

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT  
ADVANCED STUDIES IN TEACHING AND LEARNING**

**Differentiated Instruction in Secondary Advanced/Gifted Academic Classes  
Blended Course**

**Instructors:**

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**Class Dates:** September 24 - December 10

**Face-to-Face Classes:** 9/24, 10/1, 10/29, 11/5, 12/3, 12/10 (4:30-7:10). **Your attendance is required at all six sessions.**

**Online Classes:** The week of 10/8, 10/15, 10/22, 11/12, 11/19, 11/26 (allow at least 2.5 hours of time per week). The online week runs Tuesday until the following Monday for Db postings and responses.

**Textbooks:**

There is no required textbook. We will provide materials as needed throughout the course, but if you want to delve deeper into some of the topics, we recommend the following books. Many of these books can be found on the Fairfax County Public School Virtual Library.

*Differentiating Instruction in the Regular Classroom: How to Reach and Teach All Learners Grades 3-12* by Diane Heacox

*Fair Isn't Always Equal* by Rick Wormelli

*Leading and Managing a Differentiated Classroom* by Carol A. Tomlinson and Marcia B. Imbeau

*Strategies for Differentiating Instruction: Best Practices for the Classroom* by Julia L. Roberts, Ed.D. and Tracy F. Inman

**Course Description:**

This course focuses on advanced understanding, design, and implementation of differentiated curriculum across content areas for secondary school. It will provide professionals in the field of advanced academic education, regular education, and related fields with the knowledge and skills needed to design and assess effective, high quality differentiated curriculum for secondary school students.

### **Course Goals and Outcomes:**

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

1. Support for in-depth, advanced differentiation of curriculum;
2. Models of advanced differentiation of content, process and products;
3. Ways to strategically plan appropriately differentiated curriculum and instruction;
4. Establishing administrative and parental support for a differentiated classroom;
5. Implementing and managing differentiation in the heterogeneous classroom; and,
6. Grading in a differentiated classroom;

### **Model of Course Delivery:**

Course delivery will be a mixture of **face-to-face** and **online** meetings. Participants will be expected to share curriculum development projects. In addition, students are expected to actively participate in **online discussions** and **small group discussions** regarding advanced differentiation projects and scholarly articles related to differentiation in practice. The instructor will be available outside of class meetings via phone and e-mail.

### **Grading Scale:**

100 = A+, 94-99 = A, 90-93 = A-, 86-89 = B+, 80-85 = B-, 70-79 = C, Below 70 = F

A grade of B- or below is not acceptable for endorsement or graduate coursework.

### **Class Participation and Attendance Policy:**

Class participation and attendance constitutes a major element of the learning experience provided in this class. There will be online class discussions, group assignments, and strategy workshops. Expectations include the following:

- Students will be expected to be prepared for discussion by having read and reflected on assigned readings as identified in the course assignments.
- Students will be expected to work in a collegial manner to assist one another in developing responses.
- Students will be expected to substantively participate in online classroom discussions on a consistent basis as identified by the instructor.

### **Course Withdrawal**

If you need to withdraw from the course at any point you must contact your instructor of record and Jennifer Lebron ([jlebron@gmu.edu](mailto:jlebron@gmu.edu)). Failure to notify both parties can result in an 'F' on your graduate transcript.

In blended courses, face-to-face presence and online graduate students are expected to **show consistent weekly presence** in courses for which they have registered. Online participation is important not only to the individual student but also to the class as a whole. Class participation is a factor in grading. Instructors may use evidence of student's absence from face-to-face sessions and online weekly discussions to support the lowering of a student's grade as stated in

the course syllabus (GMU 2006).

If online learning is new to you, think of online sessions as if you were physically attending class at MASON. *You would be here a minimum of 2.5 hours during the week having completed your reading and posting on the Discussion Board (Db). Expect a minimum of an additional 2 - 4 hours of work (readings, writing, research, group work, reviewing) per week.* Set aside specific times during your week to focus on EDCI 623, including posting on Db. Waiting until the day before an online session ends to respond is unacceptable at the graduate level.

During online discussions, first answer the question posted in a short and concise manner (2 paragraphs), return to the Db as directed in the syllabus, and respond to at least two other classmates' postings. Responses such as "I agree" or "Good idea" are insufficient to count as in-depth responses; you should elaborate and include further questions to continue the discussion.

### **College of Education and Human Development Student Expectations**

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code. (<http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>)
- 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. (<http://ods.gmu.edu/>)
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. (<http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html>)
- Students are responsible for the content of course communications sent through their Fairfax County Public School Blackboard. All communication will be done using the email found for each student in the FCPS Blackboard Platform.
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

### **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. (<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. (<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>)

### Schedule of Course Content and Assignments

Date	Class Topics	Assignment
Prior to the first class		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please bring these items to the first class on 9/24:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pre-assessment Survey</li> <li>2. GMU paperwork</li> <li>3. Copy of the syllabus</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
9/24- class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom Introduction and Syllabus Overview</li> <li>• Defining the Need for Differentiation</li> <li>• Evaluating the Need for Change in Teaching Practice Discussion</li> <li>• Review Blackboard and Online Activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read the article, "Reconstructing the Vision"</li> <li>• Write a one page personal journal reflection in terms of how you might "construct your house".</li> <li>• E-mail the assignment to your instructor by 9/29 @ 8 PM.</li> <li>• Complete the Differentiation online differentiation quiz. Directions for accessing the quiz are in the 9/24 folder.</li> </ul>
10/1 - class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluating the Need for Change in Teaching Practice Discussion</li> <li>• Differentiation in Action</li> <li>• Review of Online Activities</li> <li>• Discuss Midterm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in the required six out of seven strategy workshops (see attached directions)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the Pre-Assessment Strategy Workshop by 10/8</li> <li>• The first two workshops must be completed by 10/15</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Start thinking about midterm presentation (see attached directions)</li> </ul>
10/8 - online 10/15 - online 10/22 - online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategy Workshops               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pre-assessment</li> <li>- Flexible Grouping</li> <li>- Questioning Strategies</li> <li>- Differentiated Products</li> <li>- Formative and Summative Assessment</li> <li>- Anchor Activities with Curriculum Compacting</li> <li>- Managing a Differentiated Classroom</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in the required six out of seven strategy workshops (see attached directions)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pre-Assessment Strategy Workshop by 10/8</li> <li>- Complete at least two workshops by 10/15</li> <li>- Complete six of the seven workshops by 10/22</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Complete mid-term presentation</li> </ul>

Date	Class Topics	Assignment
10/29 - class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mid-Term Presentations</li> <li>• Discuss Interest Articles</li> <li>• Discuss Final Project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read one of the following articles and be prepared to discuss the article in class on 11/5: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ "Detracking for Excellence and Equity" by Carol Corbett Burris and Delia T. Garrity</li> <li>○ <i>Mindset</i> by Carol S. Dweck- Chapters 1 &amp; 7</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
11/5 - class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special Populations Discussion</li> <li>• Differentiation and Special Populations</li> <li>• Challenging Advanced Learners</li> <li>• Discuss Final Project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Two Interest Articles (related to the topic you chose in class) on Blackboard <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Respond to both articles in your content area Discussion Board by 11/5</li> <li>○ Respond to two other teachers' comments by 11/19</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Write a one paragraph description of your final project choice and e-mail it to teacher by 11/12</li> <li>• Work on final project (due 12/10)</li> </ul>
11/12 - online 11/19 - online 11/26- online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interest Articles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue work on Interest Articles</li> <li>• Prepare for Grading Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Review the Grading &amp; Differentiation PowerPoint</li> <li>– Read "Grading and Differentiation: Paradox or Good Practice?" by Carol Ann Tomlinson</li> <li>– Watch Rick Wormeli's video clips <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ "Introduction to Assessment and Grading in the Differentiated Classroom"</li> <li>▪ "Redos, Retakes, and Do-Overs, Part One"</li> <li>▪ "Defining Mastery"</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Bring assignment to differentiate</li> <li>• Work on final project</li> </ul>
12/3 - class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grading in a Differentiated Classroom</li> <li>• Differentiation in Practice</li> <li>• Work on Final Project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete final project</li> </ul>
12/10 - class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course Evaluation</li> <li>• Final project presentation</li> </ul>	

## Grading: Assignments and Points

"Reconstructing the Vision" Personal Reflection	5 points
Introduction to Differentiation Blackboard Quiz	8 points
Online Strategy Workshop Db (5 points each)	30 points
Midterm Project	15 points
Special Populations Discussion	5 points
Interest Articles Db	10 points
Final Project Overview and Rationale	2 points
Grading in a Differentiated Classroom Discussion	5 points
Final Presentation	20 points

## Online Strategy Workshops

On Blackboard, there are seven strategy workshops related to differentiation strategies. These workshops involve the following topics:

- Preassessment
- Flexible Grouping
- Questioning Strategies
- Differentiated Products
- Formative and Summative Assessment
- Anchor Activities with Curriculum Compacting
- Managing a Differentiated Classroom

Each workshop includes a PowerPoint presentation and an article. During the online portion of the course, students should choose to participate in at least six of the seven strategy workshops by reviewing the PowerPoint and completing the assignment. After completion of each workshop, students must post on the discussion board a well constructed response to questions listed on the Db. Students should also respond with a short paragraph to at least **two** other students' postings.

You should complete the **Pre-Assessment Strategy Workshop** by **October 8** and the first two workshops by **October 15**.

**Six of the seven workshops** must be completed by **October 22**.

## Discussion Board Expectations

Throughout the course you will be asked to participate in a discussion board to extend your understanding of a specific strategy or article. The following provides a guide for how the discussion board postings will be graded.

### **Exemplary Postings: (5 pts. per strategy or article)**

- include an **initial posting of several** paragraphs that address the strategy or article and how it relates to classroom practice
- include **more than two** responses of at least one paragraph to other postings
- are made in time for others to read and respond throughout the course of the online work
- deliver information that is full of thought, insight, and analysis
- make connections to previous or current content
- contain rich and fully developed new ideas, connections, or applications including additional information (documents, articles, websites) related to course content

### **Proficient Postings: (4 pts. per strategy or article)**

- include an **initial posting of several paragraphs** that address the strategy or article and how it relates to classroom practice
- include **at least two** responses of at least one paragraph to other postings
- are made in time for others to read and respond throughout the course of the online work
- deliver information that shows that thought, insight, and analysis have taken place
- makes some connections to previous or current content
- contain new ideas, connections, or applications, but they may lack depth and/or detail

### **Adequate Postings: (3 pts. per strategy or article)**

- include an **initial posting of several paragraphs** that address the strategy or article and how it relates to classroom practice
- include **at least two** responses to other postings
- may not all be made in time for others to read and respond
- are generally competent, but the actual information is limited
- make limited, if any, connections
- contain few, if any, new ideas or applications; often are a rehashing of other posts

### **Minimal Postings: (1-2 pts. per strategy or article)**

- include an **initial posting** that address the strategy or article
- include **minimal** responses to other postings
- was late and did not allow time for others to read and respond
- are limited in content; there is no evidence of insight or analysis

## Midterm Project

Course participants are required to implement two of the online workshop strategies in their classrooms prior to the midterm classes.

Please submit the following to your instructor:

1. A list of target strategies
2. A brief explanation/rational as to why you choose these strategies
  - Specifically address how using each strategy **differs** from what you normally would have done
3. A brief description of your lesson plan(s)
4. A brief answer to following:
  - What went well?
  - What might I do differently next time?
  - How was my craft as a teacher enhanced?
5. One copy of your lesson plan(s) and copies/photos of student work that accommodate it
  - Use whatever format you would like for your lesson plan. You may want to consider using Fairfax's template so that you can use it for your evaluation.



You do NOT have to have:

1. Bring copies of your lesson plan(s) for each colleague in the class.
2. A PowerPoint, poster presentation, video of your teaching, etc.

You MAY:

1. Upload any information onto the discussion board you think may enhance your colleagues' teaching practice.
2. Have one lesson with two different differentiation strategies or two lessons with one target strategy each
  - It is completely possible for your lesson to have a differentiation strategy within it that you are not highlighting.



## Midterm Project Rubric

Points	Expectations	Comments
15-14	<p><u>Excellent</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lesson is engaging and clearly demonstrates the thoughtful implementation of two differentiation strategies.</li> <li>• Examples of student work or student participation were shared with the class.</li> <li>• All requested information is addressed, clear, and concise and submitted to instructor on time.</li> </ul>	
13-12	<p><u>Competent</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lesson is clear and demonstrates the implementation of two differentiation strategies.</li> <li>• Examples of student work or student participation were shared with the class.</li> <li>• All requested information is somewhat addressed, clear, and concise and submitted to instructor on time.</li> </ul>	
11	<p><u>Minimal</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lesson demonstrates the implementation of two differentiation strategies, but clarity is lacking.</li> <li>• There were no examples of student work or student participation were shared with the class.</li> <li>• Most of the requested information is addressed and somewhat clear and concise. Information may not have been submitted on time.</li> </ul>	
10-0	<p><u>Unsatisfactory</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lesson is confusing and does not clearly reveal the implementation of two differentiation strategies.</li> <li>• There were no examples of student work or student participation were shared with the class.</li> <li>• Requested information was hardly addressed or not submitted at all.</li> </ul>	

## Final Project

A final project is required. Class participants may choose from one of the following:



- Create a portfolio of authentic strategies you have implemented within your classroom. This portfolio should be a collection of at least 10 different examples (i.e. a new example of a differentiated pre-assessment). Include clear directions for implementing the strategy, rationale for the use and placement of strategies within the unit(s), and a classroom sample.
- Research and implement a new category of differentiation strategies (i.e. differentiated reading strategies or differentiated games) and create a PowerPoint strategy workshop about that category with two clear examples.
- Create a 10 minute narrated video of differentiation in action within your classroom. Include the lesson plan being demonstrated, rationale for the use and placement within the unit, and a reflection on how it worked in the classroom.
- Create a differentiated unit you plan on teaching in your classroom. Include unit plan, individual lessons, rationale for use of strategies, and product guidelines.
- Create a product portfolio to include 5 differentiated product assignments, including rubrics. For one of those assignments, bring in examples of student work at each level of differentiation.
- Develop a plan for your CLT or school for professional development related to differentiation. Your plan should be differentiated for staff and should include all documents to assist teachers with differentiating in their classrooms.
- Create a project related to differentiation of your choice. You must receive approval for this project idea by November 11 to choose this option.

Your final exam project should be distinctly different from your midterm project. All work should be your own authentic lesson and/or strategy. Be prepared to present your final project on December 10.

If your presentation is enhanced with handouts, please make **enough copies for everyone** or **post them in the Final Exam Db prior to class**.

## Final Project Rubric

Points	Expectations	Comments
18-20	<p>Excellent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The final project clearly represents application and understanding of differentiation strategies within a classroom.</li> <li>• A rationale for why certain strategies were used is presented.</li> <li>• The presentation includes thoughtful reflection on what went well and modifications / adaptations to be made in the future.</li> <li>• If applicable, examples of student work or student participation is shared.</li> </ul>	
15-17	<p>Competent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The final project represents application and understanding of differentiation strategies within a classroom.</li> <li>• The presentation includes thoughtful reflection on what went well and differentiation modifications / adaptations to be made in the future.</li> </ul>	
12-14	<p>Minimal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The final project represents application of differentiation strategies within a classroom.</li> <li>• The presentation and project are lacking in clarity and understanding of differentiation practices.</li> </ul>	
0-11	<p>Unsatisfactory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The final project does not represent application or understanding of differentiation strategies.</li> <li>• The final project seems incomplete.</li> </ul>	