UNIVERSITY



DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION



FLEX Curriculum

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HOW TO USE FLEX TO DIFFERENTIATE

“Teachers in differentiated classrooms accept and act on the premise that they must be ready to engage students in instruction through different approaches to learning, by appealing to a range of interests, and by using varied rates of instruction along with varied degrees of complexity and differing support systems.” (Tomlinson, 2014)

Differentiation means adapting, teaching, and learning to meet diverse learners’ needs in three areas: the pace at which they learn, the depth of their knowledge and understanding, and their interest in the subject matter. FLEX is designed to be flexible, making it possible for all teachers to modify their curriculum to fit student needs and provide students with numerous ways to reach the learning objectives. Differentiation is the heart of how and why FLEX was built.

When differentiating, modify instruction by:

CONTENT: what students learn

PROCESS: how students learn

PRODUCT: how students demonstrate learning

ENVIRONMENT: where students learn (Fountain, 2014; Tomlinson & Imbeau, 2011).

4 METHODS FOR DIFFERENTIATION IN THE ART ROOM

1 DIFFERENTIATE BY ARTISTIC CONTENT

What are students learning?

- Look for opportunities to differentiate by topics, themes, and concepts.
- Pre-assess your students to determine what they already know.
- Use broad themes to plan your lessons.
- Tap into student interests.
- Use FLEX resources to provide choices in content. For example, if students are learning about collage, provide them with a choice between learning about Romare Bearden or Ekoa Holmes.
- Supplement with additional FLEX resources and videos to provide intervention or extensions.
- Use the filters to find additional FLEX resources, like artist bios and videos, based on learning needs.

2 DIFFERENTIATE BY ARTISTIC PRODUCT

What are students doing, demonstrating, or creating?

- Determine several mediums that students can use to demonstrate understanding of the same topic.
- Give students choices so they can create art based on their strengths and interests.
- Allow students to express the meaning of their art in various ways (written, typed, verbally, poetically, musically, and visually).
- Utilize choice boards, learning menus, and interest inventories.
- FLEX lessons include opportunities for voice and choice. Encourage students to express their interests in lessons.

3 DIFFERENTIATE BY ARTISTIC PROCESS

How does learning take place? How are the ideas presented?

- Vary your demonstrations to include whole group, small group, 1:1 learning, flipped instruction, and peer teaching.
- Group your students in various ways (teacher selected, student selected, and random).
- Allow students to direct their own learning.
- Vary the complexity of the information provided.
- Provide options to meet students' needs within FLEX lessons. For example, if students are practicing drawing a portrait with values, they can master this skill with pencils or a digital drawing application.
- Modify art materials and tools to meet students' assessed needs.
- Provide FLEX vocabulary lists as word banks for writing assessments and discussions.
- Provide FLEX resources with sentence stems for written assessments.
- Post FLEX talking frames for discussions.

4 DIFFERENTIATE BY ARTISTIC ENVIRONMENT

How do learning environments support learning?

- Post FLEX resources, like anchor charts and vocabulary lists, to support students in building their content vocabulary.
- Print FLEX lessons to illustrate the steps and break down complex learning into smaller steps.

CREATING AN ACCOMMODATING CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

SEAT OPTIONS

- Provide flexible seating choices so students can work standing or sitting.
- Use counters as workspaces so students can stand.
- Consider creating a space where students can spread out and work on the floor.
- Look into standing desks for students.
- Use ball chairs or exercise balls if your school allows it.

PHYSICAL SPACE

- Provide collaborative and independent choices.
- Place some desks and tables in more secluded areas for students who get overwhelmed.
- Create group workspaces, and cultivate an inclusive art room.
- Provide equal access to encourage inclusion.
- Make sure your students with special needs are sitting among their typically developing peers.

DETERMINE PREFERENTIAL SEATING OPTIONS

- Closest to whole-group instruction.
- Fewest visual distractions.
- Quietest space (consider sinks, blowers, and hallway/playground noise).
- Closest to exit if the student needs frequent breaks.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- Vary lighting between overhead, natural, and small lights.
- Create a cooldown space for students who are overwhelmed.
- Provide sensory tools when appropriate (fidget items, wiggle seats, exercise bands around chair legs, etc.).

HOW FLEX FEATURES SUPPORT DIFFERENTIATION

FLEX is a flexible K-12 visual arts curriculum and includes the following features:

COLLECTIONS:

A Collection is a set of lessons around a central theme or medium.

- Search for content based on student interests.

LESSONS:

Lessons are aligned to the National Core Arts Standards and state visual arts standards.

- Use the choice and voice built into FLEX lessons to provide opportunities for students to talk about themselves and explore their interests.
- Use the visuals in FLEX lesson PDFs to illustrate each step in the lesson.
- Break the lessons into smaller steps, providing affirmative and corrective feedback along the way.
- Choose lessons based on student interests and strengths.
- Modify lesson materials or prepare materials based on students' physical and sensory needs.
- Offer adaptive tools, such as paintbrushes with thicker handles, adaptive keyboards, or mice.
- Encourage students to expand on the lesson by turning it into a body of work.

RESOURCES:

Resources are linked within lessons and can be filtered individually. Resources include handouts, guides, vocabulary lists, anchor charts, and all the materials needed for lessons.

- Select resources that will extend and scaffold learning.
- Post anchor charts, providing students with visual information.
- Share graphic organizers, vocabulary lists, and writing prompts to support students' reading, writing, and speaking needs.
- Select artist biographies that connect to student interests and identity.
- Use FLEX graphic organizers to help students organize concepts.
- Supplement lessons with additional FLEX resources to provide intervention or preview new content.
- Use the resources to help students expand on a project, medium, or artist of interest.

ASSESSMENTS:

Assessments are linked within lessons and can be filtered individually. Assessments include pre-assessments, formative assessments, and summative assessments.

Pre-Assessments

- Determine what students already know and are interested in learning.
- Modify the approach based on students' assessed interests and needs.
- Scaffold learning by having students practice and explore a skill, medium, or technique, before moving onto the larger project.
- Determine what students already know and understand before introducing new content.
- Provide FLEX vocabulary lists for students to use as word banks while they write and speak.
- Use FLEX assessments with sentence stems.
- Search FLEX assessments that provide additional challenges for students.

Formative assessment

- By assessing during learning, you (and your students) can understand their progress and make adjustments as needed.

Summative assessment

- By ending lessons with assessments, you (and your students) will have a clear understanding of their learning.

VIDEOS:

Brief animated videos are designed to capture students' attention and teach them about an art concept or art movement.

- Watch before a project to introduce a concept.
- Allow students to watch on their own at their own pace for additional support.
- Use closed captions to support language development.

MY STANDARDS:

FLEX is aligned to the National Core Arts Standards and your state's visual arts standards. The My Standards feature allows teachers to search FLEX by standards.

- Select standards at, above, or below the grade level to meet student needs.
- Use standards to scaffold instruction.

INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES TO SUPPORT DIFFERENTIATION IN VISUAL ARTS

Obviously, there is no one best way to educate all children. Indeed, the biggest mistake of past centuries has been to treat all children as if they were variants of the same individual and thus to feel justified in teaching the same subjects in the same ways. We must discover areas of strength and characteristic approaches to learning. And, as much as possible, we must bring the teaching to where the child is...When we educate better and when we can educate in a more personalized way, then children will learn better. (Gardner, H., Siegel, J., & Shaughnessy, M., 1994).

In this section, you will find instructional strategies that support differentiation.

3 WAYS YOU CAN MODIFY ART ROOM INSTRUCTION

1 MODIFY THE PRESENTATION

Talk less.

Offer a video for students to watch, or demonstrate close to the students. Use short directives like, "First, cut. Then, glue."

Use picture cues.

Visuals are helpful for students who struggle with verbal directives.

Move closer.

If you see a student off-task, struggling, or unfocused, use proximity to manage behavior nonverbally.

Cue behavior.

Use the end of your instruction to outline your expectations for work time. What does it look like and sound like?

2 MODIFY THE PROJECT

Consider size.

Students who work slowly should work smaller. Students with fine motor difficulties should work larger.

Refine your objective.

Ask students to demonstrate mastery of the objective only.

Use an alternate material.

For students with sensory issues, use more rigid media (Air-dry clay instead of ceramic clay, colored pencils instead of acrylic paint).

Simplify.

If a student can't fully develop a detailed drawing, suggest a contour drawing.

3 MODIFY THE ASSESSMENT

Use single scale.

Use a single-point rubric that focuses on your target objective.

Give ongoing feedback.

Reinforce students as often as possible, and have a signal when something should change.

Try pass/no pass.

Rather than assigning grades, work up a pass/fail system based on the target objective.

Accept incompletes.

Focus on whether the objective was met rather than if the work is complete.

TURN AND TALK

WHO IT SUPPORTS

This strategy is appropriate for the whole class. Students are engaged through collaboration.

WHAT IT IS

The teacher presents a topic for students to discuss. Students turn and talk with one or more partners. After a few minutes, the teacher brings the whole class back together, and a few students share what they discussed.

WHY IT WORKS

All students need time to process new information and discuss ideas. Turn and talk provides all students with opportunities to discuss a topic instead of one person at a time, like in a whole-class discussion. It also creates a safe environment to share collaborative ideas with one person or a small group instead of the whole class. When strategically partnered with a positive peer model, a turn and talk allows students to rehearse their responses and hear another response.

IDEAS TO TRY

- Begin by teaching students how to get into groups and designate an attention signal to transition back to whole group instruction.
- Strategically partner students based on their needs.
- Monitor students during a turn and talk to informally assess learning.
- After students have talked to a partner, bring them back together and invite a few students to share what they learned from their partner.
- Use FLEX talking frames and FLEX vocabulary lists as needed for language supports.
- Use a timer to support students in staying focused on the discussion.

VARIATION

Put students in groups of 1-4 and assign each student a number. After students discuss the topic, invite ones to share one aspect of the discussion. Next, invite twos to share a different aspect of the discussion and so on until all students have shared with the whole class.

CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING

WHO IT SUPPORTS

This strategy is appropriate for the whole class and provides students and teachers with information to help inform teaching and learning.

WHAT IT IS

Teachers monitor how students comprehend information during lessons as well as cleanup.

WHY IT WORKS

Frequent checks for understanding allow teachers and students to monitor learning and make adjustments as needed.

IDEAS TO TRY

- Clearly communicate and consider posting learning targets. Invite students to develop their own goals.
- Use FLEX formative assessments, like exit tickets, to have students demonstrate their understanding and reflect on learning during lessons.
- After giving directions, invite several students to repeat the directions back.
- At the end of class, ask the whole class a comprehension question. Invite students to whisper their responses to you as they walk out the door.
- Promote durable learning by checking for understanding of prior concepts.
- Promote flexible thinking by checking for understanding in various ways (written, oral, demonstrating a skill).
- Collaboratively create a checklist of lesson or cleanup steps.
- Provide PDFs of FLEX lessons to illustrate the steps of the lesson. For some students, it may be helpful to break the lesson into smaller pieces. Invite students to complete one step at a time. Provide affirmative and corrective feedback after step completion.

PRESENTING INFORMATION

WHO IT SUPPORTS

This strategy is appropriate for the whole class and provides visual, sensory, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile cues.

WHAT IT IS

This is a variety of tools used to address multiple senses.

WHY IT WORKS

Teachers provide students with multiple means of representation by creating variety in how information is presented.

IDEAS TO TRY

- Post FLEX visual resources as anchor charts and illustrated vocabulary charts.
- Provide PDFs of FLEX lessons to illustrate the steps of the lesson. For some students, it may be helpful to break the lesson into smaller pieces. Invite students to complete one step at a time. Provide affirmative and corrective feedback after they complete each step.
- For younger students, create visual reminders of the steps with the FLEX picture steps.
- Use FLEX graphic organizers to show how ideas are related.
- Model steps of the FLEX lessons.
- Play FLEX videos and use closed captions.
- Allow choice and modification to materials and tools.
- Use FLEX artist bios to create context and help students make connections to their own lives.
- Strategically seat students with hearing or visual impairments close to the teacher.
- Enlarge written text for students with visual impairments.

Students may need some physical or environmental adaptations to support their learning. When possible, partner them with support staff and administrators to understand their needs and develop the right approach.

PHYSICAL NEEDS

Adapt materials or processes to support safety and success. For example, students could use torn paper or precut paper shapes instead of scissors and paper for collage lessons. Adapt tools to meet student needs. For example, use a wide-handled paintbrush.

Low and no vision:

- Focus on creating with tactile materials and in 3D. For 2D lessons, students can experience drawing by pressing their fingers, pipe cleaners, or similar materials into clay.
- Avoid moving materials in the art classroom. When possible, place materials where students can access them safely and independently.
- For students with low-vision, consider providing high-contrast materials and additional lighting.

Color-blindness:

- Label materials (including a color wheel) with the names of the colors.
- Teach color relationships on the color wheel such as analogous and complementary colors.
- When possible, adjust the materials for FLEX lessons so students with color blindness can focus on other aspects of art that may be more accessible such as value, line, shape, texture, and form.

SENSORY NEEDS

The art classroom can be filled with colors, sounds, and textures that may present challenges for some students:

- Offer students with sensory needs a choice between materials. Consider using the FLEX picture cards for students that are nonverbal.
- Offer students noise-canceling headphones to wear during independent work time.

Some students may need some specialized sensory experiences to support their learning:

Elementary:

Consider adding a **sensory station** to your classroom for sensory breaks.

Secondary:

- Create a small bin of school-appropriate fidget objects, like stress balls. Establish expectations for how to use them safely.
- Attach the bumpy side of adhesive velcro tape underneath desks as a quiet fidget object.

LANGUAGE SUPPORTS

WHO IT SUPPORTS

This strategy is appropriate for students in need of language support to help discuss and write about art.

WHAT IT IS

Language supports, like sentence frames and word banks, support students with writing and discussing art and their ideas.

WHY IT WORKS

Language supports provide students with the scaffolding they need to practice the English language and share their thinking about art using content vocabulary and academic language

7 WAYS TO SUPPORT ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS WITH FLEX

MAKE IT VISUAL



Use videos to preview or reteach art concepts.



Help students practice vocabulary and build hands-on art skills using the resources in FLEX.



Download the lessons and share the steps and accompanying images with students.

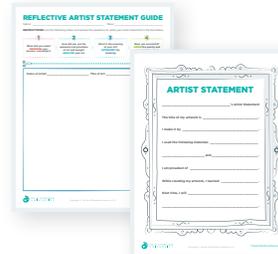


Post anchor charts to encourage autonomy.

EMPOWER LEARNERS TO TALK AND WRITE ABOUT ART



Use the vocabulary lists as word banks to help students write and speak about art. Try posting them or making a word wall.



Equip students with writing guides. Model writing tasks for students. Consider varying assessments based on language proficiency.



Provide language supports, build to larger language tasks, and check for understanding using the exit slips. Create speaking opportunities by having students read their responses to a partner. Consider partnering English learners with a fluent English speaker.

SUPPLEMENTING WITH ADDITIONAL FLEX RESOURCES

WHO IT SUPPORTS

This strategy is appropriate for teachers in providing interventions, extensions, and engagement opportunities.

WHAT IT IS

Providing students with different learning opportunities supports their assessed learning needs and interests.

WHY IT WORKS

Student learning needs and interests vary. Provide students with new learning opportunities, such as interventions, extensions of the lesson, or opportunities for choice, to maximize learning and engagement.

IDEAS TO TRY

- Use similar FLEX artist bios to provide students with choice in the content.
- Use FLEX resources to teach new skills to supplement lessons for advanced students.
- Use additional FLEX resources, including videos, to teach foundational skills to students as interventions.
- Create learning stations with FLEX resources to provide additional explorations of materials, ideas, and artists.
- Use small group instruction to support students' unique learning needs. Pull a group of students aside for additional teaching while other students work independently:
 - Be sure you can still monitor the whole class while working with a small group.
 - Keep the small group instruction brief (less than the class period).
 - Include collaborative activities, like games and discussions, to support students interacting with each other and the content.
 - Establish rules for the whole class for when you work with a small group, such as:
 - Ask your partner questions instead of the teacher.
 - Stay focused on independent work.

PARTNER AND GROUP WORK

WHO IT SUPPORTS

Partner and group work supports all learners.

WHAT IT IS

Group work provides students with opportunities to exchange ideas and work collaboratively.

Effective group work includes:

- Opportunities for all students to interact meaningfully with each other and the content.
- Clear goals and outcomes for students.
- Individual and collective accountability.

WHY IT WORKS

Group work provides students with:

- Positive peer models for behaviors and language.
- Opportunities to rehearse and develop their ideas.
- Opportunities to hear a variety of perspectives.
- Positive social development.

IDEAS TO TRY

- Be thoughtful about why students are grouped together:
 - Consider providing a positive peer language model for English learners.
 - Consider which students might benefit from a positive peer behavior model.
- Groupings should be varied, fluid, and flexible.
 - **Ability grouping:**
Creates opportunities for a teacher to provide focused interventions for struggling learners and enrichment for advanced learners. To avoid stigmatizing students and provide students with the benefit of interacting with various learners, keep these groupings brief and focused (such as pulling a group aside for a short lesson, game, or activity focused on practicing a needed skill).
 - **Mixed-ability grouping:**
The social and academic benefits of mixed-ability grouping are well documented. Mixed-ability groupings provide all students with opportunities for exchanging ideas and learning from peers that are different from them. Mixed-ability grouping is great for open-ended discussions and creative collaboration.
 - **Interest groupings:**
Group students by their learning interests. For example, if researching topics, group students interested in the same topic together.
- Avoid grouping students by gender. Gender groups (such as seating students in boy-girl order) can be difficult for students who publicly or privately identify as gender nonconforming.

3 WAYS TO USE FLEX IN AP ART

What is Advanced Placement?

AP art has three courses that relate to artmaking. These courses are 2D Art and Design, 3D Art and Design, and Drawing. In these courses, students will:

- Investigate materials, processes, and ideas.
- Experiment with and revise their artwork.
- Communicate their ideas through creative processes.

In each course, students will create a portfolio of college-level artwork. Each portfolio requires students to select a sustained investigation topic. The topic should guide their work throughout the course. For specific portfolio requirement information, see the College Board [website](#).

The top 3 ways that FLEX can help with AP:

1 ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES: As students research topics and processes, having accessible artist bios is a valuable resource. Use these to help students get started in the research process and discover new artists to inform their work.



2 VIDEOS: Initially, the elements and principles seem simple, but when students are challenged to use them as a method of communication, they get more complicated. The advanced videos are a great tool to review the elements and principles of art and show students how to apply them in their work.



3 SEARCH FILTERS: Every student in your AP class will likely be working on something different, and FLEX can help you find materials to support each of them. Use the filtering options in FLEX to find inspiring lessons for your students.



You can search by theme, subject, media, elements and principles, and art movement. For example, suppose a student is interested in something related to community. In that case, you could filter for “community” in FLEX and then use those lessons and resources to help them get started. Students can use the lessons and resources as inspiration as you introduce new artists, techniques, and processes.

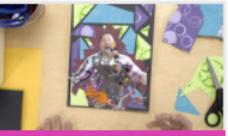
Reference:

College Board. (n.d.). *AP art and design program*. <https://apstudents.collegeboard.org/art-design-program>



FLEX provides teachers with a flexible curriculum for K-12 visual arts learning. Using FLEX, teachers can curate curricula to meet the needs of their students.

PRO provides individualized professional development for all K-12 visual arts teachers. For professional development on differentiation, check out the following PRO Packs.

 <p>METHODS/APPROACHES Planning For Choice at the High School Level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 PD Hours 18 Videos 11 Resources 	 <p>CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT Connecting with Secondary Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 PD Hours 17 Videos 13 Resources 	 <p>TAB/CHOICE Increasing Choice at the Elementary Level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 PD Hours 16 Videos 15 Resources 	 <p>MEDIA/TECHNIQUES Collage for Early Elementary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 PD Hours 19 Videos 16 Resources
 <p>DIFFERENTIATION Working with Advanced Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 PD Hours 18 Videos 11 Resources 	 <p>DIFFERENTIATION Understanding and Implementing IEPs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 PD Hours 21 Videos 14 Resources 	 <p>DIFFERENTIATION Collaborating with Paraprofessionals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 PD Hours 17 Videos 9 Resources 	 <p>CURRICULUM Building Foundational Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 PD Hours 19 Videos 9 Resources
 <p>DIFFERENTIATION Finding Success with Kindergarten</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 PD Hours 15 Videos 11 Resources 	 <p>DIFFERENTIATION Differentiation in the Art Room</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 PD Hours 17 Videos 11 Resources 	 <p>DIFFERENTIATION Strategies for English Language Learners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 PD Hours 17 Videos 9 Resources 	 <p>DIFFERENTIATION Teaching Adaptive Art</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 PD Hours 24 Videos 8 Resources
 <p>DIFFERENTIATION Setting Up an Autism-Friendly Classroom</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 PD Hours 14 Videos 8 Resources 	 <p>CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT Motivating Reluctant Learners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 PD Hours 11 Videos 9 Resources 		

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