

The Elements of Effective Instruction (EEI) Resource and Research Guides are designed to allow educators to learn more about the research, strategies, and theory behind each of the five strands. These Resource Guides can be used following the [EEI Self-Assessment](#) to help individual educators or teams learn more about areas of interest.

## Element 3: Varied Content, Materials and Methods

Students explore ideas and information in varied ways and access learning through multiple entry points. Educators select content and materials to engage and meet the needs of each learner.



### Important Ideas

1. “A 2008 meta-analysis of 41 studies found a strong link between giving students choices and their intrinsic motivation for doing a task, their overall performance on the task, and their willingness to accept challenging tasks (Patall, Cooper, & Robinson, 2008).” —Goodwin, B. (2010, September). “Research Says...Choice is a Matter of Degree.” *Giving Students Meaningful Work* 68 (1), 68.
2. “The most important thing is to focus on keeping students academically engaged so that they are invested as learners. Generally, this requires teachers to utilize strategies that are more interactive and more hands on. Most students learn better by doing than by sitting and listening passively. Teachers who employ strategies that challenge students to think and use their problem-solving abilities will be more successful in creating a learning environment that pushes kids to excel. We must challenge kids and give them the opportunity to see how what they learn in school can be applied in the real world. Cultural relevance is a really important part of this so it is imperative that we utilize multicultural books and learning materials that will engage kids and motivate them to apply themselves.” —Rea, D. W. (2015). *Interview with Pedro Noguera: How to Help Students and Schools in Poverty. National YouthAt-Risk Journal* 1(1), 11-21.
3. “When considering an environment where students are constructing their own understanding, educators may conclude that a teacher has nothing to do. On the contrary, a teacher’s role in a constructivist class is no less critical than the teacher’s role in a traditional class. It is different. Teaching no longer focuses solely on making presentations (although those are still sometimes appropriate) or assigning questions and exercises. Instead, teaching focuses on designing activities and assignments—many of them framed as problem-solving—that engage students in constructing important knowledge.” —Danielson, C. (2017). *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching* (2nd ed.) (p.17). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.



## Brief Articles

1. Novak, K., & Rodriguez, K. (2023, June 15). How UDL Creates an Equitable Environment for Students. Edutopia. Retrieved from <https://www.edutopia.org/article/universal-design-learning-promotes-equity/>. This article describes how providing students with multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression creates conditions where all students can learn
2. Schwartz, S. (2022, February 4). Four Principles of Universal Design for Learning. Edutopia. Retrieved from <https://www.edutopia.org/article/4-principles-universal-design-learning-approach/>. This article summarizes the four beliefs that underpin Universal Design for Learning.
3. Will, M. (2017, May 24). What happens when students design their own assessments? Education Week. Retrieved from <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2017/05/24/what-happens-when-students-design-their-own.html>. This article details the efforts of the Roanoke Virginia County district to move toward student-led assessments. It includes the voices and perspectives of students, teachers and administrators.



## Book Recommendations

1. Kallick, B., & Zmuda, A. (2017). *Students at the Center: Personalized Learning with the Habits of Mind*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. This book explores and explains a model of personalized learning that focuses on helping students develop and apply habits of mind. It includes practical suggestions and examples for application.
2. Novak, K. (2022). *UDL Now! A Teacher's Guide to Understanding Universal Design for Learning*. Wakefield, MA: Cast Inc. This is the third edition of this book and the author provides practice strategies for helping all learners, including key tips for how to support UDL within the MTSS framework.
3. Stobaugh, Rebecca. (2019). *50 Strategies to Boost Cognitive Engagement: Creating a Thinking Culture in the Classroom*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press. This book provides concrete strategies and practices teachers can incorporate into their instruction to support students with engagement.



## Reports and Research

1. American Institutes for Research. (2016). *Study of Deeper Learning: Opportunities and Outcomes*. American Institutes for Research. Retrieved from <http://www.air.org/project/study-deeper-learning-opportunities-and-outcomes>. This report examines how some schools have provided opportunities for students to acquire deeper learning skills and how these opportunities are related to student outcomes.
2. Lindner, K. T., & Schwab, S. (2020). Differentiation and individualisation in inclusive education: a systematic review and narrative synthesis. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2020.1813450>. This study includes research about differentiation and individualization within an inclusion model.

3. Pozas, M., & Letzel-Alt, V. (2023). Teacher collaboration, inclusive education and differentiated instruction: A matter of exchange, co-construction, or synchronization? *Cogent Education*, 10(2). <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2023.2240941>. This study examines the importance of teacher collaboration in inclusive classrooms that provide differentiated instruction.



## Videos

1. Edutopia. Project Based Learning: Success Start to Finish.  
Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-OWX6KZQDoE>
2. Edutopia. How To Make Participation More Inclusive.  
Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8UhTj6wnuGc>
3. EL Education. The Four Ts. Retrieved from <https://eleducation.org/resources/the-four-ts>
6. EL Education. Matching Module Lessons to Learner's Needs. Retrieved from <https://eleducation.org/resources/matching-module-lessons-to-learners-needs>
4. Education Week. Inside and Inclusive Classroom: How Two Teachers Work Together.  
Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJHTkHZUTrU>
5. LabXChange. What Is an Inclusive Classroom?  
Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K-AWPB8adE4>