



Differentiated Assessments: Alternative Ways to Assess All Students in Your Classroom Online Self-Paced Participant Syllabus

Course Description

Differentiated assessment is the key to helping every student have success within their own learning style. This course is designed to help educators discover new ways to assess students from a variety of different learning styles. A focus on strategies for performing pre-assessments, formative assessments, and summative assessments as well as alternative assessments such as performance-based assessments, portfolios, presentations and more to give options for students to have success other than the traditional pen-and-paper assessment. Classroom examples will be reviewed to help see how differentiated assessment can provide direction for improvement, promote confidence, and motivate students to do their best. Participants will leave the course with a better understanding of assessment practices and a wealth of resources to effectively differentiate assessments in their classroom.

Course Prerequisites

This course is recommended for K-12 teachers and administrators looking to gain background information on differentiated and alternative assessment types and methods. The course will provide an overview of a variety of different learning styles; for optimal learning success, a basic understanding of learning styles is required. Participants must hold a baccalaureate degree.

System Requirements

- Computer with word processing software
- Internet access connection
- Software capable of reading PDF files
- Software capable of viewing PowerPoint presentations

Text Books/Supplemental Reading

No textbook is required for this course. Critical reading of assigned articles and text is embedded throughout the course. Assigned and recommended readings are listed in each milestone.

Global Goals of the Course

1. To examine current research in the area of best practice of alternative assessments (NBPTS 3,4,5)
2. To develop an understanding of the need for effective alternative design and implementation in today's classroom (NBPTS 1,3,4,5)

3. To analyze current alternative assessment instructional practices and methods in order to better support student learning (NBPTS 1,3,4,5)
4. To explore possible applications of alternative assessments in the classroom (NBPTS 1,2,3,4,5)
5. To synthesize best practice alternative assessment research and classroom applications (NBPTS 2,3,4,5)

Instructional Objectives

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

1. Develop an understanding of alternative assessments
 - 1.1 Reflect on one's personal experiences using alternative assessments
 - 1.2 Explore the benefits of alternative assessments
 - 1.3 Examine current research on effective alternative assessments
2. Create learning goals for alternative assessments
 - 2.1 Define learning styles and their relationship to develop alternative assessments
 - 2.2 Explore learning styles and corresponding alternative assessments
 - 2.3 Discuss common challenges of alternative assessments
 - 2.4 Examine alternative assessments linked to learning styles
3. Develop alternative assessments for reluctant learners, average learners, and gifted students
 - 3.1 Explore characteristics of reluctant learners, average learners, and gifted students
 - 3.2 Research assessment types that are beneficial to the variety of learners in classroom
 - 3.3 Assess the differences of alternative assessments to learning style applications
 - 3.4 Design a mini outline of an alternative assessment based on a selected learning style
4. Develop lesson plans for alternative assessments
 - 4.1 Explore lesson planning options in relation to alternative learning assessments
 - 4.2 Evaluate templates, resources, and scenarios for best fit alternative assessment application
 - 4.3 Explore options to implement weekly, unit, and yearlong alternative assessment options
 - 4.4 Design a lesson plan that incorporates alternative assessment options for a variety of students
5. Implement alternative assessment methods
 - 5.1 Explore student-created games, assessment questions, tournaments, review guides, and project-based assessments

- 5.2 Assess student-created items and how they can demonstrate mastery of learning targets
- 5.3 Appraise classroom use of alternative assessment methods
- 5.4 Design mini activities based on alternative assessment methods discussed in milestone 5
- 6. Implement alternative assessment methods and effective use of rubrics
 - 6.1 Explore the use of portfolio assessments, problem-based learning activities, and choice boards
 - 6.2 Research alternative assessments for specific content areas and grade level
 - 6.3 Research effective rubric strategies related to alternative assessment
 - 6.4 Assess alternative assessment rubrics ability to demonstrate mastery of a learning target
 - 6.5 Develop a rubric for an alternative assessment
- 7. Assess online resources to enhance and improve alternative assessments application
 - 7.1 Explore online resources that can help in differentiation of assessments
 - 7.2 Examine online resources that can help identify learning styles for a variety of age levels
 - 7.3 Construct a list of online resources that can be used as a guide for alternative assessment development and implementation
- 8. Reflect on alternative assessments and educate parents/guardians of the process and benefits
 - 8.1 Reflect on alternative assessment research and explore ways to educate parents on the benefits of alternative assessments
 - 8.2 Discuss ways to explain classroom practices to students and parents about alternative assessments and the classroom culture
 - 8.3 Devise a plan to improve knowledge and classroom implementation of differentiated assessment after the course has ended

Teaching Methodology and Delivery Model

Teaching methodologies used in this course are specifically designed to maximize learning in a graduate-level, online distance-learning model. Each course facilitator is trained and/or experienced in facilitating graduate-level online courses as well as the specific content and skills of this course.

- 1. Online methodologies include instructor/expert presentations, directed skill practice, Forum and Assessment completion, as well as the synthesis of new knowledge and skills in designing educational applications.
- 2. The course is taught in a supportive learning environment with teacher-participant interaction and feedback.
- 3. Content focuses on the presentation of advanced concepts linked to instructional strategies which accommodate learning needs of a diverse student population.

4. Course content, activities, and assignments are organized into Milestones that participants complete during the 12-week span of the course. Course content is intended to cover material equal to 45 seat hours of instructional time.
5. Class participants actively construct their own learning and make it personally relevant by acquiring and applying course knowledge/skills to their own teaching situation.

Learning Assessment

Formative assessment of learning objectives for this course is conducted informally throughout the course via discussion, critiques, peer- and self-evaluations, journal entries, instructor feedback, small-group sharing and activities requiring 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. Copies of the course performance assessment rubrics are included in Appendices A-C.

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.

Final Projects

Participants taking courses for professional development unit (not-for-credit) must follow the same Participation Expectations as posted in the course syllabus. Participants will complete readings and tasks as outlined in the Task List. Forum Postings are also required. However, participants will be exempt from completing the Formative and Summative assignments unless otherwise noted. Proof of seat hours will be presented to the participants after completing the state required course evaluation located on the student portal.

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 and will be submitted to the instructor within the 8 weeks of the allotted class time. Unless the instructor states otherwise, all papers are expected to be properly formatted electronically.

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%

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 will have 12 weeks from the time of their first date of login to complete the course. They will need to contact their instructor and The Connecting Link at (888) 550-5465 should they not be able to complete the online class in the time given. Failure to complete all work in the 12-week time frame may result in an **incomplete** or a grade of **F** for the work, depending on the reason for the delay.

Late Work and Make-Up Policy

Participants are expected to keep pace with assignments and expectations. 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. 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.