

## Section 3.3 Differentiated Instruction

### What is Differentiated Instruction and how does it fit with Response to Intervention?

Differentiated Instruction is a broad term referring to the need of educators to tailor the curriculum, teaching environments, and practices to create appropriately different learning experiences for students. To differentiate instruction is to recognize students' varying interest, readiness levels, and learning profiles and to react responsively. There are four elements of the curriculum that can be differentiated: content, process, products, and learning environment.

*(From the Sacramento City Unified School District)*

Content: Multiple options for taking in information  
Process: Multiple options for making sense of the ideas  
Product: Multiple options for expressing what they know  
Environment: Multiple arrangements and settings to foster engagement and relevance.

During Phases I-IV of GPS training, one day was devoted to differentiation. This information, from [How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms](#) by Carol Ann Tomlinson, was shared during GPS training:

Differentiated instruction is proactive.  
Differentiated instruction is more qualitative than quantitative.  
Differentiated instruction is rooted in assessment.  
Differentiated instruction is student centered.  
Differentiated instruction provides multiple approaches to content, process, and product.  
Differentiated instruction is a blend of whole-class, group, and individual instruction.  
Differentiated instruction is organic.

## **Section 3.4 Flexible Grouping**

### **What is Flexible Grouping and how does it fit with Response to Intervention?**

Flexible Grouping is a type of differentiation in which students are organized into groups based on interests and/or needs. Groups are not static, and teachers use data to establish and modify the composition of the student groups.

Within a standards-based classroom, flexible grouping may resemble other grouping strategies because students are sitting together. To implement flexible grouping with fidelity, teachers would use assessment data, based on the GPS, to organize for instruction during a period on any given day.

All students need access to grade level and/or content area GPS. During an instructional period, teachers may provide information to the entire class for a short period of time. Realizing that students need to interact with material in order to make meaning, the teacher would provide time for individual and/or group interaction. The teacher should group students together in a purposeful way to further support understanding. Flexible grouping, with fidelity, is the “how are they grouped?” part of grouping. The use of assessment data is the basis for these short term grouping formations. A clear instructional plan is needed to ensure the teaching and learning that occur in the group are targeted to student needs.

