

Synchronous Communication Tools

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Differentiated instruction is a framework that provides instruction to meet the needs of all learners. When students enter classrooms, they arrive with varied backgrounds containing differing levels of readiness, interests, and learning styles. Due to the diverse nature of classrooms around the nation, it is critical to provide a learning environment for which all students can reach out and collaborate beyond their own classrooms. The four components that create a classroom that encompasses a differentiated framework include: learning environment, content, process, and product. The purpose of this paper is to describe two synchronous communication tools, which allow learners, adult and youth, to collaborate beyond the walls of a classroom in real time.

*Webex*, is a tool to facilitate a Webinar, was utilized to disseminate information to a group audience in multiple locations. Webinar experiences allow learners to process and internalize content, ideas, and skills they are exposed to. Differentiating the process is a key component to ensure that all students are challenged beyond their independence level. Students engaged in meaningful learning experiences fuel positive perceptions toward learning (Fraser et al., 2006). Fraser et al. reported positive associations between classroom involvement and opportunities for purposeful peer interactions to increased classroom attitudes (2006). Additionally, Fraser et al. reported student attitudes toward science enhance learning opportunities and thereby increase student achievement.

The screen-sharing tool *Google Hangout* promotes active learning as a key for students to gain conceptual understanding of content by collaborating in real time. During the active process, the teacher facilitates and assesses knowledge gained, provides feedback, and supports a positive learning community. According to

Piagetian and constructivist principles of theory, learners construct information through a variety of socialization formats. Interactions between teachers and their students are another format that can propel and enhance learning (Beaman et al., 2006).

Differentiating instruction is not an easy task. Understanding the framework of the four components is a starting place for educators to grow. Differentiating process and product are two areas in which there is an abundant amount of information cycling through education. Three points of differentiation to keep in mind identify students' readiness level, tap into student interest, and provide multiple avenues for learning; through varied modes of instruction learners will be challenged to think outside their independence level.