



The Differentiated Classroom: Creating Pathways for All Learners to Succeed Online Participant Syllabus

Course Description

This course is designed to help educators build a classroom structure where differentiated instruction can occur on a daily basis for varying abilities. Through the use of videos, readings, personal reflection, and online forum questions, participants will experience differentiated instruction as well as learn methods to implement strategies in their own classroom. Participants will learn to shape and maintain learning conditions that facilitate differentiated instruction, including how to identify learning styles, create tiered activities, differentiation strategies, effective classroom management, and design the physical space for classroom differentiation scenarios. Participants will leave the course with resources and strategies to reach students of varying abilities, grades, and learning styles and help them take ownership of their education.

Course Prerequisites

This course is recommended for K-12 teachers and administrators looking to gain background information on differentiated instruction and how to facilitate a variety of differentiated instruction learning mediums to meet the needs of different learning styles. 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 differentiating instruction (NBPTS 3,4)

2. To develop an understanding of the need for effective differentiating strategies in today's classroom (NBPTS 1,3,4)
3. To analyze current differentiated instructional practices in order create engaged practices to better support student learning (NBPTS 1,3,4)
4. To explore possible applications of differentiated instruction models in the classroom (NBPTS 1,2,3,4)
5. To synthesize best practice differentiated instruction research and classroom applications (NBPTS 2,3,4)

Instructional Objectives

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

1. Develop an understanding of differentiating instruction for all learners
 - 1.1 Reflect on one's personal experiences in differentiating instruction
 - 1.2 Explore the benefits of differentiating instruction
 - 1.3 Examine current research on effective differentiated instruction methods
2. Identify learning styles to drive differentiation techniques
 - 2.1 Review various learning theory models
 - 2.2 Assess learning theory models and their application to differentiated instruction
 - 2.3 Discuss how student learning styles are an integral part of differentiation
 - 2.4 Examine classroom activities that are linked to individual student learning needs
3. Develop differentiation in a mixed-ability classroom
 - 3.1 Explore Dr. Carol Ann Tomlinson's four elements to differentiate instruction
 - 3.2 Research each element of differentiated instruction to gain a deeper understanding and guide to implementation
 - 3.3 Assess what elements can be modified for the classroom to smoothly integrate differentiated instruction
 - 3.4 Design an outline to help differentiate instruction in the classroom
4. Develop differentiation strategies - part one
 - 4.1 Explore the concepts: tiering, compacting, cross-training, flexible grouping, menus, and pods
 - 4.2 Compare and contrast the different differentiation concepts and the benefits of each concept
 - 4.3 Assess what concepts align to a variety of learning styles for the classroom to smoothly integrate differentiated instruction
 - 4.4 Design a mini lesson plan that differentiates instruction for a variety of learners in the classroom
5. Develop differentiation strategies - part two

- 5.1 Explore the differentiation strategies of Socratic Seminars, QARS, Mind Movies, concept mapping, and anchoring activities
- 5.2 Compare and contrast the different differentiation concepts and the benefits of each concept
- 5.3 Assess what concepts align to a variety of learning styles for the classroom to smoothly integrate differentiated instruction
- 5.4 Design a mini lesson plan that differentiates instruction for a variety of learners in the classroom
6. Design a classroom layout that supports differentiation strategies
 - 6.1 Explore classroom arrangements related to effective differentiation techniques
 - 6.2 Assess classroom arrangements based on classroom environment, furniture, and school culture
 - 6.3 Research information on how classroom arrangement can improve learning domains
 - 6.4 Design a new classroom floorplan that fits the differentiation plan
7. Assess online resources and technology that support differentiation strategies and implementation
 - 7.1 Explore ways technology can help differentiate instruction
 - 7.2 Examine the flipped classroom model, guided online learning programs, independent study assignments, and web resources
 - 7.3 Assess the discussed technologies in milestone 7 for possible classroom implementation
8. Examine the concept of differentiated and alternative assessments
 - 8.1 Analyze the role of assessments in a differentiated classroom
 - 8.2 Explore the concepts of pre-testing, formative, and summative testing in relation to a differentiated classroom
 - 8.3 Examine ways to grade in a differentiated classroom and discuss possible roadblocks
 - 8.4 Explore the concept of alternative assessments in a differentiated classroom

Teaching Methodology and Delivery Model

Teaching methodologies used in this course are specifically designed to maximize learning in a guided, 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, asynchronous class and group discussions using threaded discussion questions, peer evaluation, self-evaluation, portfolio development, and the synthesis of new knowledge and skills in designing grade-specific lesson plans or other educational applications of knowledge and skills.

2. The course is taught in a supportive learning environment with teacher-participant interaction and feedback. Class participants interact with other professionals via the Forum area by replying to existing posts as well as creating new threads on topics of their choice.
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 8-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.

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:

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|------------------------------|-----|
| 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 8 weeks from the time of their first date of login to complete the course. They will need to contact The Connecting Link at (888) 550-5465 should they not be able to complete the online class in the time given.

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.