

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY, NEBRASKA  
COURSE SYLLABUS

**I. Course Number and Title:**

EDUC 531  
Differentiating Instruction to Increase Student Achievement

**II. Academic Credit:**

3 graduate credits

**III. Course Rationale:**

Every classroom is made up of individuals with diverse strengths, backgrounds, and approaches to learning. Understanding and responding to students' individual learning styles and needs can be a challenge for teachers.

The goal of reaching every child is not possible with a one-size-fits-all model of curriculum and instruction. We need to personalize instruction and support teachers with the skill and confidence that this can be done even in a mixed-ability classroom. Known today as "differentiated instruction (DI)," this movement places an emphasis on reaching students where they are and how they learn.

*The biggest mistake of past centuries in teaching has been to treat all children as if they were variants of the same individual and thus to feel justified in teaching them all in the same way.-- Howard Gardner*

**IV. Course Description:**

This course will review theory-based differentiated models of instruction that will provide practitioners with a strong background in a variety of instructional modalities. In this course students will discover what is old and what is new. They will learn how to determine important differences in their students' points of entry to their classroom and uncover implications for class management; for working with students and parents; and for creating fair and appropriate assessments. This course balances information with practical applications and includes material for teachers across grade levels, personal styles and philosophies of teaching.

**V. Place of Course in the Curriculum:**

This course is one in a sequence of 12 courses, and is required of all students seeking an Education Masters degree with an emphasis in Curriculum and Instruction.

**VI. Course Goals and Objectives:**

The goals of this course are:

1. To understand why differentiation is necessary

2. To understand strategies for identifying and assessing learning styles and multiple intelligences of students
3. To analyze current literature on the needs of diverse learners
4. To work cooperatively to identify resources and opportunities for differentiated learning experiences
5. To identify questioning skills that promote higher-level thinking
6. To identify strategies that actively engage students in learning
7. To maximize student growth and to promote individual student success

Students who successfully complete this course will:

- Explain what differentiated instruction is and why it is necessary
- Establish student profiles for learning and demonstrate proficiency in assessing students' learning styles and preferences
- Select and implement a variety of strategies to differentiate instruction based on students learning profiles
- Create lesson/unit plans that incorporate strategies to differentiate instruction and engage students in learning
- Prioritize teaching skills needed to manage a differentiated classroom

## **VII. Course Content:**

Unit I What is differentiation and why is it necessary?

- theory and research overview
- elements of differentiation (content, process, product)
- defensive differentiation
- non-negotiables of differentiation

Unit II How do we learn about students in order to differentiate?

- student learning profiles

Unit III Strategies to differentiate

- learning style
- language proficiency
- special needs
- cultural influences
- gender
- brain development
- closing the achievement gap between Black, Hispanic, White and Asian students
- building a sense of efficacy among learners from low socio-economic homes.

Unit IV Skills teachers need to manage a differentiated instruction classroom

- Not “sage on the stage” direct instruction
- Principles of effective curriculum design

Unit V Choosing the right tools

- Tiered curriculum

Unit VI Developing a differentiated lesson plan

Unit VII Differentiated assessment strategies

- pre-assessment
- formative assessment
- current research and practice on effective classroom questioning techniques
- development of higher order thinking skills

Unit VIII Reflection and planning for future use of course concepts

### **VIII. Methodology:**

Methods of instruction that work well for this course include, but are not limited to:

- A. Lectures
- B. Readings
- C. Written Assignments
- D. Oral Assignments
- E. Collaborative Group Work
- F. Whole Class and Small Group Discussions
- G. Presentations
- H. Teaching Demonstrations
- I. Guest Speakers
- J. Videos
- K. Case Studies
- L. Debate
- M. Journaling
- N. Wikis
- O. Blogs

### **IX. Student Roles:**

1. Read assigned material and be prepared to participate in discussions each week in both large and small groups. Students must be able to support positions with relevant research on topics covered.
2. Written assignments
3. Complete a research project to share with class (graduate research paper, Power Point presentation, video, podcast, wiki, blog or other project format approved by instructor)
4. Maintain a weekly journal to reflect on professional growth and development
5. Teaching demonstrations

6. Update portfolio with relevant artifacts in the appropriate teaching standards to demonstrate professional growth and development

#### **X. Assessment:**

Enter the method category and percentage assigned to each method. The total should equal 100%. Specify various evaluation tools which work best for the course: papers, reports, individual or group projects, discussion, participation, tests etc.

Example:

Weekly Discussion	20%
Weekly Journal	10%
Reaction/Reflection Papers	20%
Research Project	40%
Final Exam	<u>10%</u>
	100%

Development of a grading rubric in each category is strongly recommended for objective rather than subjective evaluation.

#### **XI. Bibliography:**

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Brimijoin, K., Marquissee, E., & Tomlinson, C. (2003, February). Using data to differentiate instruction. *Educational Leadership* 60(5), 70-72.

Deane, J., Ribas, W., & Seider, S. (2005). *Instructional Practices That Maximize Student Achievement: For Teachers, By Teachers*. Westwood, MA: Ribas Publications.

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Edyburn, D. (2004). [Technology Supports for Differentiated Instruction](#). *Journal of Special Education Technology* 19 (2).

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- Gregory, G. and Chapman, C. (2005) *Differentiated Assessment Strategies: One Size Doesn't Fit All*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Heacox, D. (2002) *Differentiating Instruction in the Regular Classroom: How to Reach and Teach All Learners, Grades 3-12*. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit.
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- Moll, A. (2003) *Differentiated Instruction Guide for Inclusive Teaching*. Port Chester, NY: Dude Publishing.
- Noble, T. (2004). [Integrating the revised Bloom's Taxonomy](#) with Multiple Intelligences: A planning tool for curriculum differentiation. *Teachers College Record* 106 (1), pp. 193-211.
- Norlund, M. (2003). *Differentiated instruction: Meeting the educational needs of all students in your classroom*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Education.
- Rose, D. and Meyer, A. (2002) *Teaching Every Student in the Digital Age: Universal Design for Learning*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Shelton, C. and Stern, R. (2004) *Understanding Emotions in the Classroom: Differentiating Teaching Strategies for Optimal Learning*. Port Chester, NY: Dude Publishing.
- Sprenger, M. (2003) *Differentiation Through Learning Styles and Memory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Stiggins, R. (2001) *Student-Involved Classroom Assessment* (3rd Ed.) Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Tilton, L. (2003) *The Teacher's Toolbox for Differentiating Instruction: 700 Strategies, Tips, Tools and Techniques*. Shorewood, MN: Covington Cove.
- Tomlinson, C. (2005). Grading and differentiation: Paradox or good practice. *Theory into Practice*, 44(3), 262-269.
- Tomlinson, C., & Doubet, K. (2005). Reach them to teach them. *Educational Leadership*, 62(7), 8-15.
- Tomlinson, C. A. (2003). Differentiating instruction for academic diversity. In J. M. Cooper (Ed.),

Classroom teaching skills, 7<sup>th</sup> ed (pp 149-180). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

**XII. Dates of Initial Approval and Revision:**

Initial Approval:

Revised: June 4, 2010

Reviewed: August 2012

## **Recommended Text:**

Tomlinson, Carol Ann. (2001). *How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed Ability Classrooms* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed). Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Gregory, G. and Chapman, C. (2005) *Differentiated Assessment Strategies: One Size Doesn't Fit All*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

## **Reference/Resource Materials**

### [Key Resources on Differentiated Instruction](#)

Handouts from keynote and main presentation speakers from the MI ASCD Differentiated Instruction Conference, Aug. 12 and 13, 2009

### [Raising the Bar: Differentiated Instruction](#)

Lesson and Resources by Stacy Bodin, Vermillion Parish Schools LA

### [Mapping a Route Toward Differentiated Instruction](#) by Carol Tomlinson

Even though students may learn in many ways, the essential skills and content they learn can remain steady. That is, students can take different roads to the same destination.

### [Strategies and Pieces of Learning's Differentiated Resources](#)

Since 1989, Pieces of Learning has offered staff development and differentiated resources focused on research-based differentiated instruction.

### [National Council of Teachers of Mathematics](#)

Math differentiated instruction resources for all grade levels along with research.

### [Differentiated Instruction – Some Ideas for the Classroom](#) Video

### [Ken Robinson – Differentiated Teaching](#) Video

### [Defining Differentiated Instruction](#) by Rebecca Alber

The definition begins with this: Equal education is not all students getting the same, but all students getting what they need. Approaching all learners the same academically doesn't work. We have to start where each child is in his learning process in order to authentically meet his academic needs and help him grow.

### [Examples of Tiered Curriculum](#)

Indiana Department of Education

### [Differentiated Instruction](#)

This website is an outgrowth of several workshops in the Leon County Schools, Tallahassee, Florida. Included are background information, related academic resources and sample lessons generated by participants in the workshops and seminars, as well as links to other related differentiated instruction websites.