**DIFFERENTIATED OUTPUT HIERARCHY**

[**https://www.gvsu.edu/autismcenter/differentiated-output-hierarchy-136.htm**](https://www.gvsu.edu/autismcenter/differentiated-output-hierarchy-136.htm)

The differentiated output hierarchy is a systematic, organized approach to support student’s active engagement in the general education curriculum.  The differentiated output hierarchy supports the concepts defined in differentiated instruction.  Differentiated instruction is defined as the planning of curriculum and instruction using strategies that address student strengths, interests, skills, and readiness in flexible learning environments “At its core, differentiation is simply high-quality, thoughtful teaching that builds on our best understanding of how students learn and what teachers can do to maximize each student’s learning” (The Common Sense of Differentiation, 2005). Tomlinson (2000) suggests that differentiated instruction is a way of thinking about teaching and learning.

Differentiated Instruction has three primary components

* Multiple options for taking in information **Content**
* Multiple options for making sense of the ideas **Process**
* Multiple options for expressing what they know **Product**

“Each section, the Content, Process, and Product, must be varied in anticipation of and response to student differences in readiness, interest, and learning needs.” (Common Sense of Differentiation, 2005) The differentiated output hierarchy provides a framework for addressing the multiple options for expressing what they know – The Product.

Many students who receive special education supports and services struggle with reading comprehension, written language, organization skills, etc.  The hierarchy provides a framework to allow students to show what they know even with these deficits.

**There are five levels in the differentiated output hierarchy**:

**Open Ended** – Open-ended questions may be the most difficult for students receiving special education services.  Many students who have trouble with written language skills or have trouble processing spoken language will not be able to answer open-ended questions as presented in the curriculum.  If the student is having trouble with open-ended questions, it is the time to move through the differentiated output hierarchy.

**Visual Organizational Strategies** - Visual strategies should provide the student with a kick-start, which may assist the student in organizing the answer.  For example, showing the student how many words or sentences are required to answer a question or complete a paragraph.

**Closed Strategies** - Closed strategies organize the student’s output within the curriculum.  Closed strategies also narrow the depth of the curriculum and allow the student to utilize recognition skills versus recall skills to output the information.

**Choice Strategies** - Choice strategies provide the student with a visual method to recall the information. Choice strategies should be utilized in a combination with other hierarchy strategies.

**Yes/No Strategies** – Yes/No strategies change the format of an open-ended, multiple choice, etc. type question into a Yes/No format.   The yes/no format requires the overlay of other hierarchy strategies.  A Yes / No strategy may have to be taught to a student.

**EXAMPLES OF OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS**: Open-ended questions are the hardest for students to complete. Many students who have trouble with written language skills or processing spoken language will not be able to answer open-ended questions in the curriculum.

Math –

There are 5 blue birds in the cage. There are 5 times as many green birds in another cage. How many green birds are there?

Social Studies –

How are a globe and a dollhouse alike?

Science –

Describe at least two ways Mary can improve her experiment.

Language Arts –

In a story, a character usually faces a problem. For example, a child named Connor wants a pet but is allergic to cat and dog hair. The ending of the story is important. Finish the story in a few sentences.

**EXAMPLES OF VISUAL ORGANIZATION STRATEGIES**: This level should provide the student with a kick-start, which may assist him/her in organizing the answer. Visual Organization strategies can be used in conjunction with all the other academic modification strategies as well.

General Examples:

* Provide instructions in written/bulleted forms instead of in paragraph form
* Color code the important information
* Use symbols to connect important information
* Highlighting important passages or answers to particular items
* Expand the writing output area
* Highlight the important process information + - x, etc

Specific Examples:

Math –

There are 5 blue birds in the cage. There are 5 times as many green birds in another cage. How many green birds are there?

Social Studies –

How are a globe and a dollhouse alike? A globe and dollhouse are alike because they both .

Science –

Mary could improve her experiment by

1.

2.

3.

Language Arts –

Connor wants a pet but is allergic to cat and dog hair.

1. Connor should
2. This way he
3. In the end

**EXAMPLES OF CLOSED STRATEGIES**: Closed strategies allow the student to clearly understand what is expected in the curriculum and narrow the expected response. Students without mastery level skills can interact with the curriculum using closed strategies. Visual organization strategies also can be used to support the closed strategies.

General Examples:

* Provide a “Fill in the Blank”
* Provide a Word Bank
* Give the Page Number of the Reference
* Use Highlighter Tape to highlight answers
* Use Symbols and have student match – Box to box….triangle to triangle

Specific Examples:

Math –

There are 5 blue birds in the cage. There are 5 times as many green birds in another cage. How many green birds are there?

blue birds X = green birds

Social Studies –

A globe and dollhouse are alike because they are a of the real thing.

Science –

Mary needs to be sure all the pieces of the cloth are .

Language Arts –

Connor is allergic to and hair. A pet he might not be allergic to is a .

**EXAMPLES OF Choice Strategies**: Choice strategies provide a student a visual method for recalling information. It also narrows the expected response. Choice strategies can be provided with words, colors, pictures, or objects.

General Examples:

* Color code a word bank to offer two choices
* Color match for multiple choice
* Blocking out choices in a multiple choice to reduce options
* provide Pictures of the two choices

Specific Examples:

Math –

1. x 5 =

20 25 30

Social Studies –

Circle 2 things that are alike because they both are models of the real thing.

Globe State Dollhouse

Science –

Circle one way Mary could improve her experiment

Pieces of cloth need to be the same size

Use more clothing made by Girbau

Language Arts -

What might be 2 good pets for Connor?

Bird Puppy Fish

**EXAMPLES OF YES / NO STRATEGIES**: Because of the ability level of some of students, a Yes / No response must be taught could be used but must be specifically taught. The person modifying the curriculum must consistently deliver the Yes / No system to the student if he/she is likely to learn it. Once the student has made a Yes / No decision, the student must be held accountable for his actions to teach the meaning of Yes / No.

General Example:

* Change the format of the question into Yes/No
* Overlay other hierarchy strategies

Specific Examples:

Math –

1. x 5 = 20

Yes No

Social Studies –

Are a globe and dollhouse both models of the real thing?

Yes No

Science –

If Mary wanted to improve her experiment, she could make sure the pieces of cloth were the same size

Yes No

Language Arts –

Is a bird possibly a good pet for Connor?

Yes No