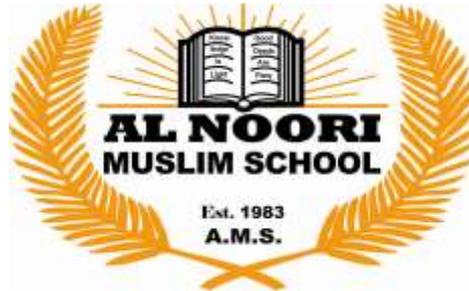


AL NOORI MUSLIM SCHOOL



# Academic Support

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Policies & Documents

**Year 2016**

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## Background

The NSW Board of Studies defines:

Students with difficulties in learning are those who are not achieving the outcomes of English K-6 according to expectations. These students will experience difficulties for a range of reasons and with varying degrees of intensity and duration. Students who have learning difficulties may include those:

- with English as a second language background
- with a background in Aboriginal English
- from groups with low socioeconomic status
- with an intellectual disability
- with specific learning problems
- who have missed or changed schools frequently
- who have received inappropriate teaching for their learning needs
- with detected or undetected hearing or vision loss.

*NSW Board of Studies 2007*

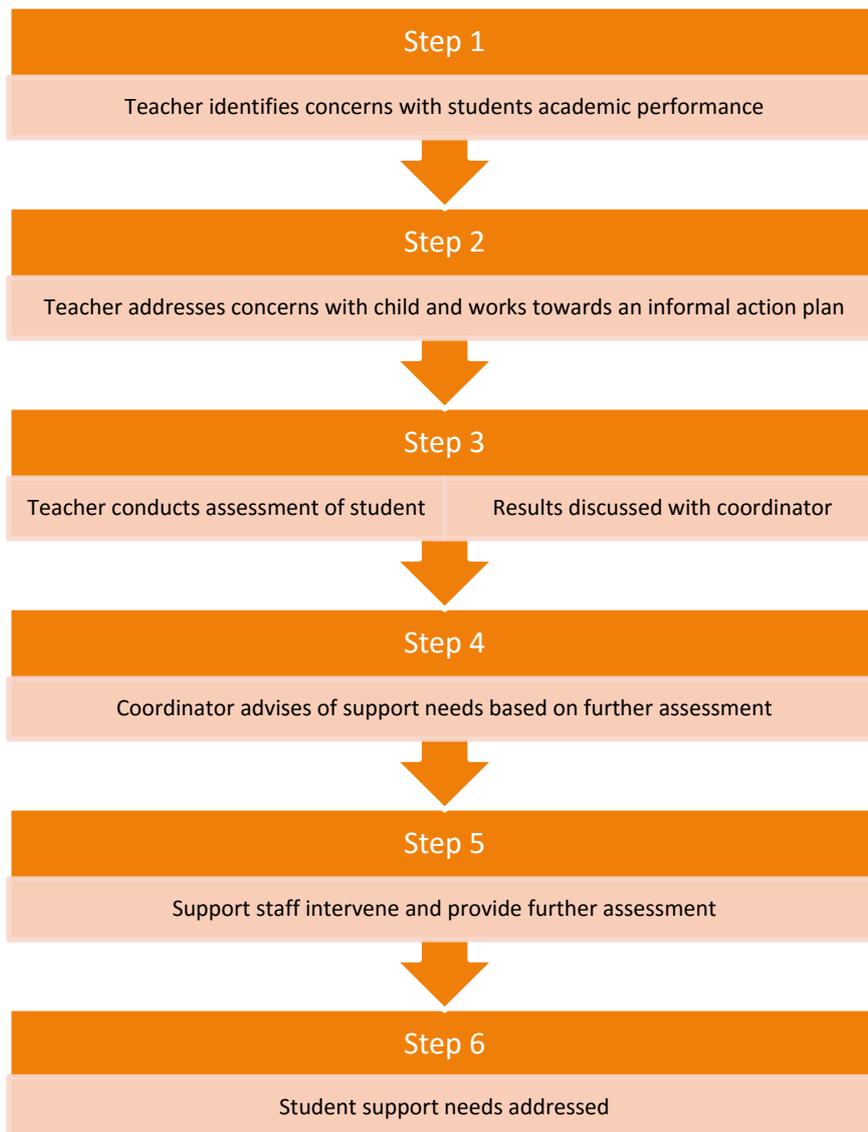
## 1 Identifying students requiring support

There are a wide range of techniques and procedures for assessing students who are experiencing learning difficulties. Although such techniques and procedures may vary according to the difficulties experienced, they should include skilled observation and/or application of appropriate test materials, e.g. using P & M benchmarks for assessing reading.

Assessment procedures should lead to the provision of quality teaching programs for individual students.

Assessment should be conducted by class and support teachers. Assessments are an ongoing process; all information collected is to be filed with both the class and support teachers.

### 1.1 Assessment procedure:



## 2 The role of the support teacher

### 2.1 Overview

The Support Teacher assists schools to cater for those students in regular classes who are experiencing difficulties in basic areas of learning.

In carrying out this role the Support Teacher will:

- assist in the identification and assessment of students with learning difficulties;
- work with school executive, teachers and parents to plan and design appropriate programs for students with learning difficulties;
- work with regular class teacher predominantly in a team teaching role within classrooms on the implementation of programs for students with learning difficulties;
- assist school executive and class teachers monitor and evaluate programs for students with learning difficulties.

*Student Support Services Directorate New South Wales Department of Education Sydney*

### 2.2 Assessment

Initial assessment occurs after concerns have been communicated by the class teacher and coordinator.

Ongoing assessments occur during the support sessions. Students are assessed on identified areas of difficulty as well as current content taught. Support teachers utilise various assessment methods, including:

- targeted testing,
- observation supported by anecdotal notes,
- surveys,
- interviews/ discussion, etc.

Support teachers are required to communicate results to the relevant class teachers and determine whether particular students no longer require support or require more intense support.

### 2.3 Developing Programs

To effectively meet the needs of support students, it is essential to develop individualised and/ or small group programs.

Programs should:

- build on information gained from assessment of each student's individual learning needs;
- acknowledge that students with learning difficulties, like all students, need to learn at a pace and in a style which is both appropriate and challenging for them;
- recognise that many learning difficulties experienced by individuals may be overcome by only slight modification to regular class programs while more complex problems will require comprehensive planning and provision;
- provide for differences in the duration of programs, depending on the individual needs of the student;
- Establish and continue to evaluate curriculum and programs

*Student Support Services Directorate New South Wales Department of Education Sydney*

### 2.3.1 Program Evaluation

Support teachers evaluate programs on a weekly basis and reflect on teaching strategies used, individual student progress, use of resources, support session timings, follow up required etc. These are to be communicated with the class teacher if applicable and when necessary.

### 2.3.2 Monitoring support programs:

The deputy principal and school executives are responsible for the monitoring of support sessions, program development and progress of students. Support teachers will need to submit programs, evaluations, resource request etc. to department supervisor (school executive).

Executives will monitor the effectiveness of support sessions by conducting observations of the different support sessions including individual, small group and team teaching. Executives will meet with support teachers after the observation occur and discuss the organisation of the support session with the support teacher. Programs developed by support teachers will be appraised by school executives.

## 2.4 Teaching

The support teacher implements all developed programs during timetabled support sessions. The organisation of the support session is individualised to meet the needs of each class. The support teacher will assist students in three different contexts.

### 2.4.1 Support Types:

#### 2.4.1.1 Team teaching:

This process involves the support teacher working alongside the class teacher and supporting the teaching and learning process of the current program. In this process, students have access to the common syllabus outcomes. Both class and support teachers provide one-to one support to students experiencing difficulties.

#### 2.4.1.2 Group support:

This process involves a small support group engaged in learning some/all or no outcomes addressed in common syllabus of the KLA. The teaching and learning variation may be:

- more appropriate pacing of syllabus outcomes to meet the need of support students
- implementing outcomes from earlier stages on the continuum of learning in order to address specific academic needs
- implementing some components of the life skills syllabus in parallel to the common syllabus, or
- implementing the life skills syllabus only.

#### 2.4.1.3 Individual support:

This process involves the support teacher working on a one-to-one basis with students who have been identified as at risk with higher learning difficulties. During support sessions, teachers are actively involved explicit teaching methods; modelling should be utilised in all talking and listening, reading and writing opportunities.

### 2.4.2 Record keeping

Support teachers are responsible for establishing a support workbook documenting student work and performance. A file should be established for each student collating all work samples, assessments and progress reports. These files are stored with the support teacher with access rights restricted to the class

teacher, coordinator, and deputy principal. Anyone else requiring access will need to seek the approval of the principal.

## **2.5 Communication:**

### **2.5.1 Working with other teachers**

The support teacher should utilise the first week of each term to meet with subject teachers and discuss the plans and programs for each term. During these meetings teachers will form an agreement about forms of assessment which will be used to identify students who are experiencing difficulty and areas of difficulty.

Support teachers attend grade meetings to discuss the support schedule and future plans and programs. Students' progress will also be discussed and the support teacher is required to provide ongoing information.

### **2.5.2 Working with other staff**

Students identified with severe learning difficulties require more intensive levels of support. Support teachers are required to be in liaison with the school counsellor. Support teachers may also need to work with Special Needs Consultants who will help teachers establish better means of assessing and supporting the needs of students experiencing difficulty.

### **2.5.3 Working with the community**

Support teachers may also be in contact with other professionals involved in the life of students. Professionals such as doctors, speech therapists, optometrists and audiologist may contact the school seeking information about the progress of particular students.

### **2.5.4 Communicating with parents**

Support teachers are available via appointments to meet with parents concerning the progress of their child. Support teacher/s may also be asked to attend parent/ teacher interviews to assist class teachers in delivering accurate information to parents about support students' strengths and weaknesses.

## **2.6 School Duties**

Support teachers will be expected to fulfil timetabled duties such as playground duty, assembly duty, staffroom duty and prayer duty. Support teachers may at certain times be required to replace a teacher for a session of the day or all day (as required by the Principal).

### 3 Establishing a differentiated classroom

Students with learning difficulties require a high level of support both within the mainstream classroom and during support sessions, in addressing the needs of these students, class teachers endeavour to establish a differentiated classroom.

A differentiated classroom is described by Tomlinson (2000) as a classroom where the teacher begins where students are at, not at the front of a curriculum/ syllabus document. Furthermore the teacher is required to engage students in different learning modalities, by appealing to differing interests, and by using varied rates of instruction.

All class teachers begin each year by assessing all students. By establishing a differentiated classroom the teachers are well informed about students' abilities and are constantly setting/ modifying tasks to meet students' needs.

Tomlinson (2000) further suggests that in a differentiated classroom the teachers carefully fashion instruction around the essential concepts, principles, and skills of each subject. KLA teachers are responsible for adapting teaching strategies which are relevant, effective and suited to the topic area/ concept taught.

It is necessary for all tasks to be considered before implementation, class teachers need to determine which group is capable of completing the task and which group requires support, the teaching strategy used from group to group will differ and the final product (work sample) from each student should be individual.

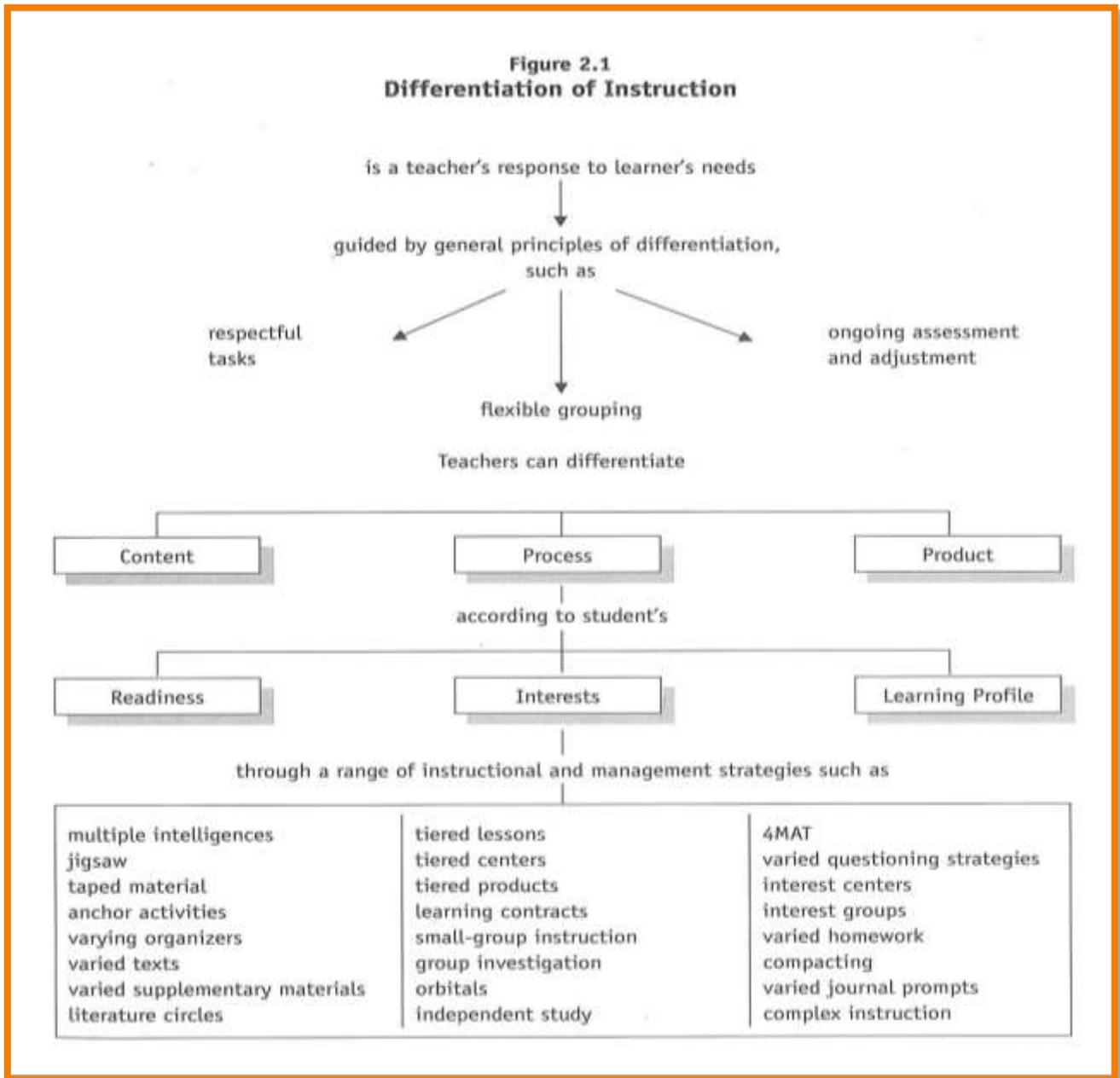
#### Key Principles of a Differentiated Classroom

- The teacher is clear about what matters in subject matter.
- The teacher understands, appreciates, and builds upon students differences.
- Assessment and instruction are inseparable.
- The teacher adjusts content, process, and product in response o student readiness, interests and learning profile.
- All students participate in respectful work.
- Students and teachers are collaborators in learning.
- Goals of a differentiated classroom are maximum growth and individual success.
- Flexibility is the hallmark of a differentiated classroom.

*Tomlinson (2000)*

See Appendix 1 for more detail.

Appendix 1



## References:

Snow, D. (2000) Classroom strategies for helping At-Risk students. Association for supervision and curriculum development. Virginia, USA.

Tomlinson, C. (2000) The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the needs of all learners. Association for supervision and curriculum development. Virginia, USA.