3 Ways to Meaningfully Differentiate Instruction

"Differentiated instruction," like "personalized learning," has been an oft-used buzzword in education for many years. How does this idea translate into real-world, meaningful solutions you can use every day in your classroom (without creating 30 different lesson plans!)? Here are a few ideas.

- **Vary materials**: One size—or type of resource—rarely fits all when it comes to education. Use different materials to teach the same skill in order to ensure success for all students. For example, advanced readers may examine theme in a novel, while developing readers may focus on a short story. Some students may benefit from learning about place value with manipulatives like base ten blocks, while others might learn best using printed number squares.

- **Vary assignments**: Allow for subtle variations in assignments that take into account students' different needs and abilities. For example, you might ask some students to write a short story, others to complete a graphic organizer describing a story, and still others to create a series of drawings to convey a story. You might have some students write a paper analyzing the results of a scientific experiment, while others record themselves discussing it. You might ask some students to solve an equation, and other students to both solve it and explain their thinking.

- **Clone and customize**: [Wisewire's assessment platform](#) makes it easy to modify a given assessment item in order to assess slightly different parts of the same concept or to activate different levels of cognitive complexity. Simply hit the gear to the right of an item saved on your dashboard and select "clone question." Then adjust the question and/or answer options to account for learner differences. For example, a basic recall item could be cloned and variations that address higher-level skills like analyzing and synthesizing could be created. Create different student "groups" within our assignment tool to quickly assign the different versions accordingly.