





• Figure 1.4 •

Lesson Variations for Students with Fewer Skills

Rather than reduce the concept and skill level, teachers must figure out ways for struggling students to learn targeted skills and concepts. Use this list of variations for students with fewer skills as a checklist to increase the efficiency of differentiating a lesson. Skim the list to validate differentiation practices already in place, select options to implement, or prompt your brainstorming of different variations. View this chart as a developing document to use to refine and add to as often as adaptation ideas occur.

Before Direct Instruction

1. Support ELL students by providing a tape recording of the lesson content in the child's first language as an advanced organizer before the student experiences direct instruction in the targeted skills in English. 
2. Provide tape recordings of fiction or nonfiction. Students listen and follow along to develop background experience before they read the text during direct instruction. 
3. Discuss, model, and post a rubric of the behaviors students should demonstrate when meaningfully engaged in learning.

4. Create a support system to enable struggling students to succeed at the target level for the tasks. This system includes working with the teacher, an aide, a parent volunteer, a peer tutor, in a background group, or in a peer-share trio (similar-readiness level peers). 


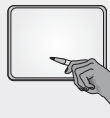
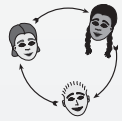
During Direct Instruction

5. Strive to stretch students slightly beyond their comfort zones.
6. Ensure that the instruction is interesting and engaging so that all students look forward to their learning opportunities.
7. Plan to engage students' interests through choice and content examples, such as using class experiences and students' names as positive examples incorporating skills. *On the way home yesterday, Ethan listened to three songs that were each three and one-half minutes long. What was the total time he heard music?*
8. Incorporate manipulative, three-dimensional, and printed resources so students experience learning through multiple learning modes.

9. Provide manipulatives, choral reading, and role-playing opportunities that students use to actively demonstrate understanding through auditory, kinesthetic, and visual modalities.



10. Plan process engagement tasks every few minutes to ensure mental engagement and assess understanding. We dare not assume that they *got it* because we *said it*. Pause to engage the students in predicting, asking and answering questions, and making personal connections using strategies, such as response rounds, topic talk, and individual response boards.



11. Incorporate pair-share. *Turn to the person next to you and discuss...*

12. Incorporate quick write opportunities to check for understanding. *For one minute, list all of the examples you can think of...*

13. Encourage children to incorporate quick sketches, symbols, and rebus writing to embellish or elaborate their responses and explanations.



14. Use more direct instruction until students begin to understand.

15. As appropriate, delegate more responsibility to students for their learning to ensure that they gain independence and management skills.

16. Provide concrete structure during the lesson. Structure the learning process so students experience a clear, linear sequence.

17. Use graphic organizers and other visual tools to structure and organize lesson content.

18. Incorporate closure techniques to aid student memory and understanding. Strategies such as riddles, summarization, and exit tickets are efficient and effective.



19. Simplify readability by using less complex versions of the content.

20. Match resources to students' background knowledge and skills. At times, these materials may need to differ from the textbook or grade-level curriculum resources. Your librarian or media specialist is a wonderful source to help secure a range of materials for every topic you teach.

21. Engage students in echo reading in which the teacher reads one line and the group echoes or repeats the same line to model reading skills and develop comprehension. Later, students reread the passage independently.

22. Structure time more flexibly. Allow time for students to incubate content and skills.

23. Incorporate ample time for modeling and discussing examples that help students to make connections.

24. Pace the lesson sequence with planned repetition, novelty, and practice that responds to the students' rate of learning.

25. Instruct students for brief periods in small groups of two to four students when optimum achievement is required.

26. Incorporate simple rebus sentences to support phonics and the students' reading development.



27. Provide word banks.

28. Promote students' high-levels of thinking during this learning experience. All students, including those with fewer skills, benefit from opportunities to apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information.

Higher levels of thinking are necessary to move students toward long-term learning rather than just short-term memorizing. Involve them in strategies such as think aloud and analyze it.



29. Support ELL students by supplementing the lesson with materials in a child's first language to augment comprehension during and after direct instruction.

30. Tape record all or part of a lesson as you work with students. As needed, students can replay a significant part to revisit or practice the skill.



31. Develop concept map relationships and webs of words as you work with students during a lesson. Students use the webs to support and structure their responses and learning tasks following the lesson.

After Direct Instruction

32. Incorporate the rebus sentences and initial sentences into direction statements so the children can read and follow directions independently.



33. Provide blank copies of a graphic organizer to structure the content during a lesson. Students complete the organizer individually or in pairs as a follow-up to the lesson.

34. Duplicate and cut apart a completed graphic organizer used during a lesson. Students use the pieces as a manipulative to reconstruct the information.

35. Cut a summary of the content into phrases for students to use as a manipulative. Students increase comprehension by reconstructing the summary in order.

36. Use peer tutors and aides to increase individual instruction and support during study groups, guided practice of activities for targeted skills, and follow-up lessons. For example, peer teams engage in echo reading.

37. Tape-record every story read aloud to the class. Individual students can replay and follow along to practice tracking print, developing reading vocabulary, and increasing comprehension skills.



38. Have students quietly read aloud with a tape recording of text to increase fluency.



39. Use older students or parent volunteers to help develop tape recordings of fiction, nonfiction, and directions for learning experiences.



40. Use tiered centers with activities that promote practice of targeted skills and concepts. The centers should be organized with a mixed-readiness group of students for support and interaction.