

Reaching All Students

Teaching requires understanding the individual differences of all students in your classroom. Evaluate how well your practices accommodate the needs of everyone in your class.

- You consider the seven different intelligences, as identified by Harvard psychologist Dr. Howard Gardner:
 1. logical-mathematical: the ability to reason deductively or inductively and to recognize and manipulate abstract patterns and relationships
 2. verbal-linguistic: ease with reading and writing skills, and sensitivity to nuances, order, and rhythm of words
 3. musical-rhythmic: sensitivity to pitch, timbre, and rhythm of sounds, and responsiveness to music
 4. visual-spatial: the ability to create visual-spatial representations of the world and to transfer those representations mentally or concretely — to think in pictures
 5. bodily-kinesthetic: using the body to solve problems, create products, and convey ideas and emotions
 6. interpersonal-social: ability to work effectively with and understand others, and to notice their goals, motivations, and intentions
 7. intrapersonal-introspective: working well alone at own pace

- You make an effort to acknowledge that all of your students have different learning styles, and then construct your instruction to offer many different types of strategies, activities, and experiences. Some examples of different learning styles:
 - Sensory: visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile
 - Individual preferences: sound level, light level, temperature, seating arrangement, mobility, group size, type of learning activity, eating and/or drinking while concentrating, chronobiology (time preferences)

- You are sensitive to learning disabilities. All learning disabled children can learn and become successful students, given fair opportunities.
 - You know the warning signs and watch for students who may have a learning disability.
 - You have acquired the broadest training and knowledge possible.
 - You have developed effective teaching techniques and modified curricula to meet students' needs.
 - You provide structure. Learning disabled students need to learn to monitor their own progress and regulate the time and effort they spend on assignments.
 - You collaborate with parents to develop coping approaches, both at home and at school.
 - You have become an advocate for your learning disabled students, protecting them from discriminatory practices.

- You develop effective strategies for helping gifted students.
 - You give gifted children many opportunities to make choices about what they learn, how they learn, and how they demonstrate their learning.
 - You allow gifted children the opportunity to work with other high-ability children.
 - You offer gifted students opportunities to struggle with complex material.
 - You practice “curriculum compacting” by giving students credit for what they already know and modifying the curriculum to allow them to learn something new.
 - You allow for independent study projects, mentorships, and thematic instruction.
 - You provide opportunities to practice divergent thinking and critical thinking.

- You take time to consider how cultural diversity might impact the teaching and learning of academic content:
 - Culture may influence the extent to which a person “speaks up” or “speaks out.”
 - The use of gestures, eye contact, and other nonverbal cues varies among cultures.
 - Cultural patterns should not be ignored, but also remember that there are as many differences as similarities among individual members of the same cultural group.

- You speak to the needs of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students.
 - You make an effort to provide a climate of warmth and caring.
 - You seat LEP students close to the front of the room.
 - You speak naturally, but slowly, to allow for comprehension to develop.
 - You use clear, simple language.
 - You support content-area instruction with visual materials.
 - You provide manipulative materials whenever possible.
 - You offer film and filmstrips with the sound track turned off and tell the story or explain the lesson in simpler language and less complex terms.
 - You make sure not to call on LEP students for a lengthy response.
 - You avoid correcting pronunciation, structural, or vocabulary errors when LEP students speak.
 - You assign a dependable classmate to assist whenever additional directions are needed.
 - You recruit volunteers who speak the same language as the LEP students.

- ❑ You make an effort to be aware of your behavior towards each gender. Sometimes teachers unconsciously exhibit discriminatory behaviors. In addition to avoiding those practices, you should:
 - ❑ Direct lower-order and higher-order questions to both boys and girls.
 - ❑ Assign leadership and support roles equitably.
 - ❑ Eliminate segregated play areas and discourage students from segregating themselves.
 - ❑ Avoid grouping on the basis of gender.
 - ❑ Encourage boys and girls to participate in nontraditional activities.
 - ❑ Avoid stereotyping girls as compliant and obedient and boys as disruptive and aggressive.
 - ❑ Reinforce boys and girls who are working and playing together.
 - ❑ Avoid thinking of girls as being “neat” and boys as being “intellectually competent.”

Helpful Resources:

- Special Needs
<http://teacher.scholastic.com/professional/specialneeds/index.htm>
- A Place for Everyone: Nurturing Each Child’s Niche
<http://teacher.scholastic.com/professional/bruceperry/niche.htm>
- Electronic Learning: Special-Needs Solutions
<http://teacher/products/instructor/specialneeds.htm>
- The Girls Have It!
<http://teacher.scholastic.com/professional/todayschild/thegirlshaveit.htm>
- The New Gender Gap
http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/instructor/Mar04_gendergap.htm