

KEY FINDINGS & OBSERVATION GUIDE

Adapted From:

Bellon, J.J., Bellon, E.C., & Blank, M.A. (1992). *Teaching from a Research Knowledge Base.*
New York: Macmillan Publishing Company.

Adapting Instruction for Small Groups and Individuals

Key Findings

- Careful planning is necessary when instructional adaptations are made to address specific learning needs.
- Cooperative learning strategies can have a positive effect on important instructional goals.
- Small groups can be organized to attend to specific instructional purposes.
- When discussions are properly structured and moderated, students can develop, enrich, and expand their knowledge.
- Individualized instruction, in order to be effective, must be carefully planned, managed, and monitored and should provide for regular student and teacher interaction.
- Computers can be used as instructional tools to address a range of learning goals and objectives.
- Because so much time is devoted to seatwork and other forms of independent practice, teachers should take steps to ensure that the time is being used to promote and enhance student learning.
- Under certain conditions, and when appropriate guidelines are followed, homework can be an effective instructional tool.

Focused Observation Guide: Adaptive Instructional Approaches

[Links to _____ of the TN Framework for Evaluation and Professional Development]

Observe: *What approaches are used to adapt instruction to small groups of students or to individual students?* The most productive observation would be one that is extended over several lessons in an instructional sequence. Prior to the observation it would be helpful to find out from the teacher the specific content objectives and learner characteristics that influence instructional decisions. As you observe, describe the ways students are involved in learning tasks by identifying whole group, small group, pairing, tutoring, or independent activities. Focus in on several students and record their actions. Note materials and equipment used, interactions with the teacher or other students, the level of on-task behavior or of active engagement with the content, and the ways students are evaluated or their progress is monitored.

From your observation information, identify ways instruction was adapted. Estimate the degree to which instruction is adapted to individuals and groups. Notice if students were effectively involved in activities with peers (small groups or triads or pairs), or if supplementary materials, equipment, or computers were appropriate adaptations for student needs. Indicators could be the level of task engagement, the amount of time spent in gathering materials or gaining assistance, level of interaction with other students or with the teacher, the success rate, and/or statements or actions that demonstrate a positive student response. It may be difficult to tell if the learners are progressing, but you can make some determination about the level of difficulty or challenge and about the students' ability to deal with the task structure.

Analyze/Apply: Identify the strategies you feel may be the most productive in adapting instruction to the needs of your students with specific content topics and processes. Decide if it would be helpful to incorporate effective practices observed. Suggest possible alterations in assessment, management, and monitoring to make the strategy more effective.

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