

Adaptive Teaching

Remove the ceiling and focus support for all learners

What is it and why is it important?

Adaptive teaching is when teachers make on-the-fly tweaks and adjustments based on whether students are coping in the moment. This represents a shift from traditional classroom differentiation to a more inclusive approach that ensures all students are provided with the opportunity to succeed. Teaching to the top and providing a single explicit instructional goal helps to cultivate a classroom culture of high expectations that does not cap students' opportunities or aspirations. The cornerstone of adaptive teaching is being responsive to students who might need more scaffolding or support. Research by Lyn Corno¹ emphasises the importance of 'microadaptations,' subtle, real-time adjustments made by teachers that support every student in reaching shared learning goals. These include strategies such as pre-teaching concepts before starting a topic, checking for understanding or using flexible grouping for specific tasks.

How is adaptive teaching different to differentiation?

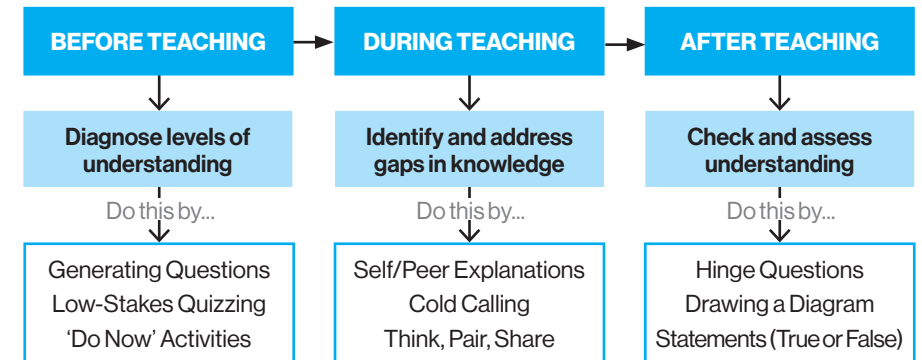
This analysis by the Huntington Research School outlines the main differences²:

DIFFERENTIATION	ADAPTIVE TEACHING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Must, should could' learning objectives Capped expectations for those who need the most support Individualised learning plans Mini lessons for different groups of learners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focused support for all students Responsive tweaks to lessons to support students who need scaffolding Targeted catch-up Judging in the moment whether students are coping

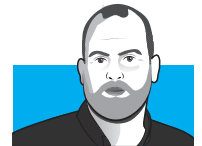
Read More: 'On Teaching Adaptively' by Lyn Corno

How do I implement this?

Plan microadaptations: Educator and author, Alex Quigley explains "there are a number of activities teachers can use before, during and after teaching a topic that will help them to diagnose students' levels of understanding and make timely microadaptations. Some of these simple formative strategies include:

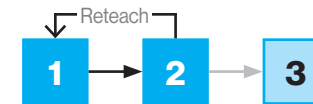


Flexible grouping: Sometimes, we need to go over topics again to make sure everyone understands. Be ready to change groupings in class to help with this. Flexible groupings emphasises the importance of observing students' performance in real-time to identify their strengths and areas for improvement. It might involve seating students together who need to address a particular misconception or pairing students with differing levels of understanding to promote peer tutoring.



ALEXQUIGLEY

If you ask teachers exactly what adaptive teaching looks like in action, the answers will not typically be confident or consistent. This is a problem, because if adaptive teaching is to live up to the hype, and not become a passing fad, we need to be able to define what it is, what it isn't and how it works in practice.³



Plan adjustments: Be prepared to change the direction of instruction by making quick adjustments and reteaching the misunderstood content. Plan to reintegrate these concepts into subsequent lessons by presenting the information in different ways and checking for understanding.

References

1. Corno, L. (2008). 'On Teaching Adaptively' <https://ssrlsite.files.wordpress.com/2018/02/corno-2008-on-teaching-adaptively.pdf>
2. Huntington Research School. 'Adaptive Teaching: What the Core Content Framework for ITTs can help us understand about the shift from differentiation to adaptive teaching' (2023). <https://researchschool.org.uk/huntington/news/adaptive-teaching>
3. Quigley, A. (2023). 'Adaptive teaching: how to use 'microadaptations'' <https://www.tes.com/magazine/teaching-learning/general/adaptive-teaching-how-use-microadaptations>