

# DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

**Helping all students  
achieve educational success**



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# INTRODUCTION

This document<sup>1</sup> is intended to support the school system in the activities it carries out to help all students achieve educational success. It describes the concepts that underlie differentiated instruction: pedagogical flexibility,<sup>2</sup> adaptation, and modification of expectations associated with Québec Education Program (QEP)<sup>3</sup> requirements.

**This document is intended for all elementary and secondary school teachers, school administrators and various other professionals on the school teams.**

Differentiated instruction is aimed at helping all students achieve educational success. It is an approach that is put into practice through interaction between teaching, learning and evaluation. It consists in adjusting teaching to the diverse abilities, needs and interests of students of different ages, backgrounds, aptitudes and skills, thus enabling them to make optimal progress in developing the competencies targeted by the program. Differentiated instruction is underpinned by educational values, representations and beliefs, especially the belief that all students have the potential to achieve success and that each student can develop along a path that takes their individual characteristics into consideration.

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1. As this document is primarily intended for school service centres, school boards and private educational institutions, it is based on the Québec Education Program. The concepts described, however, may serve as a guide for schools that follow another curriculum.
  2. Often referred to as “differentiated pedagogy” in the literature.
  3. In preschool, the program focuses mainly on the overall development of the child and differentiated instruction is presented as being implicit.

The first section of this document presents various publications of the Ministère that discuss the diversity of people and their needs and provide the school system with support for activities designed to promote the educational success of all students. The next two sections cover differentiated instruction and the support required to implement it. The three forms of differentiated instruction are then described. First is pedagogical flexibility, routinely put into practice by teachers, followed by adaptation, put in place for some students, and the modification of expectations associated with QEP requirements, a special type of strategy that is different from the first two forms. Lastly, the interactions between the three forms of differentiated instruction are described.

To help with the implementation of differentiated instruction, educators can refer to two complementary tools for general examples of pedagogical flexibility and concrete examples related to the various subjects.<sup>4</sup> A third tool suggests possible ways of preparing individualized education plans to ensure consistent and coherent implementation of the adaptation strategy and modifications to the expectations associated with QEP requirements<sup>5</sup> for certain students with handicaps, social maladjustments or learning difficulties.

As the reader will discover, several of the elements described are already familiar to educators and form part of their current practices, while others will help enhance activities that are already in place. It should also be remembered that differentiated instruction can be implemented in the regular classroom as well as with other types of groups. It is compatible with the various approaches chosen by educational institutions, such as Response to Intervention (RTI) and Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

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4. See Complementary tool 2, which provides subject-specific examples of differentiated instruction.

5. See Complementary tool 3: Suggestions for the individualized education plan process – Adaptation strategy and Modification of expectations associated with QEP requirements (students with handicaps, social maladjustments or learning difficulties).

# 1 STUDENT DIVERSITY: NEEDS THAT ARE SIMILAR YET DIFFERENT

To help students flourish in school and contribute fully to society, the education system must adapt to them and take into account the diversity of individuals and their educational needs by providing them with the best opportunities to learn. There is nothing new about schools taking students' different needs (emotional, physical, psychological, cognitive, social, etc.) into consideration. But now, with the evolution of knowledge, digital contexts and the education system, further steps can be taken to promote educational success

for all young people and help them develop their full potential. There is no doubt that students' needs are similar yet different, that they evolve over time and that they are likely to have an impact on learning. Differentiated instruction is needed because classes contain a great diversity of students, and this is one of the paths that enables every student to develop their competencies as much as possible.

## **The profiles and needs of students vary due to different factors, including:**

- › socioeconomic context
- › sociocultural, linguistic and religious references
- › family situation
- › self-identifying or being identified by others with one or more Indigenous communities
- › immigration journey or that of their family
- › knowledge of French
- › having one or more handicaps, social maladjustments or learning difficulties
- › being gifted or not
- › having or not having specific difficulties

## 1.1 PUBLICATIONS FROM THE MINISTÈRE

The Ministère has released numerous publications geared to helping the school system promote educational success for all students. The main elements covered in these documents provide good illustrations of the orientations in this area.

*Do More, Do Better, the 2017-2022 Government Action Plan for the Social and Cultural Development of the First Nations and Inuit (2017)*, proposes diversified initiatives in several areas. It includes concrete actions to foster educational success and school retention among Indigenous students.<sup>6</sup> Some school boards also have resources dedicated to supporting parents and students on the latter's educational path.

*The Policy Statement on Educational Integration and Intercultural Education, A School for the Future (1988)*, presents three principles for action that can form a basis for addressing ethnocultural, linguistic and religious diversity, namely the promotion of "equal opportunity for all; proficiency in French, the shared language of public life; and education for active citizenship in a pluralistic and democratic society."<sup>7</sup> It also states that all teachers contribute to the integration of students newly arrived in Québec and, furthermore, that the task involves the

rest of the school staff who are called upon to support these students in learning and mastering French, and to help with their schooling and socialization.<sup>8</sup> The *Cadre de référence: Accueil et intégration des élèves issus de l'immigration au Québec (2014)* also suggests that a school that is open to cultural diversity respects the values of equality, equity, inclusion and social harmony and takes all necessary means to help all students succeed.<sup>9</sup>

The Policy on Special Education, *Adapting Our Schools to the Needs of All Students (1999)*, invites all school staff to work together to help students with handicaps, social maladjustments or learning difficulties achieve success with regard to knowledge, social development and qualifications. It also states that "students with special needs, like other students, can succeed in acquiring knowledge, achieving social development and obtaining qualifications on condition that they are given help in doing so and that it is accepted that success may have different meanings for different students."<sup>10</sup> Certain aspects of differentiated instruction are geared more specifically to students with handicaps, social maladjustments or learning difficulties. Another publication from the Ministère, *Learning difficulties: Reference framework for intervention (2003)*, supports that statement and mentions the importance of collaboration in promoting students' educational success.

6. Québec (2017), *Do More, Do Better: Government Action Plan for the Social and Cultural Development of the First Nations and Inuit 2017-2022*, 24.

7. Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation (1998), *A School for the Future: Policy Statement on Educational Integration and Intercultural Education*, 6.

8. Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation (1998), *A School for the Future: Policy Statement on Educational Integration and Intercultural Education*, 19.

9. Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (2014), *Cadre de référence: Accueil et intégration des élèves issus de l'immigration au Québec*, 4. Partenariat – École, famille et communauté, 2.

10. Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation (1999), *Adapting Our Schools to the Needs of All Students: Policy on Special Education*, 15.

The reference framework, *Complementary Educational Services: Essential to Success* (2002) presents these services and their support structure. Complementary educational services are provided to all students, those with difficulties and those without, and the purpose is to foster each student's progress in the various areas of learning. These services are called "complementary," because they help the school carry out its educational mission by complementing preschool, elementary and secondary educational services. The collaboration between the staff who work in these services, the teachers and the school administration helps them to know the students better and fosters the implementation of differentiated instruction.

In addition, the *Policy on the Evaluation of Learning: Evaluation for Better Learning* (2003) presents the values, orientations, functions and processes associated with evaluation. It describes the values of justice, equality and equity,<sup>11</sup> coherence, rigour and openness. This policy recognizes that these values are an essential foundation for evaluation and underlines the importance of adhering to them so as to ensure that no one is put at a disadvantage. The policy also states that evaluation serves two main purposes: to help students learn and to recognize competencies. It goes on to say that "evaluation of learning must be at the service of students to allow them to acquire learning that will contribute to their full intellectual, affective and social development, irrespective of their abilities or specific needs."<sup>12</sup>

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11. "Equity requires that evaluation practices take into account the individual characteristics of certain students or the common traits of certain groups to ensure that evaluation does not contribute to increasing existing differences." Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation (2003), *Policy on the Evaluation of Learning: Evaluation for Better Learning*, 7.

12. Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation (2003), *Policy on the Evaluation of Learning: Evaluation for Better Learning*, 11.



## 2 DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

When it takes into account the diversity of students and their educational needs and steers them toward success, differentiated instruction is indispensable. Teaching exclusively to a group or tailoring one's teaching to each individual are ineffective strategies for ensuring that all students achieve success. Differentiated instruction does not mean that the teacher stops teaching to the whole class; rather, it relies on striking a balance between the common objectives of collective work in class, work in subgroups or pairs, and work by individual students, so as to foster learning by all.

The definition of differentiated instruction<sup>13</sup> adopted by the Ministère de l'Éducation (MEQ) draws on the 2003 document published by the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation<sup>14</sup> as well as on the work of Tomlinson (2004), Tomlinson and Imbeau (2010), and Caron (2008). Differentiated instruction is presented in three forms: pedagogical flexibility, adaptation and modification of expectations associated with QEP requirements. In different and complementary ways, these three forms are intended to promote activities that are tailored to the situation of a student, or group of students, in elementary and secondary school.

**Differentiated instruction is aimed at helping all students achieve educational success. It is an approach that is put into practice through interaction between teaching, learning and evaluation. It consists in adjusting teaching to the diverse abilities, needs and interests of students of different ages, backgrounds, aptitudes and skills, thus enabling them to make optimal progress in developing the competencies targeted by the program.**

13. The definitions differ, depending on the country. The definition produced by the MEQ reflects the situation in Québec.

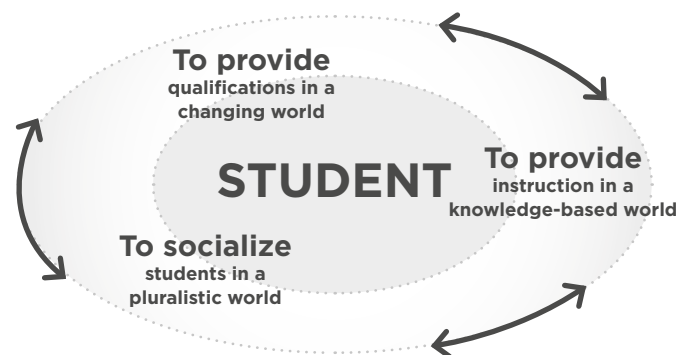
14. Conseil supérieur de l'éducation (1993), *Le défi d'une réussite de qualité: Rapport annuel 1992-1993 sur l'état et les besoins de l'éducation*, 39.

### 3 KEY SUPPORTS FOR IMPLEMENTING DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

To take student diversity into account and support student learning, it is important to fully understand the elements to be taught, the students' characteristics, what they have mastered and what they are to learn. The support of certain fundamental elements is required to effectively implement differentiated instruction.

#### 3.1 MISSION OF QUÉBEC SCHOOLS

"In keeping with the principle of equality of opportunity, the mission of [Québec schools] is to impart knowledge to students, foster their social development and give them qualifications, while enabling them to undertake and achieve success in a course of study."<sup>15</sup> The schools have "a mandate to provide educational services to all young people, to take into account the diversity of their situations and to provide them with the tools necessary to achieve their social and intellectual potential in both their personal and working lives. This means that schools must play a multidimensional role in the lives of young people."<sup>16</sup>



15. *Education Act*, s. 36.

16. Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation (2006), *Québec Education Program, Secondary School Education, Cycle One*, 5.

## 3.2 EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS

“Educational success covers the three major vectors of the mission of Québec’s schools: to provide instruction, to socialize and to provide qualifications. It includes success in school, but goes beyond obtaining a diploma or qualification by taking the person’s overall intellectual, cognitive, affective, social and physical potential into account starting in early childhood. Although this is the school’s mission, several other elements contribute to educational success, such as culture and sports.”<sup>17</sup> The collaboration of parents, the extended family and the community also has an impact on the educational success of students.

## 3.3 THE QUÉBEC EDUCATION PROGRAM AND THE PROGRESSIONS OF LEARNING

In the Québec Education Program for preschool, elementary and secondary education,<sup>18</sup> differentiated instruction is considered to be the main lever for helping all students achieve success. The QEP is the common reference for everyone called upon to contribute to student success. Its application is compulsory<sup>19, 20</sup> and the school must ensure that the necessary organizational, pedagogical and instructional conditions are put in place.

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The development of competencies also targets the acquisition of useful knowledge and skills that enable people to adjust to a rapidly changing context. As stated in the *Digital Competency Framework* (MEES, 2019), this includes the development of digital competencies. Using a digital learning environment must contribute to the success of all students, whether they have difficulties or not. This environment facilitates access to information in various formats (print, video and audio) and also enables students to develop other skills such as creativity, innovation, critical thinking or problem solving.

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17. Québec. Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur (2017). *Policy on Educational Success*, 26.

18. The Work-Oriented Training Path and the *CASP-I Education Program: A Competency-Based Approach to Social Participation* are not discussed in this document. However, the documentation for those two programs makes it clear that differentiated instruction is a practice to be favoured.

19. Indigenous students who are beneficiaries under the *Education Act for Cree, Inuit and Naskapi Native Persons* are exempt from the compulsory application of the QEP.

20. Under section 23.2 of the *Basic school regulation for preschool, elementary and secondary education*, a school board may, to the extent and on the conditions the Minister determines, exempt the following students from the application of the subject-time allocations associated with the QEP: students with moderate to severe or profound intellectual handicaps, students receiving welcoming services and support in learning French, or students receiving home or hospital instruction.

The education plan presented in the QEP is intended to foster the multidimensional development of students. Progressions of learning are also available for most of the subjects. These progressions complement the QEP and provide detailed information on the knowledge, skills, notions, concepts and strategies that students must acquire throughout their schooling. They are also tools to help teachers plan their teaching and their students' learning.

**The QEP defines a competency as a “set of behaviours based on the effective mobilization and use of a range of resources” (Ministère de l'Éducation, 2006).**

In the QEP, the subject-specific competencies correspond to the educational aims specific to each discipline, each organized around key features, knowledge and evaluation criteria. In the simplification and clarification process associated with the implementation of the provincial report card and the development of prescribed frameworks for the evaluation of learning, some competencies were combined and the evaluation criteria were revised. The criteria prescribed in the frameworks for the evaluation of learning introduced in 2011 stem from the criteria contained in the programs. The QEP requirements are based on this set of constituent elements.

### **3.3.1 Teaching and evaluation within the context of the Québec Education Program**

Teaching and evaluation must be planned based on the diverse abilities and needs of students, the QEP and the different progressions of learning. Equally important is a good understanding of the various evaluation criteria that assist in making a judgment on the degree to which competencies<sup>21</sup> have been developed. This allows teachers to help all students make progress, whether they learn easily or experience difficulties.

#### **3.3.1.1 Evaluation as regulator and support for learning**

To develop their competencies, students need to be supported and accompanied. They must have the opportunity to work in various contexts, be given enough time and receive frequent feedback.

Evaluation as support for learning helps students to regulate their learning process and teachers regulate their pedagogical approach.

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“Evaluation serves to support learning whenever the goal of evaluation is to support the student in acquiring knowledge and developing competencies. To fulfill this function, evaluation must be integrated into the teaching and learning process and be used to monitor both student learning and teaching practices.”<sup>22</sup> “Regulation is the process by which students and teachers adjust their actions to allow learning to progress more smoothly.”<sup>23</sup>

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21. “In a situation involving evaluation to support learning, judgment often consists of an informal assessment and the ensuing decision serves to regulate the teaching or learning process.” Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation (2003), *Policy on the Evaluation of Learning: Evaluation for Better Learning*, abridged version, 4.

22. Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation (2002), *Evaluation of Learning at the Preschool and Elementary Levels: Framework*, 7.

23. Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (2006), *Evaluation of Learning at the Secondary Level: Framework*, 45.

**In this document, the emphasis is placed on evaluation as regulator and support for learning, since evaluation is not an end in itself. Indeed, students do not learn in order to be evaluated; they are evaluated in order to learn better. When evaluation is not used for recognizing competencies but as support for learning, there is room for great latitude.**

The purpose of regulation during the learning process is to support students in making progress; it “helps them learn.” *To adjust student learning*, the teacher could use activities such as evaluation by peers or self-evaluation as regulation strategies. The teacher could also have the students collaborate among themselves and take this opportunity to take stock of the learning they have acquired and thus track their progress. Teachers can also use regulation strategies to *adjust their pedagogical activities* in order to check the effect that their actions are having on student learning. In its role as support for learning, evaluation can assist students who are progressing easily as well as those who are experiencing difficulties and, as a result, help keep everyone motivated.

### **3.3.1.2 Evaluation to recognize competencies**

When evaluation is used to check the level of competency development attained, it plays a role in the recognition of competencies. In fulfilling this role, it takes place at specific, scheduled times. It can consist in checking the development level for competencies taught during a certain period of time, particularly near the end of a learning sequence or school year, or at the end of a cycle. It can also be associated with the certification of studies in contexts such as ministerial examinations,<sup>24</sup> which entail processes and rules that must be respected.

Whether in the context of supporting learning or recognizing competencies, the professional judgment of teachers is considered to be crucial.

24. Ministerial examinations are composed of compulsory examinations (end of Elementary Cycle Two, end of Elementary Cycle Three and end of Secondary Cycle One), complementary examinations and uniform examinations (Secondary IV and V) for the certification of studies.

## 4 THE FIRST FORM OF DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION: PEDAGOGICAL FLEXIBILITY

Pedagogical flexibility allows the planning of learning activities, learning situations, and learning and evaluation situations in which different options are offered to the students. It should be brought to the fore in the various subjects taught in class. This does not involve planning individualized teaching but it does involve taking into account the characteristics of the individuals and the group, and offering choices that enable all students to learn. The current challenge is to make pedagogical flexibility more formal and planned, and to ensure that it is underpinned by a clear and cohesive educational aim.

In terms of pedagogical flexibility, there are four elements that can be differentiated: content, process, learning environment and products.

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The pedagogical flexibility emphasized in the QEP at the elementary and secondary levels is the first form of differentiated instruction and can be put into practice with all students. Routinely, this flexibility opens the door to offering students all kinds of possibilities through the choice of varied content, learning environment, processes and products (Tomlinson [2004], Tomlinson and Imbeau [2010], Caron [2008]). The goal is to help students make optimal progress in developing the competencies targeted in each of the programs that make up the QEP.

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## 4.1 DIFFERENTIATE CONTENT

Content includes the knowledge and strategies that students must acquire as well as the competencies to be developed based on the QEP and the progressions of learning. When pedagogical flexibility is practised, the content is not necessarily taught to all students at the same time or at the same pace.

## 4.2 DIFFERENTIATE PROCESSES

For teachers, the choice of processes to be used with students relates to the planning of learning activities or learning and evaluation situations as well as to the pedagogical strategies they will use, all of which take into account the diverse needs of the students. The teacher who practises pedagogical flexibility uses different methods and strategies to help students make optimal progress in developing their competencies. Scaffolding will also vary according to student needs.

For students, the processes represent the road taken to reach the educational aim. In pedagogical flexibility, these processes refer to the intellectual operations, all the internal resources that they have used and all the external resources available to them (Caron, 2008). Processes also include the different strategies mobilized by the students.

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“Scaffolding consists in providing temporary customized support to the learner so that they can carry out a task that they are not yet able to complete on their own”  
(Saint-Laurent and Boisclair, 1995, 6) [*Translation*].

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## 4.3 DIFFERENTIATE THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The learning environment in which students evolve includes structures such as the organizational arrangement of the classroom. Differentiating the learning environment consists mainly in varying the work groups and providing different classroom setups. An astute reading of the classroom climate promotes the well-being of all students and remains an essential condition to be taken into consideration.

## 4.4 DIFFERENTIATE PRODUCTS

Products serve as ways of demonstrating what the students have learned and developed or what they are able to accomplish after a certain period of learning. Pedagogical flexibility allows students to demonstrate in different ways their understanding and their progress in developing their competencies.

## 4.5 POSSIBLE COMBINATION OF ELEMENTS OF PEDAGOGICAL FLEXIBILITY

It is important to emphasize that, in pedagogical flexibility, differentiation of any of the four elements (content, process, learning environment and products) does not necessarily occur in isolation; in other words, differentiating process often entails differentiating structures just as differentiating content often entails differentiating the learning environment. Furthermore, the use of materials (e.g. books, balls, geometric shapes, dice) simultaneously involves content, process and learning environment. It follows that more than one element is likely to be differentiated at the same time. As mentioned earlier, Complementary tool 2 contains examples of pedagogical flexibility regarding in many of the subjects taught, in accordance with the four elements.

## 5 THE SECOND FORM OF DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION: ADAPTATION

The second form of differentiated instruction, adaptation, shares certain similarities with pedagogical flexibility. It is added to pedagogical flexibility for students who need it. Adaptation is an indispensable adjustment that enables a student with major difficulties (or limitations) to overcome or cope more easily with an obstacle encountered during learning or evaluation. It does not modify what is expected of the student. Without adaptations tailored to the student's needs, the student will be impeded in developing their competencies and demonstrating their learning. The decision to implement such a strategy for one or more subjects is based on an analysis of the student's situation with regard to their individualized education plan.

Adaptation enables students to participate actively in the class' pedagogical activities, thus respecting the principle of equity. It has no effect on what is learned and what it is evaluated. When it is implemented, the student actively mobilizes and uses a set of resources related to the competency concerned. In this way, the student pursues their learning in accordance with QEP requirements and, thanks to the adaptation, can also demonstrate their learning.

The analysis of the student's situation that leads to the decision to implement an adaptation takes into account the context, the progress the student is making in the different subjects and the persistent difficulties the student is experiencing. The various interventions on the part of teachers and complementary educational services staff, especially those related to pedagogical flexibility, are also examined as part of this analysis. To ensure that the decisions taken are the right ones, the analysis of the obstacle the student encounters must be matched with an appropriate means of overcoming or reducing it.



As the adaptation strategy is recorded in the individualized education plan,<sup>25</sup> school staff can follow up on it and check whether it really enables the student to overcome an obstacle to their learning or to cope more easily with it. Conducted by the individualized education plan team, the analysis of the student's situation favours concerted effort and requires the contribution of each of the school staff members concerned. If the adaptation involves introducing a digital tool, for example, there must be a plan (and specific staff, as needed) to support and guide the student in using this tool. During the review of an individualized education plan, a judgment can be made on the effectiveness of the adaptation strategy, based on an assessment of the student's progress.

Implemented for certain students with handicaps, social maladjustments or learning difficulties, adaptation helps them develop the competencies set out in the program. This adaptation, indispensable to the student, is added over and above the intervention strategies and the planned instruction for all students based on the QEP and the progressions of learning.<sup>26</sup> The decisions with respect to adaptation must take into account the directives from the Direction de la sanction des études with respect to the ministerial examinations for the students concerned.<sup>27</sup>

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25. See Complementary tool 3: Suggestions for the individualized education plan process – Adaptation strategy and Modification of expectations associated with QEP requirements (students with handicaps, social maladjustments or learning difficulties).

26. See the section on the Québec Education Program and the progressions of learning.

27. If adaptation is required for a student who is receiving support in learning French, an individualized education plan is established for that student. Like all other students, that student is subject to the administration of uniform ministerial examinations.

## 6 THE THIRD FORM OF DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION: MODIFICATION OF EXPECTATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH QUÉBEC EDUCATION PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS<sup>28</sup>

The third form of differentiated instruction, the modification of expectations associated with QEP requirements, is different from the first two forms. It is used in addition to pedagogical flexibility and adaptation, if applicable. This means is available to the school system and aims to foster the development of QEP competencies by students who are unable to meet the QEP requirements for one or more school subjects. The decision to modify the expectations for a student requires a prior analysis of the subjects concerned.

Modification of expectations associated with QEP requirements may be made for students with handicaps, social maladjustments or learning difficulties. It may also be considered for students whose French language competencies<sup>29</sup> temporarily limit the development of the subject-specific competencies of the QEP or the ability of students to demonstrate their learning. For students with handicaps, social maladjustments or learning difficulties, the decision is taken within the framework of the development of the individualized education plan. For students who are receiving welcoming services and support in learning French, this decision is part of a multidisciplinary analysis process.

Expectations tailored to the student, based on QEP requirements, then determine how the school subject in question is taught and evaluated.

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28. For the Cree School Board, the Kativik Ilisarniliriniq School Board and the Naskapi School, the local program may be considered.

29. There are three language competencies: *Lire des textes variés en français*; *Écrire des textes variés en français* and *Communiquer oralement en français dans des situations variées*. Programme de formation de l'école québécoise, enseignement primaire, Intégration linguistique, scolaire et sociale

## 6.1 STUDENTS WITH HANDICAPS, SOCIAL MALADJUSTMENTS OR LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

With regard to students with handicaps, social maladjustments or learning difficulties, the modification of expectations associated with QEP requirements is an exceptional measure that can be implemented only if it is the best way for the student to make progress in developing their competencies in a subject. Implementation requires an analysis of the student's situation within the framework of the development of the individualized education plan.<sup>30</sup> The various interventions implemented for the student form part of this analysis.<sup>31</sup> It is during the collaborative process of developing the individualized education plan that the expectations specific to the student and their needs are determined. This means that the teacher alone does not decide to use this measure.

*Modifying the expectations* associated with QEP requirements means *modifying what is expected of the student*. As a result, the expectations tailored to the student, based on QEP requirements, determine how the subject in question is taught and evaluated. This makes it possible to target learning based on the QEP that is appropriate to the student's development. And that means that a different result is expected from this student, compared with what is expected of Québec students in general at the same educational level, in one or more subjects. It does not necessarily mean, however, that the student will never be re-integrated into the regular learning path. The decision should be reviewed periodically to ensure that it is still the best choice. Lastly, because this decision is taken within the scope of the individualized education plan, parents who participate in it are informed of any possible impact on their child's schooling or the possibility of obtaining a secondary school diploma.

## 6.2 STUDENTS WHO ARE RECEIVING WELCOMING SERVICES AND SUPPORT IN LEARNING FRENCH<sup>32</sup>

To meet the needs of some of these students, the expectations associated with QEP requirements may be modified for the period of time set for learning the language of instruction, integrating, and adapting to the Québec school system. The expectations associated with the Intégration linguistique, scolaire et sociale (ILSS) program, developed to facilitate linguistic, educational and social integration, do not have to be modified because ILSS is a preparatory program tailored to the student's needs. However, expectations may be modified for other subjects separate from the ILSS program. This is a means, most often temporary, that can be implemented at the most appropriate point in a student's development, before returning the student to the regular stream. It is not necessary to create an individualized education plan. The teacher does not take sole responsibility for modifying the expectations associated with QEP requirements. This decision is based on an analysis of the situation and is made by a team of stakeholders who are called upon to work together to respond to the student's needs. The analysis of the situation by a multidisciplinary team leads to the establishment of expectations tailored to the student and intended to allow the student to develop their competencies to the greatest extent possible, especially their French-language competencies. However, this does not mean that the student will never be able to reintegrate into the regular stream without modifications. Indeed, the multidisciplinary team must re-analyze the situation after a certain period of time to ensure that the decision still represents the best choice for the student. The creation of an individualized education plan is not compulsory in the case of a student who is receiving welcoming services and support in learning French, unless that student also has handicaps, social maladjustments or learning difficulties.

30. See Complementary tool 3: Suggestions for the individualized education plan process – Adaptation strategy and Modification of expectations associated with QEP requirements (students with handicaps, social maladjustments or learning difficulties).

31. The Annual Directives contain information on this subject.

32. To learn more about students receiving welcoming services and support in learning French, consult the following document: [http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/site\\_web/documents/education/diversite/Guide-soutien-milieu-scolaire\\_2020-2021.pdf](http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/site_web/documents/education/diversite/Guide-soutien-milieu-scolaire_2020-2021.pdf) (available in French only).

### 6.3 ELEMENTS TO BE CONSIDERED WITH REGARD TO THE MODIFICATION OF EXPECTATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH QUÉBEC EDUCATION PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

As stated in section 3.3, the QEP (along with the progressions of learning and the frameworks for the evaluation of learning) is an indispensable common reference for all school staff with regard to the instruction to be provided and the evaluation to be carried out for all students subject to the QEP. When a student is not capable of meeting QEP requirements in one or more school subjects, the stakeholders concerned (individualized education plan team or multidisciplinary team) determine the expectations for this student, based on the QEP. To modify *what is expected of the student*, they make choices based on this program, hence the designation “modification of expectations associated with QEP requirements.”<sup>33</sup> In the context of developing competencies in a given school subject, these choices are made regarding elements such as key features, strategies, knowledge, concepts, processes and evaluation criteria and serve as references for teaching, evaluation and communicating results. Even though use of the scales of competency levels at the elementary and secondary school levels<sup>34</sup> is no longer prescribed by the *Basic school regulation for preschool, elementary and secondary school education*, these scales can help support the teacher’s judgment. By way of example, level 3 of each of these scales corresponds to the acceptable level of development for each competency.

Modification of expectations associated with QEP requirements is a way to support students within the framework of how services are organized, in regular classes or in other types of groups. As is done for all other students, the teacher chooses the means that can support the learning set for specific students. The learning activities and the learning and evaluation activities may be the same, or sometimes different, depending on the educational aims established for the student for whom the expectations have been modified. In terms of the role of evaluation as support for learning, the student for whom expectations have been modified also needs to be supported and accompanied.<sup>35</sup> For the recognition of competencies, this student is evaluated in accordance with the expectations established for them. This means that a judgment must be based on these expectations and the learning acquired by the student. The results for the school subjects concerned<sup>36</sup> are communicated in the report card in a different way from those of other students. Furthermore, it is important to ensure that the parents understand the learning acquired by their child.

33. See the section on the Québec Education program and the progressions of learning.

34. *Scales of Competency Levels* for elementary education, Cycles One, Two and Three (2009) and for secondary school education (2007).

35. See the section on regulation and evaluation as support for learning (3.3.1.1).

36. These parameters are indicated in the Annual Directives.

# 7 INTERACTION BETWEEN THE THREE FORMS OF DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

As mentioned earlier, pedagogical flexibility supports success for all students. It is the foundation for the implementation of the two other forms of differentiated instruction. Adaptation and the modification of expectations associated with QEP requirements are added to pedagogical flexibility for students who need them.

These three forms of differentiated instruction do not form a continuum of interventions, nor are they a series of steps to work through. Thus, modification of expectations associated with QEP requirements does not necessarily have to be preceded by the implementation of one or more adaptation strategies, but it can be. Pedagogical flexibility is routinely applied and the other two forms of differentiated instruction require a collegial analysis of the needs of a specific student. Analysis of the student's situation is what determines whether the second or third form must be implemented as additional support to foster the student's success. This analysis must be based on sufficient and diverse information that allows the needs and capabilities of the student to be identified.

Pedagogical flexibility offers a wide range of means to differentiate content, process, learning environment and products. The use of these diverse means will enable a number of students to either avoid encountering obstacles on their learning path or to cope more easily with these obstacles. In other cases, some obstacles to learning will require an analysis in order to make an appropriate choice. It is not the means that constitutes pedagogical flexibility or adaptation. What

distinguishes pedagogical flexibility from adaptation is the fact that the latter is essential for the student. Indeed, adaptation is necessary to enable the student to develop and demonstrate their competencies.

To help implement differentiated instruction, the following complementary tools are provided:

- › Complementary tool 1 – General examples of pedagogical flexibility
- › Complementary tool 2 – Examples of pedagogical flexibility related to the various subjects
- › Complementary tool 3 – Suggestions for the individualized education plan process – Adaptation strategy and Modification of expectations associated with QEP requirements (students with handicaps, social maladjustments or learning difficulties)

# CONCLUSION

Differentiated instruction aims to help all students make progress in developing their competencies with respect to the QEP, regardless of their capabilities, needs, interests, age, background, aptitudes or skills.

Differentiated instruction has three distinct yet complementary forms. The first two forms, pedagogical flexibility and adaptation, have certain characteristics in common. The third form, modification of expectations associated with QEP requirements, differs in nature.

In the QEP, differentiated instruction is identified as the main lever for helping all students achieve success. The input of each member of the school team is essential in order to know a student well and provide them with the desired support. Pooling all resources in the search for solutions and focusing efforts on a common goal constitute the bases of the collaborative practices needed to implement differentiated instruction.

Although each student is unique, the idea that all young people can learn and benefit from learning together enables the school to be creative in enriching the educational path of each student. The diversity of students and their needs drives us to be proactive in using differentiated instruction because it encourages collaboration between the various members of the school staff, draws on the strengths of each student and makes a difference in terms of fostering the development of the full potential and the educational success of all students.

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