

Principals Want to Know

A tip sheet for principals that focuses on practical issues faced in schools.

Drawn from existing resources, these tips are designed to support instructional leadership practice.

Issue #26 July 2016

Learning for All: A Guide to Effective Assessment and Instruction for All Students, Kindergarten to Grade 12 (Learning for All, K-12) (2013)

The Question:

“*Learning for All, K-12 (2013)*, an important resource for instructional leadership practice, describes an integrated process of assessment and instruction that supports personalized and precise teaching and learning for all students, including students with special education needs, from Kindergarten to Grade 12. How can I use this document to support the professional learning of all educators in my school?”

The Answer:

Here are seven Tips for Success:

1. Use *Learning for All, K-12 (2013)* to support the improvement planning process.
2. Provide multiple entry points to staff professional learning.
3. Examine and reflect on your school’s current practices and use of planning tools.
4. Customized class and student profiles assist educators in “getting to know the learners”.
5. Support collaborative inquiry.
6. Use the tiered approach as a school-wide systematic approach.
7. Align *Learning for All, K-12 (2013)* with identified school priorities and other initiatives.

1. Use *Learning for All, K-12 (2013)* to support the improvement planning process.

Schools and districts can use *Learning for All, K-12 (2013)* as an overarching framework as educators identify areas of strength, areas requiring improvement, and collaboratively pursue inquiry focused on student learning (p. 8 and 9). The following are some ways that districts are using it to support professional learning and improvement planning in:

- building alignment with school effectiveness and board improvement planning processes;
- using it as a foundational document and framework for all students;
- building teacher capacity to recognize student learning styles and respond to student needs;
- improving connectedness between curriculum and special education; and
- facilitating authentic collaboration across departments.

The three elements of Personalization, Precision and Professional Learning are critical in an integrated process of assessment and instruction, and are represented in the School Effectiveness Framework.

2. Provide multiple entry points to staff professional learning.

Begin by unpacking these “shared beliefs” and reflecting on current practice in your school that brings them to life in the classroom:

- All students can succeed.
- Each child has unique learning patterns.
- Successful instructional practices are founded on evidence-based research tempered by experience.
- Universal design and differentiated instruction are effective and interconnected means of meeting the learning or productivity needs of any group of students.
- Classroom teachers are the key educators in the school context for a student’s literacy and numeracy development.
- Classroom teachers need the support of the larger community to create a learning environment that supports students with special education needs.
- Fairness is not sameness.

This set of shared beliefs is included in the front section of all revised [Ontario Curriculum policy documents](#).

3. Examine and reflect on your school’s current practices and use of planning tools:

- Assessment for Learning
- Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
- Differentiated instruction (DI)
- The tiered approach
- Class and student profiles

Some school boards have integrated these approaches into their practice and shared their learning from collaborative inquiry projects. To read about their journeys, please see regional project reports posted on [the ministry website](#).

Use the guiding questions in Appendix C (p. 62) to engage educators in reflective dialogues about their

practice and collaborative inquiry. It is best viewed as “Good for All, Necessary for Some”.

4. Customized class and student profiles assist educators in “getting to know the learners”.

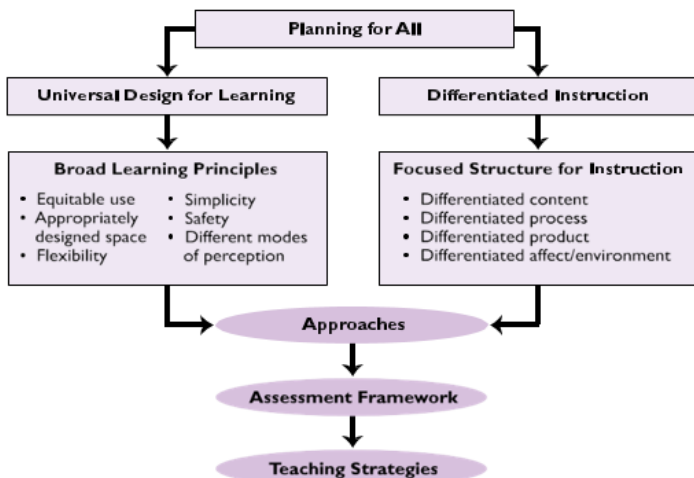
Class Profile is an information-gathering tool, a reference tool and a tracking tool all in one. It helps teachers plan effective assessment and instruction for all students in the class, monitor student progress, and provide timely interventions when needed (p. 34). **Student Profile** gives detailed, in-depth information about the learning strengths and needs of the individual student. It supplements the class profile as a tool for planning personalized and precise assessment and instruction for students who need extra attention and support in particular areas of learning (p. 42).

Engaging students in this process will give them insight that they can apply as they develop their **All About Me** portfolios and **Individual Pathway Plans**, as outlined in *Creating Pathways to Success: An Education and Career/Life Planning Program for Ontario Schools – Policy and Program Requirements, Kindergarten to Grade 12*.

5. Support collaborative inquiry.

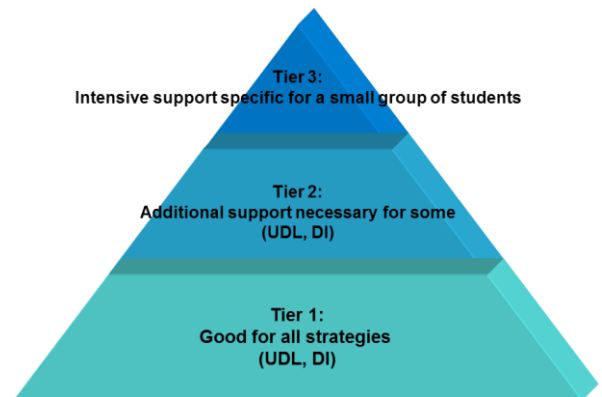
This positions educators as informed practitioners who apply UDL and DI, and continuously refine planning, assessment and instruction in pursuit of greater personalization, precision, and professional learning.

UDL encourages teachers to develop a class profile and then plan, from the beginning, to provide means and pedagogical materials that are tailored to draw on the strengths and meet the needs of all students, and not only those with special education needs (p.14).



6. Use the tiered approach as a school-wide, systematic approach.

It ensures that high-quality evidence-based assessment, instruction, and appropriate interventions, are responsive to a student’s individual needs. The tiered approach can be used to address both academic and behaviour needs (p.24).



7. Align Learning for All, K-12 (2013) with identified school priorities and other initiatives.

Connect *Learning for All, K-12 (2013)* with key policies such as *Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting in Ontario Schools (2010)*.

Use sample classroom practice of UDL and DI embedded in other professional learning resources. Many of them are available on the [EduGAINS](#) website (e.g., [Full-Day Kindergarten](#), [Financial Literacy](#)). Video resources can be used to generate discussion and dialogue among educators, and also to facilitate reflection on their own practice.

School boards report that most effective professional learning of *Learning for All, K-12 (2013)* has been job-embedded (e.g., coaching model).

Other Supporting Resources:

- Universal Design for Learning
 - ✓ [Centre for Applied Special Technology \(CAST\)](#)
 - ✓ [Design Thinking for Educators](#)
- [Capacity Building Series](#)
 - ✓ Student Voice: Transforming Relationships
 - ✓ Dynamic Learning: Connecting Student Learning and Educator Learning
 - ✓ Pedagogical Documentation
 - ✓ Collaborative Teacher Inquiry
- French-language resources are available at [EduSource Ontario](#)