



**Destination Differentiation:
How to Meet the Needs of 21st Century Learners
Site-based Participant Syllabus**

Course Description

This course is designed to explore the critical need to differentiate instruction for 21st century learners. The philosophy of differentiation will be examined in relation to cultural needs, learning styles, intelligence theories, and thinking skills. The use of technology and the role of effective feedback will also be addressed. Participants will be provided multiple opportunities to engage in discussions and activities that refine their current differentiation strategies and practices in an effort to meet the needs of all learners.

Course Prerequisites

This course is intended for experienced K-12 teachers who are interested in adjusting instruction to more effectively meet the learning needs of an increasingly diverse student population within the classroom. Participants must hold a baccalaureate degree.

Text Books/Supplemental Reading

No textbook is required for this course. Critical reading of assigned articles and text is included in the participant manual.

Global Goals of the Course

To deepen and/or apply the content and skills of the teacher's existing professional knowledge base by meeting the following global goals of this course:

1. To understand the need to differentiate instruction in an effort to meet the needs of 21st century learners (NBPTS 1,2,4 & InTASC 1,2,3,5)
2. To synthesize current teaching practices with 21st century beliefs in an effort to expand learning opportunities (NBPTS 1,4,5 & InTASC 4,7,8,9)
3. To analyze empirical and educational research on differentiated learning, learning styles, and assessment (NBPTS 1,2,3,4,5 & InTASC 6)
4. To examine the research findings on the effectiveness of differentiation and to incorporate the essential knowledge into practical applications in the classroom setting (NPTS 1,2,3,4,5 & InTASC 5,10)
5. To gain knowledge of formal assessments, informal assessments, and grading practices utilized in a differentiated classroom (NBPTS 1,3 & InTASC 6)

Instructional Objectives

By the conclusion of the course, each participant should be able to do the following:

1. Define *differentiation*
 - 1.1 Explore multiple aspects of differentiation including content, process, product, readiness, interest, learning profile, access, motivation, and efficiency
 - 1.2 Construct lessons that ensure all learners are afforded opportunities to learn in a comfortable and challenging environment and are prepared for the demands of the 21st century
 - 1.3 Customize lessons that incorporate the four tools for differentiation: instructional strategies, assessment strategies, grouping strategies, and classroom management strategies
 - 1.4 Examine the philosophy of differentiation in relation to 21st century learning needs, brain-based research, learning styles, intelligence theories, and thinking skills
2. Recognize various learners and learning styles
 - 2.1 Review various types of learning theories including Gardner's multiple intelligence theory, Sternberg's learning styles, Lowry's color learning styles, and Glazvov's personality traits
 - 2.2 Examine the challenges of teaching advanced, struggling, and culturally diverse learners in the same classroom
 - 2.3 Assess personal learning profile
 - 2.4 Define the learning needs of students in the classroom considering the following groups: gifted learners, special education learners, RtI learners, English language learners, digital learners, and global learners
3. Examine differentiation strategies and tools
 - 3.1 Discuss how differentiation practices are fair for all learners despite different activities and assessment protocols
 - 3.2 Address how to use the strategies associated with the four tools for differentiation (instructional strategies, assessment strategies, grouping strategies, and classroom management strategies) to create differentiated lessons for the classroom
 - 3.3 Review the following instructional techniques: tiering, compacting, agendas, cubing, stations, jigsawing, RAFT activities, choice boards, Socratic seminar, entry points, and Bloom's questioning techniques
 - 3.4 Describe how to develop lessons based on students' learning characteristics utilizing differentiated strategies
4. Identify digital differentiation
 - 4.1 Recognize the use of technology as an instructional tool
 - 4.2 Explore Web Quests, independent studies, orbital studies

- 4.3 Construct differentiated lessons utilizing technology
- 4.4 Customize lessons that meet the needs of digital natives
- 5. Examine differentiation and assessment
 - 5.1 Evaluate the purpose of grading in a differentiated classroom
 - 5.2 Address the challenges associated with grading in a differentiated environment
 - 5.3 Review what evidence teachers should collect to determine if students have met the KUD goals in a differentiated activity
 - 5.4 Describe how to incorporate informal and formal assessment techniques

Teaching Methodology and Delivery Model

Content and instructor focus are on improvement of course participant expertise through the development of knowledge and skills related to transition planning and associated concepts.

1. Methodologies include instructor presentations, specific skill practice, discussions, audio-visual presentations, self-evaluation, project development, course readings, research/inquiry exercises, and the synthesis of new knowledge and skills with previously acquired skills/expertise in relation to transition knowledge and content.
2. The course is taught with instructor-participant and participant-participant feedback. Course content, activities, and assignments are organized into segments totaling 45 seat hours. Final projects are due within the two-week period immediately following class meetings.
3. Research-based content, presentations, and assignments are supported by textbooks and additional readings/handouts designed specifically for education professionals, educator resources in print and on the Internet, notes from instructor presentations, class activity work pages, and references.
4. Daily activities include a variety of research-based instructional approaches appropriate for adult learners. Class participants actively construct their own learning and make it personally relevant by acquiring and applying course knowledge/skills during hands-on practice and problem-solving activities, personal reflection, in-class presentations, whole-class discussions and activities, assigned readings, research/inquiry, projects, and collaborative work in various group formats. All are designed to make it possible for teachers and other transition-related personnel across the entire spectrum to learn the same basic content and skills with an emphasis on application to their own specific content area or grade level.

Learning Assessment

Formative assessment of learning objectives for this course is conducted informally throughout the week via discussion, critiques, peer- and self-evaluations, journal entries, verbal and written instructor feedback, small-group sharing, and activities requiring the participants to make sense of new knowledge and/or skills within their realm of teaching. Additionally, three formative assessments are embedded within the course. Summative assessment for the course occurs in the form of a final project which requires each participant to synthesize class content and apply it within the teacher's specific teaching environment.

Compliance with National Board of Professional Teaching Standards

The National Board of Professional Teaching Standards represents the highest level of professional achievement in the continuum of teacher professional development. There are five core principles (standards) which cover five aspects of professional educational practice: (1) commitment to students and their learning, (2) knowledge of subject matter and instructional strategies, (3) management and monitoring of student learning, (4) systematic reflection about the teaching profession to learn and grow from experience, and (5) collaborative participation in the educational learning community.

Compliance with Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) Standards

The Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium's work is guided by one basic premise: An effective teacher must be able to integrate content knowledge with the specific strengths and needs of students to assure that all students learn and perform at high levels. All teachers should meet the following standards: (1) learner development, (2) learning differences, (3) learning environments, (4) content knowledge, (5) application of content, (6) assessment, (7) planning for instruction, (8) instructional strategies, (9) professional learning and ethical practices, and (10) leadership and collaboration.

Topics Agenda

Topic One: Course Overview/What is Differentiation for 21st Century Learners? Explore how differentiation for the 21st century differs from a more "traditional" approach while exploring the role of the teacher and the students. Participants will unravel the definitions and essential elements of the differentiation philosophy. The "what" of differentiation (content, product, process) and the "how" of differentiation (readiness, interest, learning profiles) will be discussed.

Topic Two: Why Should We Differentiate?/ Who are 21st Century Learners in our Classrooms?

Participants will explore incorporating the KUD formula into differentiated lesson planning and consider students' motivation, access to material, and efficiency.

Learning goals and state standards will be discussed. Participants will examine the unique learners in their classrooms and discuss how differentiated philosophy is advantageous to success in school.

Topic Three: What are Ways to Determine Learning Styles?/ Differentiated Tools/Strategies

Participants will review various types of learning theories including Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory, Sternberg's Learning Styles, Lowry's Color Learning Styles, Kolb's Experiential Learning Profile, McCarthy's 4 Mat Model, Gregorc's Learning Styles, and Glazvok's Personality Traits. Participants will study tiering, compacting, jigsawing, choice boards, agendas, contracts, and centers/stations. Participants will have opportunities to develop lessons for their specific grade and to share ideas.

Topic Four: Differentiated Tools and Digital Differentiated Strategies/ How Can a Differentiated Classroom be Fair and Respectful of All Learners?

Participants will explore strategies that promote higher order thinking skills. Socratic seminars, RAFT writing, cubing, simulations, independent study, anchoring activities, and entry points will be reviewed. Participants will discuss the use of technology and digital media. The use of independent study assignments, Web Quests, and orbital studies will be introduced. Participants will review Tomlinson's Equalizer and the concept of a respectful class. Participants will also contemplate the issues of what is fair and equal when it comes to differentiated assignments.

Topic Five: How Does Differentiation and Assessment Complement One Another?/ Differentiation and Grading Practices

Participants will explore formal assessments and informal assessments. Ways to collect evidence of KUD goals will be revealed. Participants will discover ways to collect evidence to illustrate students' growth and progress in a differentiated classroom. Participants will discuss the challenges associated with grading in a differentiated classroom.

Final Projects

Assignments/ assessments should reflect that each participant is accountable for a high degree of learning; thus, an appropriate combination of group and individual assignments/assessments that can accurately determine an individual's achievement level is required.

In keeping with best instructional and assessment practices, this course requires participants to demonstrate synthesis and application of course knowledge in an applied final project linked to the instructional objectives of this course. Assessment of the project should not be limited to the quantity of work submitted but should carefully consider the quality and intellectual value of the work.

Final projects are due within two weeks of the end of class. Projects submitted during the third week “grace period” will have their grade reduced one full letter grade. No papers will be accepted past the grace period, and participants will, consequently, forfeit credit for the course. Papers are expected to be properly formatted and submitted to the instructor either in person or via mail or an email attachment.

Participants taking professional development unit (not-for-credit) courses must attend all scheduled class sessions and complete all formative assignments. However, they will be exempt from completing the final summative project unless otherwise noted. Proof of seat hours will be presented to the participants after completing course reflection via the student portal and all hours are met.

Grading

Throughout the course, participants will engage in both formal and informal formative and summative assessments. Points are assigned based on a four-point criterion rubric specifically delineated for each assessment that can be further defined as follows:

Distinguished: The assessment is highly imaginative; demonstrates critical thought; is unique; shows substantial application to one’s own teaching or professional position; *goes above and beyond requirements*; is creative; demonstrates both breadth and depth of knowledge of transition-related subject matter; shows individual’s personality; is professional in presentation and appearance; and demonstrates considerable effort. The assessment is exceptionally completed and demonstrates clear understanding of the tasks, gives explanations, and shows how the assessment applies to a teaching/learning situation. The assessment meets the specific criteria delineated in “Distinguished” on the course rubric.

Proficient: The assessment is well-organized and complete; is effectively and clearly presented; demonstrates clear understandings; applies what has been learned to the author’s own classroom situation; clearly shows connections; is detailed; and is thoughtful and supported with ideas. A thoroughly completed assessment demonstrates that the participant shows awareness of the tasks, gives explanations, and shows how the assessment applies to a teaching/learning situation. The assessment meets the specific criteria delineated in “Proficient” on the course rubric.

Basic: This is the lowest passing grade. The assessment meets minimum requirements; includes general information but lacks descriptive detail; shows limited application to teaching/learning; and lacks originality. This denotes work that does not meet **all** aspects of standards for academic performance in a graduate-level course. The assessment meets the specific criteria delineated in “Basic” on the course rubric.

Unsatisfactory: The assessment is missing evidence or information; is sloppy and poorly organized; demonstrates only surface understandings; shows no evidence of application to the author's own teaching situation; is poorly written; and does not meet minimum standards for academic performance in a graduate-level course. The assessment meets the specific criteria delineated in "Unsatisfactory" on the course rubric.

The assessments for this course are weighted as follows:

Participation and Reflection	30%
Formative Assessments	30%
Summative Assessments	40%

Letter grades are based on 100 points possible and assigned based on the university grading scale.

Academic Honesty and Integrity

All participants are expected to maintain academic honesty and integrity by doing their own work to the best of their ability. Academic dishonesty (cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, etc.) will result in the participant receiving a zero for that assignment or paper.

Americans with Disabilities Act Compliance

In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and The Americans with Disabilities Act, participants who have any condition, either permanent or temporary, which might affect their ability to perform in this class are encouraged to inform the instructor at the beginning of the first session. Reasonable academic accommodations, aids, and adjustments may be made as needed to provide for equitable participation.

Attendance

Participants are required to attend all classes as well as participate in class discussions, small group activities, and projects. Absence from any part of the class will require that you withdraw from the class. You will need to contact The Connecting Link at (888) 550-5465 in the event this occurs.

Emergency Statement

In the event of an emergency declared by the college or by The Connecting Link, we reserve the right to alter course plans and the attendance policy. In the event of an emergency, TCL will contact the instructor/participants with alternative educational plans for the course.

Late Work and Make-Up Policy

Participants are expected to keep pace with in-class assignments and evening at-home assignments. If a situation arises in which an assignment cannot be completed, the participant is expected to make arrangements with the instructor for the timely submission of such work. All work is due not later than two weeks after the class ends. Failure to complete all work in this time frame will result in an **incomplete** or a grade of **F** for the work, depending on the reason for the delay.

University Compliance

Course content and instruction are bound by policies associated with the university granting academic credit for the course. Such policies include, but are not limited to: academic integrity and honor codes, institutional objectives and grade grievance procedures. These policies are located within the official academic catalogs which can be accessed through the university's official website.

For Valparaiso University Graduate School Student Learning Objectives please visit:
www.valpo.edu/gradschool