

**George Mason University  
College of Education and Human Development  
Graduate School of Education**

***EDCI 545: Assessment and Differentiation***

Fall 2011

Wednesdays 4:30 pm - 10 pm, ARL Founder Hall 481

Oct. 19 - Dec 14, 2011

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*“Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid” (Einstein)*

**Course Description**

Provides a research-based introduction to differentiated instruction for children in grades PK-6. Emphasis on the assessment of learners and differentiation of instruction to meet the needs of all learners.

**Learning Outcomes**

1. Students will be able to discuss current, validated research underlying the theory, principles, and practices of differentiated instruction.
2. Students will be able to identify and explain the core principles of differentiated instruction and the ways in which these principles inform and guide all aspects of instructional implementation.
3. Students will be able to apply the core principles of differentiation when planning and assessing lessons.
4. Students will be able to discuss the interdependent relationship between assessment and instruction in a learning environment.
5. Students will be able to identify formal and informal assessment tools to collect data on the readiness, interests, and learning profiles of students as the basis for differentiation before and during instruction.
6. Students will be able to identify and discuss strategies for assessment and grading in a differentiated classroom.
7. Students will be able to generalize course content to reflect how the multicultural, special needs, gifted students and other diverse populations within classrooms have their needs met via the application of the skills, strategies, and knowledge of this course.

**Nature of Course**

This course is structured to utilize multiple instruction formats. We will engage in face-to-face class sessions, as well as regularly scheduled online discussions and activities. Face to face class sessions will include small/large group discussions and tasks, lecture, and student leading of discussions.

## **Standards Addressed in Course**

INTASC

3 Diverse Learners

7 Planning

8 Assessment

ISTE NETS for Teachers

### *2. Design and Develop Digital-Age Learning Experiences and Assessments*

Teachers design, develop, and evaluate authentic learning experiences and assessment incorporating contemporary tools and resources to maximize content learning in context and to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes identified in the NETS•S. Teachers:

- a. design or adapt relevant learning experiences that incorporate digital tools and resources to promote student learning and creativity.
- b. develop technology-enriched learning environments that enable all students to pursue their individual curiosities and become active participants in setting their own educational goals, managing their own learning, and assessing their own progress.
- c. customize and personalize learning activities to address students' diverse learning styles, working strategies, and abilities using digital tools and resources.
- d. provide students with multiple and varied formative and summative assessments aligned with content and technology standards and use resulting data to inform learning and teaching

### *5. Engage in Professional Growth and Leadership*

Teachers continuously improve their professional practice, model lifelong learning, and exhibit leadership in their school and professional community by promoting and demonstrating the effective use of digital tools and resources. Teachers:

- a. participate in local and global learning communities to explore creative applications of technology to improve student learning.
- b. exhibit leadership by demonstrating a vision of technology infusion, participating in shared decision making and community building, and developing the leadership and technology skills of others.
- c. evaluate and reflect on current research and professional practice on a regular basis to make effective use of existing and emerging digital tools and resources in support of student learning.
- d. contribute to the effectiveness, vitality, and self-renewal of the teaching profession and of their school and community.

**Required Texts**

Chapman, C. and King, R. (2005). *Differentiated assessment strategies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.

Tomlinson, C. A. (2005). *How to differentiate instruction in mixed ability classrooms* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Additional readings will be posted on Blackboard

**Assignments**

*Readings and Class Attendance (25 pts)*

The readings for the course are essential to your learning. They provide you with the theory necessary to implement, with meaning, the practical strategies involved in differentiating instruction. It is expected that each week you will read the assigned selections and that you will participate with your peers in a professional learning community (PLC). A PLC is a way for you to engage with your peers professionally to share successes and challenges, to support and question one another, and be leaders of your own professional learning. Each week you are expected to be in class and to have read and completed any assigned tasks. If you are not prepared, it affects not just your own learning, but that of your peers.

*Self-Study in Learning (5 pts)*

You will conduct a brief self-study that outlines your own learning preferences, including strengths and weaknesses, and your interests. Include in the case study, a reflection on your own schooling experiences and its effects on your learning and achievement. This should be 2-3 pages.

*Student Learning Profiles (10 pts)*

Implement a variety of methods to learn about your students academically, personally, and socially. You are expected to implement a minimum of one strategy per column and per row.

	Academically	Personally	Socially
Family			
Student			
Self			

1. Copy the chart and write a brief description of each strategy utilized.
2. Create an at-a-glance sheet that reports the information that you learned for each student. You will use this sheet to create groups and plan differentiated lessons by learning profile, interest, and readiness.

	Learning profile	Interest	Readiness (in...)	Important Information
Student name A				
Student name B				
(continue for all students)				

### *Specialist Interview (10 pts)*

Differentiation is about meeting the needs of ALL groups of students. Critically reflect on your teaching and student learning. What group of students do you feel the most uncertainty teaching? For example, students with disabilities? English Language Learners? Students with behavioral challenges? Gifted students? Etc.... Seek out a human resource at your school who specializes in teaching this particular type of student and who can offer insight and instructional suggestions for assessment and differentiation. You will then interview this specialist. Interview questions will be determined in class.

### *Resource Contribution (10 points)*

We will create a course repository for resources you find useful to assessment and differentiation. These can be documents you create or find, links to useful websites, and/or academic journal articles. You are expected to post to the repository at least twice throughout the semester. Each resource you add must include a brief annotation so that readers can quickly search and find materials.

### *Assessment and Differentiation in Praxis- PBA (40 pts)*

Throughout the course of the semester you will conduct a series of mini-inquiries where you will work to differentiate instruction for your students. Effective teaching requires that you learn, apply that professional learning, assess its effects, and use that evaluation to drive further instruction. Each week you are expected to integrate a new differentiation concept or strategy into your daily teaching. You will assess its effects on student learning and share your progress with your peers. Include three pieces: 1) what you did and why (tie this to our readings/class discussions and to your students), 2) what happened (how you assessed and the findings), 3) challenges or questions you have about what you did, and 4) your next steps.

Using the skills in assessment and differentiation that you have developed, you will then create a formal lesson plan sequence that details two to three days of instruction in a core subject area (towards the end of the semester). Your plan will include an overarching goal for the lessons, measurable sub-objectives, DC learning standards, grouping methods, activities, and detailed evaluation methods. You will include appropriate references justifying your decisions throughout the plan. A lesson plan template will be provided in class. You will work with a critical friend to collaboratively refine your lesson sequence, then you will implement it and collect data of student learning for analysis. Finally, you will write a reflection of your learning. A rubric for evaluation of this task will be provided in class.

#### **Note:**

Assignments earning less than a passing grade may be rewritten and resubmitted so that the assignment is satisfactorily completed. In fact, because learning is the goal, I may *require* you to redo an assignment that is far below expectations.

All written papers must be double spaced, with 1" margins, and in 12-point font (Times New Roman, Calibri, or Arial).

#### **Grading Scale**

A=93-100; A-=90-92; B+=87-89; B=80-86; C=70-79; F=below 70

## **University, College, and Elementary Program Policies**

### *CEHD Student Expectations*

Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor. One cell phone will remain on in class that is registered with the Mason Alert System. Visit <https://alert.gmu.edu>, to find out more about Mason's alert system for GMU emergencies.

Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See [gse.gmu.edu](http://gse.gmu.edu) for a listing of these dispositions.

Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>].

*Honor Code.* To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal integrity, GMU has set forth a code of honor that includes policies on cheating, attempted cheating, lack of class participation in group work, plagiarism, lying and stealing (see link above). The Elementary Program abides by these policies and takes them seriously.

Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html>].

Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.

Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See <http://ods.gmu.edu/>].

### *Campus Resources*

The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See <http://caps.gmu.edu/>].

The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>].

The College of Education and Human Development strives to represent a set of core values that drive the work of faculty and students. These values of collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice are further described on the CEHD website <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>.

## Course Calendar

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading/Assignment Due</b>
Oct. 19	Introductions Examining current practice Defining assessment Knowing your learners	<b>Self Study Due</b> Chapman & King, Introduction-Ch. 3
Oct. 26	Effective and equitable assessment	<b>Student Learning Profiles Due</b> Chapman & King, Ch. 4-5 Article TBA
Nov. 2	Using assessment findings Defining differentiated instruction	Tomlinson Ch. 1-5 Article TBA
Nov. 9	Planning for and managing differentiation	<b>Specialist Interview Due</b> Chapman & King, Ch. 6 Tomlinson, Ch. 6-7
Nov. 16	Differentiating by readiness, interest, and learning profile	Tomlinson, Ch. 8-10 Article TBA
Nov. 23	No F2F Class- Thanksgiving Recess	
Nov. 30	Differentiating content, process, and products	<b>Lesson Sequence Plan Due</b> Tomlinson, Ch. 11-13 Article TBA
Dec. 7	Differentiating and grading/accountability	<b>Teach Lesson Sequence by this date</b> Chapman & King, Ch. 7 Tomlinson, Ch. 14 Article TBA
Dec. 14	Planning the next steps	<b>Final Analysis and Reflection Due</b> Article TBA

Note: Calendar is tentative and may be modified in line with course needs.