

George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
Graduate School of Education
EDCI 622: Curriculum Differentiation for Diverse Learners
Fall 2013
Tuesday 4:15-7:10

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EDCI 622: Curriculum Differentiation for Diverse Learners is a three credit graduate course in the College of Education and Human Development at George Mason University. The course Develops personal and professional rationale for differentiating instruction in mixed-ability classrooms, as well as skills and knowledge of strategies to utilize pre-assessment data and plan for and implement differentiated instruction.

Objectives:

The course will consist of a blending of required readings, lecture, discussions, group activities, and individual activities

By the end of this course, participants should be able to articulate and apply basic vocabulary, principles, and strategies related to:

1. Pre-assessing readiness, interest, and learning profile in order to plan appropriately for a variety of learners
2. Applying key principles and practices of the Parallel Curriculum Model
3. Defining differentiation
4. Differentiating content (what we teach and what students learn)
5. Differentiating process (how students make sense of what they learn)
6. Differentiating products (how students demonstrate what they have learned)
7. Establishing administrative and parental support for a differentiated classroom
8. Implementing and managing differentiation in the heterogeneous classroom
9. Using appropriately a range of instructional strategies to facilitate differentiation
10. Stating a personal and professional rationale for why differentiation is vital in meeting the needs of gifted students.

Professional Standards:

This course is designed around the program standards endorsed by the National Association for Gifted Children (2006) as well as the Virginia Licensure Regulations for School Personnel (1998) and specifically addresses 8VAC 20-21-270: Gifted Education (add-on endorsement) standards.

Standard 3: Individual Learning Differences

Educators of the gifted understand the effects that gifts and talents can have on an individual's learning in school and throughout life. Moreover, educators of the gifted are active and resourceful in seeking to understand how language, culture, and family background interact with an individual's predispositions to impact academic and social behavior, attitudes, values, and interests. The understanding of these learning differences and their interactions provides the foundation upon which educators of the gifted plan instruction to provide meaningful and challenging learning.

K1	Influences of diversity factors on individuals with exceptional learning needs.
K2	Academic and affective characteristics and learning needs of individuals with gifts, talents, and disabilities.
K3	Idiosyncratic learning patterns of individuals with gifts and talents, including those from
	diverse backgrounds.
K4	Influences of different beliefs, traditions, and values across and within diverse groups on relationships among individuals with gifts and talents, their families, schools, and communities.

Standard 4: Instructional Strategies

Educators of the gifted possess a repertoire of evidence-based curriculum and instructional strategies to differentiate for individuals with gifts and talents. They select, adapt, and use these strategies to promote challenging learning opportunities in general and special curricula and to modify learning environments to enhance self-awareness and self-efficacy for individuals with gifts and talents. They enhance the learning of critical and creative thinking, problem solving, and performance skills in specific domains. Moreover, educators of the gifted emphasize the development, practice, and transfer of advanced knowledge and skills across environments throughout the lifespan leading to creative, productive careers in society for individuals with gifts and talents.

K1	School and community resources, including content specialists, which support differentiation.
K2	Curricular, instructional, and management strategies effective for individuals with exceptional learning needs.
S1	Apply pedagogical content knowledge to instructing learners with gifts and talents.
S2	Apply higher-level thinking and metacognitive models to content areas to meet the needs of individuals with gifts and talents.
S3	Provide opportunities for individuals with gifts and talents to explore, develop, or research their areas of interest or talent.
S4	Pre assess the learning needs of individuals with gifts and talents in various domains and adjust instruction based on continual assessment.
S5	Pace delivery of curriculum and instruction consistent with needs of individuals with gifts and childhood through adolescence.

Standard 7: Instructional Planning

Curriculum and instructional planning is at the center of gifted and talented education. Educators of the gifted develop long-range plans anchored in both general and special curricula. They systematically translate shorter-range goals and objectives that take into consideration an individual's abilities and needs, the learning environment, and cultural and linguistic factors. Understanding of these factors, as well as the implications of being gifted and talented, guides the educator's selection, adaptation, and creation of materials, and use of differentiated instructional strategies. Learning plans are modified based on ongoing assessment of the individual's progress. Moreover, educators of the gifted facilitate these actions in a collaborative context that includes individuals with gifts and talents, families, professional colleagues, and personnel from other agencies as appropriate. Educators of the gifted are comfortable using technologies to support instructional planning and individualized instruction.

K1	Theories and research models that form the basis of curriculum development and instructional practice for individuals with gifts and talents.
K2	Features that distinguish differentiated curriculum from general curricula for individuals with exceptional learning needs.
K3	Curriculum emphases for individuals with gifts and talents within cognitive, affective, aesthetic, social, and linguistic domains.
S1	Align differentiated instructional plans with local, state/provincial, and national curricular standards.

S2	Design differentiated learning plans for individuals with gifts and talents, including individuals from diverse backgrounds.
S3	Develop scope and sequence plans for individuals with gifts and talents.
S4	Select curriculum resources, strategies, and product options that respond to cultural, linguistic, and intellectual differences among individuals with gifts and talents.
S5	Select and adapt a variety of differentiated curricula that incorporate advanced, conceptually challenging, in-depth, distinctive, and complex content.
S6	Integrate academic and career guidance experiences into the learning plan for individuals with gifts and talents.

Standard 8: Assessment

Assessment is integral to the decision-making and teaching of educators of the gifted as multiple types of assessment information are required for both identification and learning progress decisions. Educators of the gifted use the results of such assessments to adjust instruction and to enhance ongoing learning progress

S3	Develop differentiated curriculum-based assessments for use in instructional planning and delivery for individuals with gifts and talents.
S4	Use alternative assessments and technologies to evaluate learning of individuals with gifts and talents.

National Association for Gifted Children (Landrum, Callahan and Shaklee, 2001).

Standard 1: Curriculum and Instruction:

- 2.1m. Teachers must differentiate, replace, supplement, or modify curricula to facilitate higher level learning goals.
- 2.2m. Means for demonstrating proficiency in essential regular curriculum concepts and processes must be established to facilitate appropriate academic acceleration.
- 2.3m. Gifted learners must be assessed for proficiency in basic skills and knowledge and provided with alternative challenging educational opportunities when proficiency is demonstrated.
- 2.1e. Teachers should be responsible for developing plans to differentiate the curriculum in every discipline for gifted learners.
- 5.0m. Diverse and appropriate learning experiences must consist of a variety of curricular options, instructional strategies, and materials.

Standard 3: Program Design:

- 4.0m. Gifted education programming should be articulated with the general education program.
- 5.0m. The use of flexible grouping of gifted learners must be an integral part of gifted educational programming.

Virginia Department of Education: Gifted Education

Standard 5: Practitioners will acquire and display understandings of theory and principles of differentiating curriculum designed to match the distinct characteristics of gifted learners including:

- a. integration of multiple disciplines into an area of study
- b. emphasis on in-depth learning , independent and self-directed study skills
- c. the development of analytical organization, critical, and creative thinking
- d. the development of sophisticated products using varied modes of expression
- e. the evaluation of student learning through appropriate and specific criteria
- f. the development of advanced teaching skills to enhance student performance

Standard 6. Understanding of contemporary issues and research in gifted education

Texts:

Tomlinson, C., Kaplan, S., Renzulli, J., Purcell, J. Leppien, J., & Burns, D. (2002). *The parallel curriculum*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Tomlinson, C. (2000). *How to differentiate instruction in mixed-ability classrooms*. 2nd Edition. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Gay, G. (2000). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research and practice*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Course Assignments:

Active and Informed Participation (25%) Students are expected to contribute to class discussions from a theoretical and practical point of view and should reflect information gained from readings, etc.

Students are required to be present and on time for each class session. Students who are absent for more than 2 class sessions will not receive credit for the class. Students who are late to class will have points deducted from their final grades. Class participation is vital to whole and small group discussions. There will be numerous in class activities designed to illicit interaction among participants and practice with particular concepts.

Curriculum Development Project: (40%) This project will be a reflection of how students can apply concepts and principles from readings and discussions. This project will be completed in groups of students who are working with similar grade levels. The project will consist of a written unit that will reflect ability to differentiate curriculum and the theory and practice of the Parallel Curriculum Model. It will also address culturally responsive teaching. The unit will contain a professional rationale for differentiation, class demographics, learning levels, learning goals, pre and post assessments, and materials and handouts used.

This project may also be a learning center that reflects learning needs and interests of students, Additional information regarding this final project will be distributed later during the course.

Critical Responses (35%): Each participant will be expected to complete critical responses to various readings to be written in APA format. The topics to be read will pertain to the course goals as outlined in the course syllabus and should comprise the bulk of the articles and chapters read. (e.g. differentiation for gifted learners, curriculum, and instructional strategies) These responses will be assignments completed for homework and for class work. Homework is due the session after it is assigned. Points will be taken off for late homework

GMU Policies and Resources for Students:

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See<http://oai.gmu.edu/honor-code/>].
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See<http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>]
- 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.
- [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 \[See http://caps.gmu.edu/\]](http://caps.gmu.edu/).

- 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/>].
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- 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/>].

Professional Dispositions

- Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

Core Values Commitment

- The College of Education & Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles. <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>

Grading Scale:

A+	= 100
A	= 94-99
A-	= 90-93
B+	= 85-89
B	= 80-84 (no B- grades)
C	= 70-79 – does not meet licensure requirements or Level I award recommendation
F	= Does not meet requirements of the Graduate School of Education

NOTE: This is an advanced graduate level course; therefore the quality of your work; attendance and informed participation are expected to be of the highest caliber. No absences are excused. Should you miss a class it is your responsibility to inform the instructor ahead of time, turn in your assignments, collect any notes/assignments from a colleague and do your utmost to remain current in the class. Should you need special assistance because of identified learning needs please contact the instructor immediately.

Additional Readings:

Maker, J., Nielson, A., *Curriculum Development and Teaching Strategies for Gifted Learners*._(Selected Chapters)

Van Tassel-Baska, J. (2003). *What Matters in Curriculum for Gifted Learners: Reflections on Theory, Research, and Practice* in Colangelo and Davis_ (2003). Handbook of Gifted Education. Boston, New York, Allyn and Bacon.

Tomlinson, C. (1995). Differentiating Instruction for Advanced Learners in the Mixed-Ability Middle School Classroom, ERIC Digest, EDO-EC-94-7.

Reis, S., Kaplan, S., Tomlinson, C., Westberg, K., Callahan, C., Cooper, C. (1998). Equal Does Not Mean Identical. *Educational Leadership*, November, 74-76.

Tomlinson, C., Kalbfleisch, M.L. (1998). Teach Me, Teach My Brain: A Call for Differentiated Classrooms. *Educational Leadership*, 56 (3), 52

Resources:

ASCD <http://www.ascd.org/>

NAGC <http://www.nagc.org/>

Tentative Class Sessions

Session 1

Course Overview, review of syllabus, assignment requirements, projects and due dates and definitions, registration
Read chapter 1 from Maker and Nielson, answer questions

Session 2

Theories of intelligence, high intelligence, understanding differentiation
Read Van Tassel-Baska- *What matters in curriculum for gifted learners: Reflections on theory, research, and practice*, answer questions

Session 3

Definitions, characteristics and needs of the gifted
Bring in curriculum for a topic/subject of interest

Session 4

Linking standards to curriculum for the gifted
Read chapter 5- Parallel Curriculum

Session 5

Introduction to the Parallel Curriculum Model, determining non-negotiable ideals for quality curriculum
Read chapters 4 and 5 in Parallel Curriculum. Write a synthesis of the key concepts in the chapters

Session 6

Parallel Curriculum Model; core and practice
Read chapter 7 in Parallel Curriculum. Write a synthesis of the key concepts in the chapter.

Session 7

Parallel Curriculum Model; connections and identity
Read chapter 8 in Parallel Curriculum- focus on your subject/grade level. Written work to be assigned.

Session 8

Ascending Intellectual Demand
Read chapters 8, 9, 10 in *How to differentiate Instruction in mixed-ability classrooms* Written work to be assigned

Session 9

Differentiating curriculum: content

Session 10

Differentiating curriculum: process

Session 11

Differentiating curriculum: product
Read chapter 2 of *Culturally responsive teaching*

Session 12

Descriptive characteristics of cultural responsiveness
Read chapter 3 of *Culturally responsive teaching*

Session 13

Culture and curriculum in the classroom
Read chapter 4 of *Culturally responsive teaching*

Session 14

Presentations on Curriculum Development Project

Session 15

Presentations on Curriculum Development Project