

DIFFERENTIATION PLANNING TEMPLATE

Teaching in the Age of AI requires more than letting a large language model spit out a lesson plan. The point of using AI is to save time while maintaining professional judgment. The checklist below breaks the process into manageable steps. Use it as a working document when designing differentiated lessons with AI. Take notes as you complete each step.

You're still in control—if something doesn't make sense for your class, skip it.

1. Identify student needs

✓ **"Teach me about common errors..."**

Ask the AI to explain typical misconceptions and errors for the topic. This yields a list to help identify student needs and gives you language to watch for in student work.

✓ **"Analyze student work..."**

Upload anonymised samples to the AI tool or summarise the patterns yourself. Look for systematic mistakes to target in instruction.

✓ **"Anticipate learning hurdles..."**

Identify vocabulary, background knowledge or procedural skills students are missing.



2. Craft the Plan

✓ **Specify the grade level and subject:**

It can be helpful to explain the context of the lesson plan—what are the previous lessons or concepts that students have recently learned? What should they already know?

✓ **Generate differentiated resources:**

Use AI to design small group lesson plans and aligned resources. AI tools can quickly generate differentiated materials—such as leveled reading passages, problem sets, or other activities—based on any text or topic. These tools can automatically create summaries, highlight key vocabulary, and provide comprehension questions, making it easier to tailor content.

✓ **Support diverse learners:**

Ensure the plan includes multiple versions that meet the needs of your students, with vocabulary lists or hints for each. Provide translations or simplified language for multilingual learners and consider multimodal outputs such as audio or visuals.

✓ **Use your expertise:**

Use the generated output as a starting point and adapt it using your professional judgment.



3. Evaluate the Plan

- ✓ **Check standards and learning objectives:**
Compare the AI generated plan to state/district standards and the learning goals of your unit.
- ✓ **Assess difficulty and vocabulary:**
AI tutors and adaptive platforms can tailor tasks to individual strengths and gaps, but you must decide whether the difficulty is appropriate. Verify that reading levels, vocabulary and numerical complexity match your learners.
- ✓ **Identify bias or inaccuracies:**
Review any examples or contexts for cultural relevance and factual accuracy. Do not assume the AI's first answer is correct.



4. Revising the Plan

- ✓ **Add local context:**
Insert examples familiar to your students and adjust reading levels or scaffolds. Teacher adaptations may include adding local examples, adjusting reading levels and developing additional assessments and supports.
- ✓ **Integrate scaffolds and choice:**
Provide suggestions, sentence stems or graphic organisers to help developing learners. Offer extension tasks or open-ended questions for advanced students.
- ✓ **Plan formative checks:**
Build in quick assessments (exit tickets, miniquizzes) to monitor understanding and adjust instruction.
- ✓ **Collaborate and Share:**
Test your plan, share it with colleagues and refine based on feedback.



Best Practices

- **Start with standards:** Use AI to unpack learning objectives but never let it replace curriculum alignment.
- **Be skeptical:** AI is a tool, not a teacher. It can suggest leveled texts and questions, but you must verify the quality and accuracy.
- **Mind your time:** AI tools can free up some of this time, but only if used strategically.
- **Prioritise privacy:** Ensure any AI tool complies with student data protection policies.

