Chapter 1: An Overview of Student-Specific Planning

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Chapter 1: An Overview of Student-Specific Planning

Key Ideas in This Chapter

- Student-specific planning is a collaborative team process that requires the identification of appropriate outcomes, instruction, and assessment.
- A range of options are available for addressing student diversity.
- Student support team membership will vary according to the needs of the student.

Addressing Student Diversity through Student-Specific Planning

Responsibilities and rights related to education in Manitoba are defined in *The Public Schools Act* and in *The Education Administration Act*. School boards are required to provide each resident and enrolled pupil access to appropriate educational programming.

Appropriate educational programming for most students consists of the expected learning outcomes in the provincial curriculum.* Some students, however, require student-specific outcomes in addition to, or instead of, the expected learning outcomes. For example, a student who has difficulty controlling his or her disruptive behaviour may be working on the expected learning outcomes in the curriculum and also on a student-specific outcome related to behaviour management. A student with a profound cognitive disability, however, may be working only on functional student-specific outcomes.

For further information, refer to the following Manitoba acts and regulations:

Appropriate Educational Programming Regulation 155/2005, available online at http://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/regs/pdf/p250-155.05.pdf.

The Education Administration Act, available online at http://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/statutes/ccsm/e010e.php.

Education Administration Miscellaneous Provisions Regulation, Amendment, Regulation 156/2005, available online at http://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/regs/2005/156.pdf.

The Public Schools Act, available online at http://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/statutes/ccsm/p250e.php.

* The terms *expected learning outcomes* and *provincial curriculum* are used interchangeably throughout this document.

Appropriate educational programming starts in the classroom with the student, the students' parent(s), and the students' teacher(s). Student-specific planning is a process that guides educators in identifying student needs, providing programming supports, and monitoring student progress.

General Obligation

2(1) The appropriate educational programming that a school board must provide is the curriculum.

Appropriate Educational Programming Regulation 155/2005

The Core Team

Educational planning for all students begins with a core team: the student, the student's parent(s), and the student's classroom teacher(s). Planning for all students is a collaborative process in which the core team identifies appropriate educational outcomes and ways of attaining these outcomes (refer to Figure 1.1).

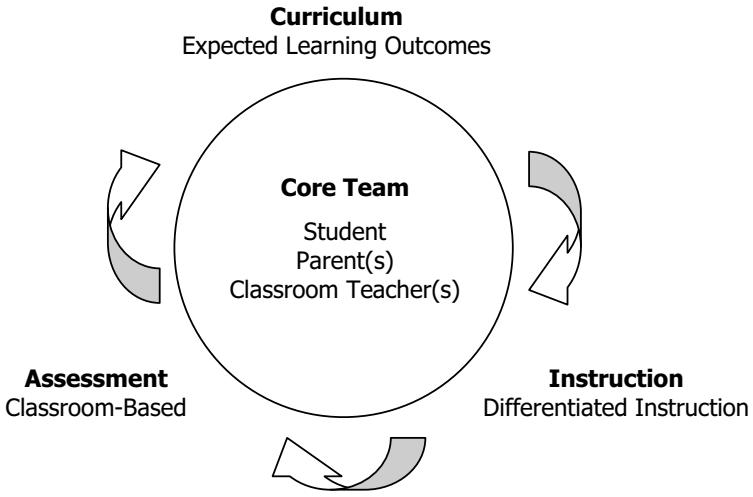
Learning is an interactive process in which learners try to make sense of new information and integrate it into what they already know. Teachers use their knowledge of the curriculum and various classroom assessment processes to determine the starting points for instruction and to monitor each student's developing understanding and skill as instruction proceeds. When a teacher observes differences in a student's learning and/or behaviour, focused classroom observation and assessment occur. The teacher then employs variations in the pacing of instruction, materials, or instructional approaches to better enable the student to be successful.

School divisions shall:

- use the information gathered by the classroom teacher as the first source of information regarding student learning (Manitoba Regulation [MR] 155/05)

Appropriate Educational Programming in Manitoba: Standards for Student Services (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth 13)

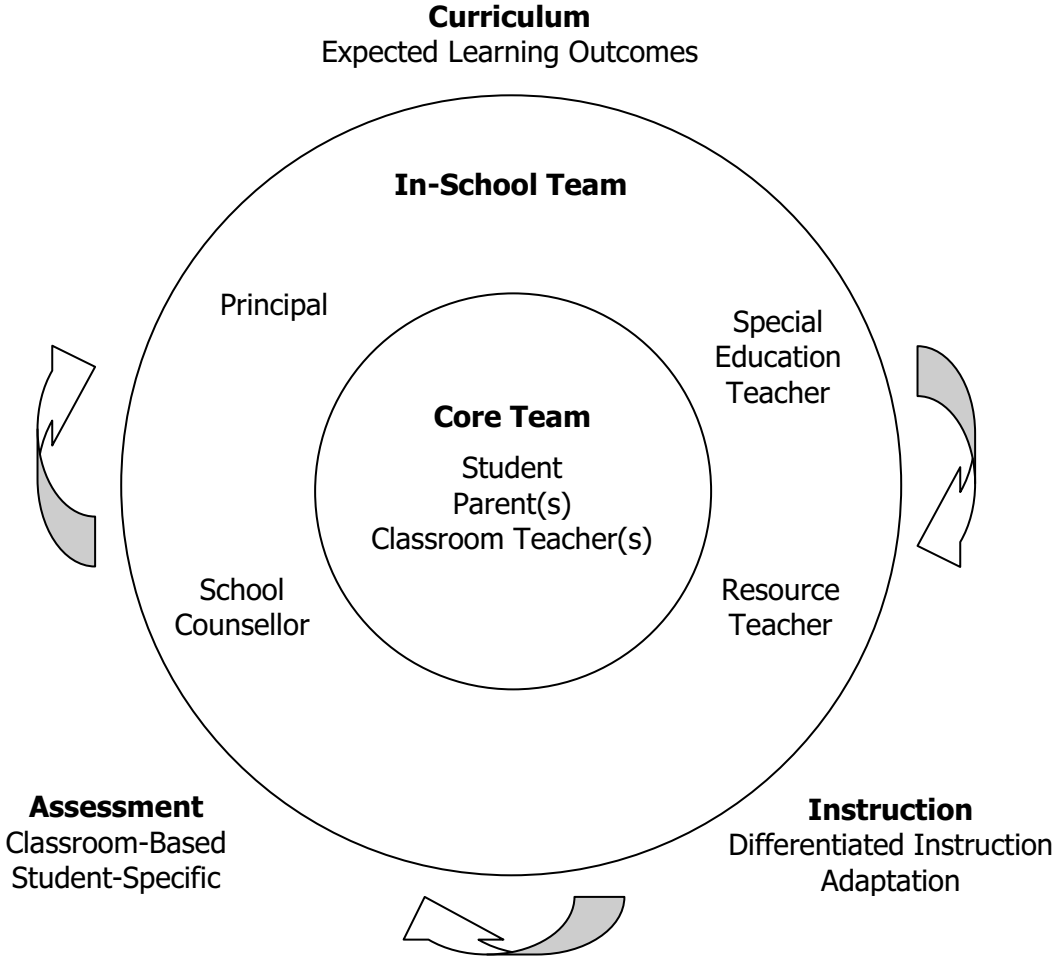
Figure 1.1 THE CORE TEAM EDUCATIONAL PLANNING PROCESS



The In-School Team

Even with skilled classroom instruction, some students continue to demonstrate difficulty in meeting the expected learning outcomes. The core team of the student, parent(s), and teacher(s) may then decide it is appropriate to request the involvement of additional school-based colleagues to form an in-school team. The in-school team will vary according to the needs of the student and the resources available, and may include the resource teacher and/or school counsellor (refer to Figure 1.2). The in-school team continues gathering and sharing information to develop a student profile that describes the unique development of the individual student. This may be done through focused classroom observation and/or additional assessment and will guide the selection of additional classroom intervention strategies and the implementation of those strategies.

Figure 1.2 THE IN-SCHOOL TEAM EDUCATIONAL PLANNING PROCESS



Assessment

4(1) A principal must ensure that a pupil is assessed as soon as reasonably practicable if he or she is having difficulty meeting the expected learning outcomes.

4(2) A principal must ensure that a pupil is referred for a specialized assessment if the pupil's teacher and resource teacher, guidance counsellor or other applicable in-school personnel are
- (a) unable to assess why the pupil is having difficulty meeting those outcomes; or
- (b) of the opinion that differentiated instruction and adaptations are insufficient to assist the pupil in meeting those outcomes.

4(5) A specialized assessment must identify the following, as applicable:
- (a) other methods of differentiated instruction and adaptations that can be used to assist the pupil in meeting the expected learning outcomes, if it is determined that such methods or adaptations will be sufficient to assist the pupil in meeting those outcomes;
- (b) if it is determined that differentiated instruction and adaptations will be insufficient to assist the pupil in meeting the expected learning outcomes, what the pupil requires to meet or approximate
  - (i) the expected learning outcomes, or
  - (ii) the learning outcomes the pupil can reasonably be expected to achieve.

Appropriate Educational Programming Regulation 155/2005

The School Support Team

For most students, the collaborative planning of the in-school team and the resulting interventions will successfully address the students' needs. If this is not the case, however, the in-school team may consult with the school support team for further assistance. The school support team may include clinicians, therapists, mental health professionals, and/or others who work with the in-school team to support student-specific planning and educational programming (refer to Figure 1.3).

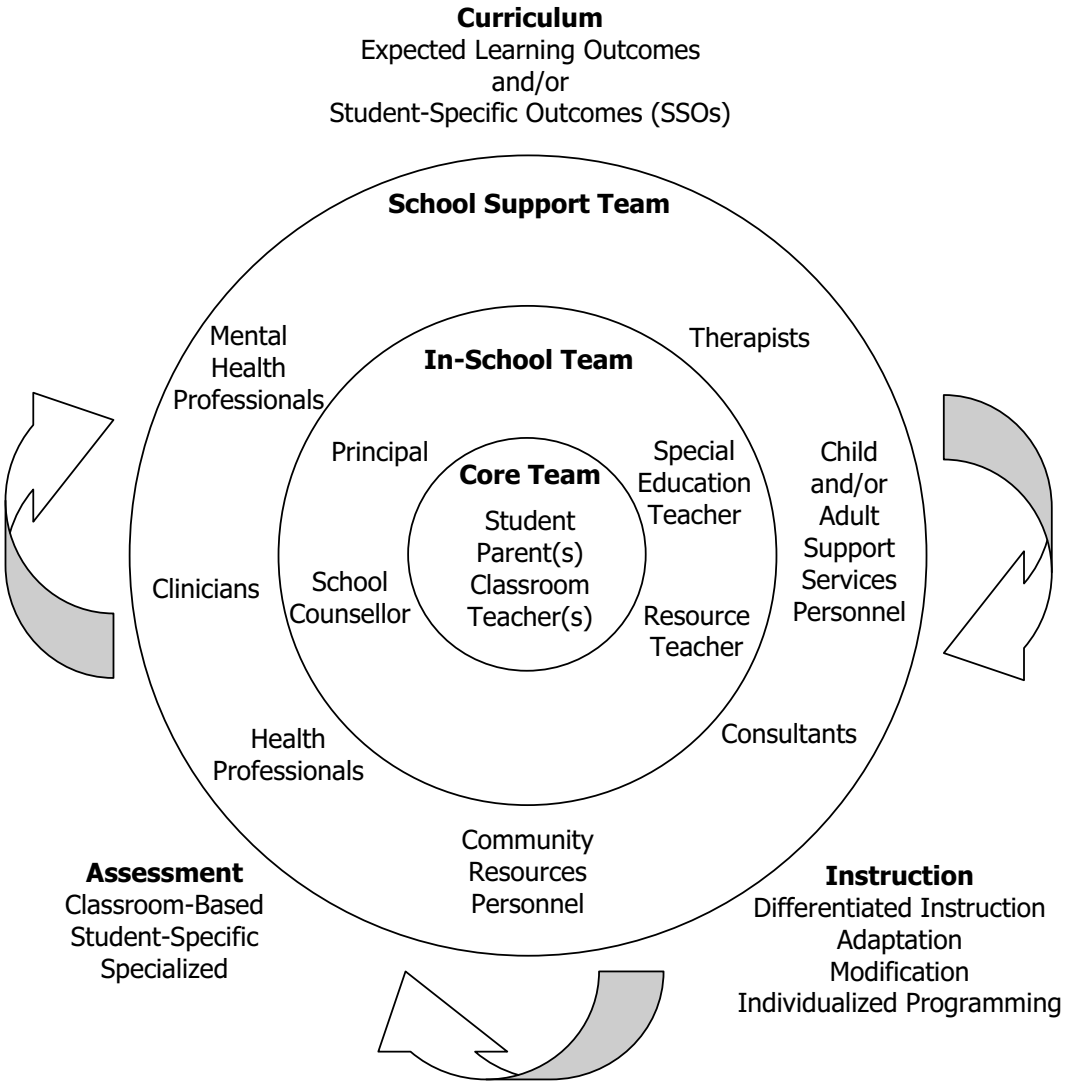
The Student Support Team

A **core team** is the student, the student's parent(s), and the student's teacher(s).

An **in-school team** is the core team and other school staff, such as the resource teacher and/or school counsellor. The in-school team is the key decision maker in the student-specific planning process.

A **school support team** is the in-school team and additional personnel, such as clinicians and consultants, who consult and collaborate with the in-school team to support student-specific planning and educational programming.

Figure 1.3 THE SCHOOL SUPPORT TEAM EDUCATIONAL PLANNING PROCESS



Collaborative Planning

Student-specific planning gives the people who work most closely with students an opportunity to collaborate. It represents a coordinated effort by families, school staff, school division staff, community agencies, and others to develop and implement educational programming to accommodate student needs.

Student-specific planning helps individuals who work with students to

- share information and observations about the student's learning and behaviour over time and in a variety of settings
- develop a student profile that reflects a common understanding of the student's strengths, interests, needs, and current level(s) of performance
- identify priorities for educational programming and planning across curriculum areas and/or domains
- monitor and report on student progress and achievement

Instructional Supports for Addressing Student Diversity

Manitoba Education has identified a range of instructional supports for addressing student diversity, including differentiated instruction, adaptation, modification, and individualized programming. This is not a continuum of supports; rather, each instructional support is intended to address specific programming needs in consideration of expected learning outcomes and/or student-specific outcomes.

Definitions

Adaptation means a change in the teaching process, materials, assignments or pupil products to assist a pupil to achieve the expected learning outcomes.

Differentiated instruction means a method of instruction or assessment that alters the presentation of the curriculum for the purpose of responding to the learning diversity, interests and strengths of pupils.

Expected learning outcome means the learning outcomes consistent with the curriculum.

Appropriate Educational Programming Regulation 155/2005

Differentiated Instruction

Differentiated instruction (DI) is instruction that acknowledges and responds to the differences among learners. When planning and providing daily instruction, educators use a wide range of intentional strategies and techniques, as well as ongoing formative assessment, to support student learning and to help the broadest student population achieve the expected curricular learning outcomes. Differentiated instruction recognizes that there are many avenues for reaching the expected learning outcomes and that each student requires a complex and unique mix of basic instruction and practice to reach his or her potential. Educators differentiate instruction to offer students options at various stages of the learning process.

For further information, see

Success for All Learners: A Handbook on Differentiating Instruction: A Resource for Kindergarten to Senior 4 Schools (Manitoba Education and Training).

Adaptation

Adaptation means a change made in the teaching process, resources, assignments, or pupil products to help a pupil achieve the expected learning outcomes. Adaptation addresses identified student-specific needs. For example, a student with a print disability may require information and directions to be presented verbally as well as in writing, and may need to demonstrate his or her learning in the same ways. A student with an attention disorder may require that instructions and assignments be broken into "chunks," and may require a checklist to monitor task completion.

Modification

Modification is appropriate for students who have a significant cognitive disability and refers to altering the number, essence, and content of the curricular learning outcomes that the student is expected to meet. In high school, students with significant cognitive disabilities can register for Modified (M) courses. M-designated courses are intended for students who will benefit from department-developed or -approved curricula, providing they have been modified significantly to meet the student's unique learning requirements. Students receiving modification will have an IEP that details the curriculum modifications and an implementation plan.

For further information, see

Towards Inclusion: A Handbook for Modified Course Designation, Senior 1–4 (Manitoba Education, Training and Youth), available online at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/modified/index.html.

Individualized Programming

Individualized programming is intended for students whose cognitive disabilities are so significant that they do not benefit from participating in curricula developed or approved by Manitoba Education. Individualized programming identifies highly individualized learning experiences that are functionally appropriate. Students receiving individualized programming will have an IEP that details their student-specific outcomes and implementation plan.

For further information, see

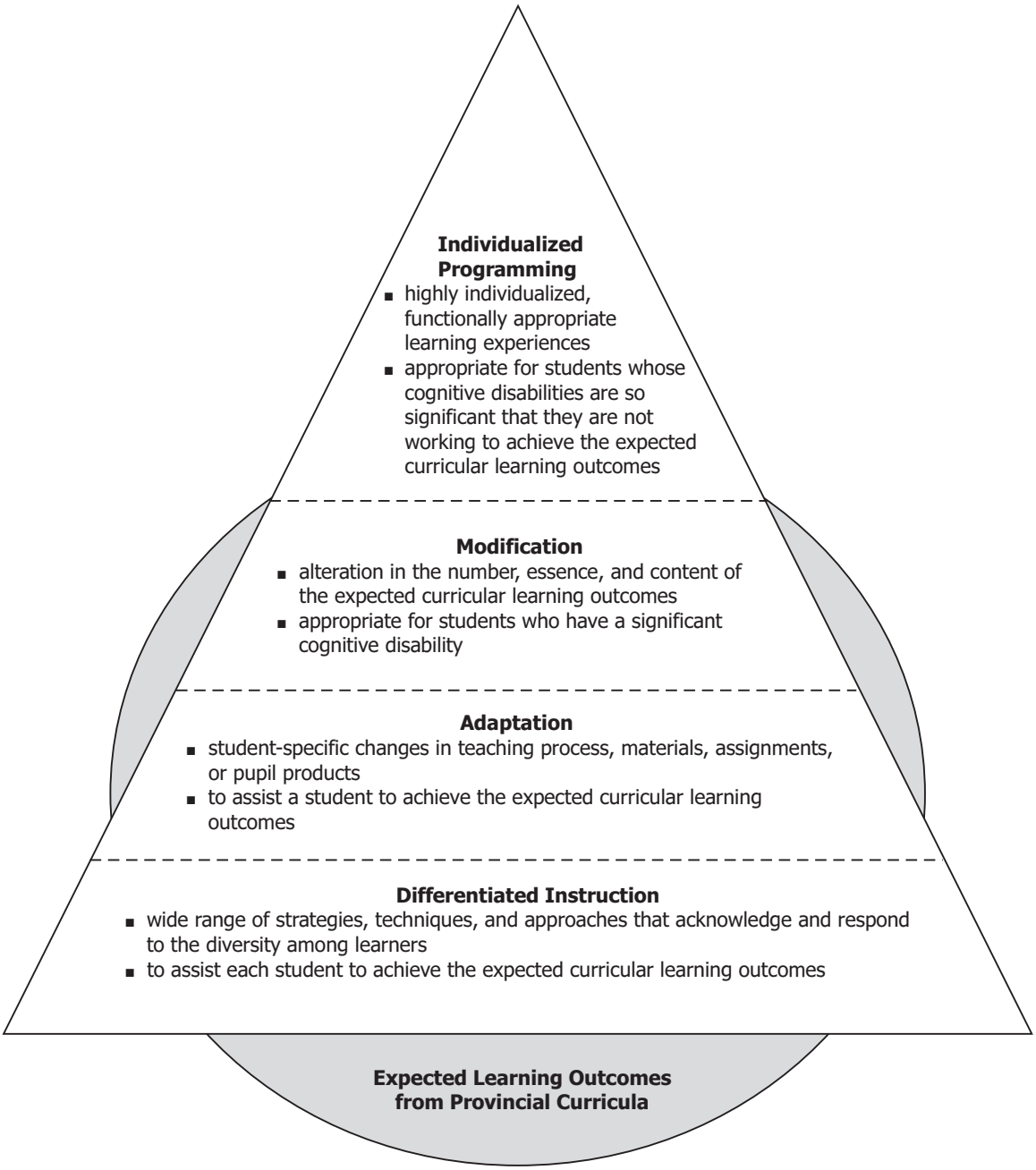
Towards Inclusion: A Handbook for Individualized Programming Designation, Senior Years (Manitoba Education, Training and Youth), available online at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/individu/index.html.

Each member of the student support team has different knowledge, skills, and experiences with the student. Collaborative planning allows the team to identify, coordinate, and make use of a range of resources and strategies that will offer students the best opportunities for developing and achieving in all educational experiences (refer to Figure 1.4).

For further information, see

Working Together: A Handbook for Parents of Children with Special Needs in School (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth), available online at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/parent/index.html.

Figure 1.4 INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORTS FOR ADDRESSING STUDENT DIVERSITY



Effective IEPs

Individual education plans (IEPs) document the information gathered, decisions made, strategies identified, and ongoing assessment that occurs during the student-specific planning process.

In general, IEPs summarize

- what is known about the student (current level of performance)
- the programming that is being and/or will be provided (outcomes, instructional strategies, activities, and materials)
- the effectiveness of the programming (assessment, evaluation)

A written plan ensures continuity in educational programming by providing

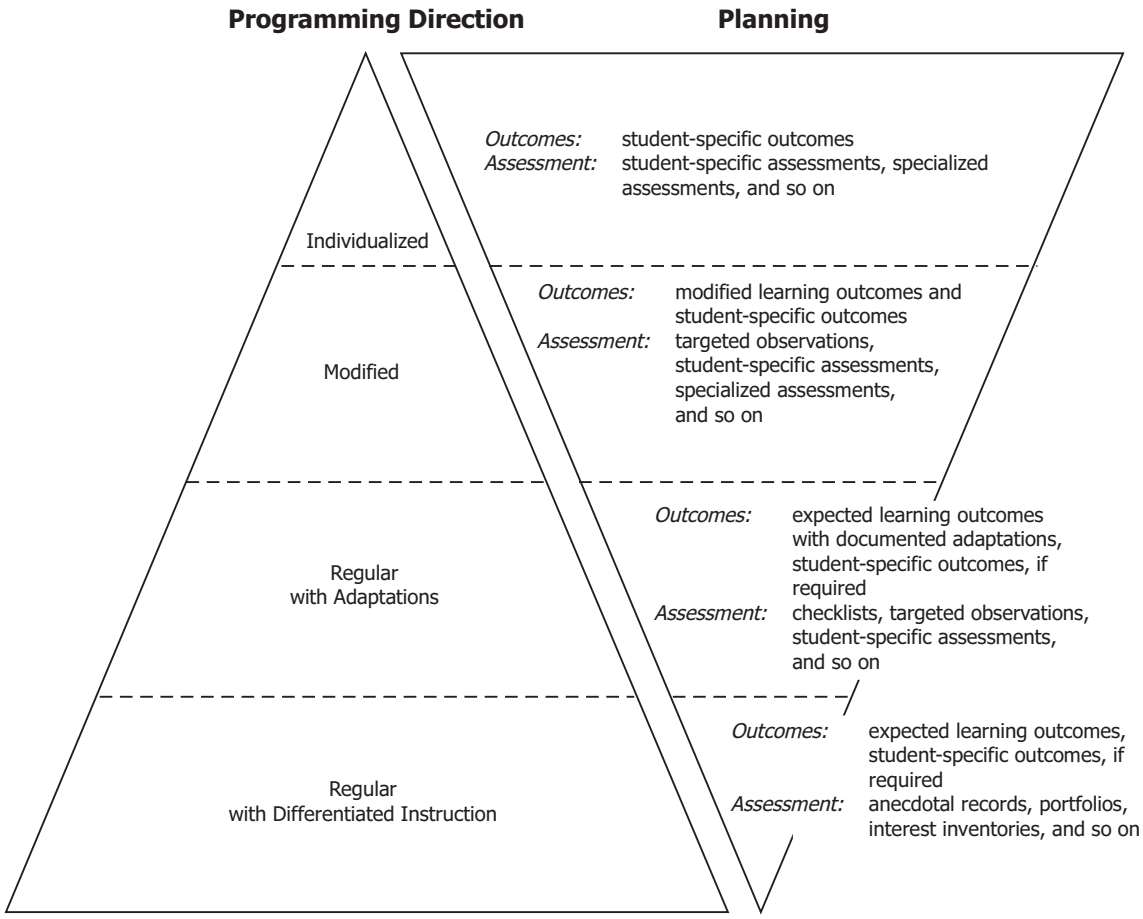
- a record of the educational programming for the student
- a tool for tracking individual student learning in terms of agreed-upon outcomes
- a basis for reporting the student's progress

The format, length, detail, and comprehensiveness of the IEP will reflect the needs of the student. Most students who require student-specific planning will require supports, such as adaptation, within regular programming and will be working to achieve expected learning outcomes. These supports can often be documented in one or two pages. A smaller number of students with more involved needs will require more detailed and comprehensive plans.

A student's specific needs and the comprehensiveness of the IEP they require are related. Most students achieve the expected learning outcomes in provincial curricula with the support of differentiated instruction. The teacher plans instruction according to the class profile. Very few students require individualized programming; those who do, have unique needs and require detailed IEPs describing functional outcomes (refer to Figure 1.5).

Figure 1.5

Programming Direction and Related Comprehensiveness of Planning



Chapter Summary

- ❑ At its core, the educational planning process is the same for all students.
- ❑ Parents and classroom teachers are the first source of information regarding student learning.
- ❑ Student-specific planning occurs when a student requires support.
- ❑ Collaborative planning allows the student support team to identify, coordinate, and implement resources and strategies to address a student's unique needs.
- ❑ Student-specific planning is a process; an IEP is a written document.