

**George Mason University**  
**College of Education and Human Development**  
**Program: Elementary Education**

**EDCI 545 – Assessment and Differentiation**

Spring 2014, Wednesdays 7:20-10:00 PM, Thompson 1020	3 Credit Hours, Sec. 001
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### **Course Description**

This course provides a research-based introduction to differentiated instruction for children in grades K-6. The emphasis in this course is on the assessment of learners and differentiation of instruction to meet the needs of all learners. *Prerequisites: Admission to the program, and taken in program sequence.*

### **Relationship to Program Goals and Professional Organizations**

This course addresses the following GSE priorities: research-based practice and diversity. It is designed as an integral component of the new Elementary Program for teachers of grades K-6, and meets new state and national guidelines and standards including Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) and International Society for Technology in Education, (ISTE). This course will build closely upon themes addressed throughout the program.

### **Student 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 Delivery**

This course includes multiple instructional strategies. Individual session formats will vary and may include lecture, small group/ large group discussion, hands-on, interactive work, student presentations, and cooperative learning. Approximately 40% of the course will be online.

### **STANDARDS**

#### **INTASC**

Standard #2: Learning Differences. The teacher uses understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards.

Standard #7: Planning for Instruction. The teacher plans instruction that supports every student in meeting rigorous learning goals by drawing upon knowledge of content areas, curriculum, cross-disciplinary skills, and pedagogy, as well as knowledge of learners and the community context.

Standard #6: Assessment. The teacher understands and uses multiple methods of assessment to engage learners in their own growth, to monitor learner progress, and to guide the teacher's and learner's decision making.

#### **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.  
develop technology-enriched learning environments that enable all students to pursue
- b. 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

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

Burke, K. (2009). *How to assess authentic learning* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

**Required Articles are posted in MyMason for each online module.**

### Assignments:

**ALL ASSIGNMENTS SHOULD BE SUBMITTED ELECTRONICLY BY THE DUE DATE.** Assignments that contain multiple grammar and spelling errors and/or typos will be returned, without grading, to be edited by the student.

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).

### ***Readings, Class Participation, and Online Activities (20 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 face-to-face week

you are expected to be in class and to have read and completed any assigned tasks. You will also engage in online discussions with your PLC. If you are not prepared, it affects not just your own learning, but that of your peers.

***Student Learning Profiles (15 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 to learn about your students.

	<b>Academically</b>	<b>Personally</b>	<b>Socially</b>
<b>From family</b>			
<b>From student</b>			
<b>From self</b>			

1. Copy the chart. In the corresponding boxes, write a brief description of each strategy utilized and the kinds of information learned from it. This only needs to be filled out once if the same strategies are used for each student. See example in the Getting to Know Your Students Module.
2. Create an at-a-glance sheet for each student that reports the information that you learned (template provided online). You will use this information to create groups and plan lessons that consider learning profile, interest, and/or readiness to differentiate the content, process, and/or product for your learners (in other words, you will use this for your PBA#1). If you know your second placement, see if you can gather this information on those students. For those not in a classroom this semester, see Dr. Sprague for an alternative assignment.

***Assessment and Differentiation in Praxis (15 pts) (ongoing)***

Throughout the course of the semester you will conduct a series of mini-inquiries where you will work to differentiate instruction and assessment 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 planning and teaching. You will assess its effects on student learning and share your progress with your peers. When you come to class each week, bring your responses to the following:

- 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 (you can leave #4 blank until after conversing with peers):

***PBA #1: Planning for Differentiated Instruction (30 pts)***

Using the skills in assessment and differentiation that you have developed, you will create a formal lesson plan sequence that details 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, learning standards, grouping methods, activities, and detailed evaluation methods. You will include appropriate references justifying your decisions throughout the plan. One of the lessons should include the integration of technology. A lesson plan template will be provided in class. You will receive feedback from your instructor as well as work with a critical

friend to collaboratively refine your lesson sequence. You will then implement the sequence and collect data of student learning for analysis. A detailed description and rubric for evaluation of this task is included at the end of the syllabus. **Submit the final version to TaskStream at <https://www1.taskstream.com/>.**

***PBA #2: Assessing Student Learning (20 pts)***

Using the skills in assessment that you have developed, you will analyze the student learning data collected from your lesson sequence. You will be expected to examine it to such a level that you are able to identify areas of strength and weakness for individual students while also identifying learning trends across the classroom. A detailed description and rubric for evaluation of this task is included at the end of the syllabus. **Submit the final version to TaskStream at <https://www1.taskstream.com/>.**

**TASKSTREAM REQUIREMENTS**

Every student registered for any Elementary Education course with a required performance-based assessment (will be designated as such in the syllabus) is required to submit this assessment (***PBA #1: Planning for Differentiated and PBA #2: Assessing Student Learning***) to TaskStream (regardless of whether a course is an elective, a onetime course or part of an undergraduate minor). Evaluation of your performance-based assessment will also be provided using TaskStream. Failure to submit the assessment to TaskStream will result in the course instructor reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN). Unless this grade is changed upon completion of the required TaskStream submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester.

**Grading Scale**

A = 94-100%  
B = 80-86%

A- = 90-93%  
B- = 77-79%

B+ = 87-89%  
C = 70-76%

## **COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS:**

### **GMU POLICIES AND RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS**

- a. Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/>].
- b. Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>].
- c. 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.
- d. 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/>].
- e. 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/>].
- f. Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- g. 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. [See <http://cehd.gmu.edu/assets/docs/cehd/Dispositions%20for%20a%20Career%20Educator.pdf>]

### **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/>

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website [See <http://gse.gmu.edu/>].

### **PBA Task Description 1: Planning**

Create a series of **three** lessons that effectively differentiate instruction for various groups of students in a classroom. You will design these lessons to promote equity in learning opportunities for all students. This means that intentional decisions will need to be made to consider student readiness, interests, and learning profiles. You will need to consider how content, process, and/or products of the lesson will be different for different groups of students depending on their strengths.

In order to plan effective instruction, in this assignment - three consecutive lesson plans, you will need to know students academically, personally, and socially. If you are not currently teaching full-time, a composite profile representing a diverse third grade classroom will be provided to you. If you are a practicing teacher or currently in your internship, you will receive blank student profiles to complete with your own classroom data. In each case, composites will include a variety of information for each student that will aid you in making instructional decisions. Using the composite data, you will prepare lesson plans that support the learning of all students by effectively differentiating instruction to target students' strengths to meet their needs\*. For each part of your lesson plan, you will describe in detail the rationale for designing your lesson plan using relevant course readings and research literature (e.g., literature in Differentiated Instruction, assessment, effective literacy instruction, effective technology integration, and effective instruction for specific student groups) to support your decisions.

This task will engage you in a feedback cycle of professional development. For these purposes, your professional development feedback cycle will involve formative reviews of your first set of lesson plans to support your final submission. After the submission of your lesson design, you will receive feedback from your instructor and your peers related to your utilization of learning theory, differentiation in practice, and assessment. It is expected that after receiving feedback on your lesson plans, you will use the feedback to drive the construction of your final lesson plans. Because this assignment involves formative assessments, your final grade for the task will be earned after you create your **second set of lesson plans**.

Each lesson will have its own objectives for student learning, but all lessons need to be conceptually connected by a large overarching question (e.g., "How do good readers make sense of expository text?"). It is expected that the lessons act as the beginning to a larger "unit" of study.

Lesson plans should contain all sections of the elementary program lesson plan template provided to you.

\*Assignment notes:

- For students who are currently teaching full time, the lesson series will need to be an actual series that you will be teaching in your curriculum towards the end of the semester.
- For your student profiles, if you teach multiple blocks of students, choose the one to whom you will teach your sequence. (Your student profiles must be from the class for whom you plan your lessons.)

**PBA Task Description 2: Assessing**

\*Note this task may or may not be directly related to the planning from Part I.

Given an assessment of student learning, you will analyze student performance related to a lesson's objectives and sub-objectives. You will go beyond merely attending to percentage correct/incorrect of the assignment and instead will "break the assessment down" to its skills and subskills.

First, you will evaluate what the student demonstrated that he/she knew or did not know within each objective. Second, you will pose implications for further instruction based on your analysis.

PBA Task 1 Rubric: Planning

Criteria	Exceeds Requirements (A) 5 Points	Meets Requirements (A-, B+, B) 2-4 Points	Needs Improvement (C and below) 0-1 Points	Weight
Objectives	<p>There is a clear overarching conceptual question for the three plans. The objectives clearly state what students will do and learn during each lesson. The objectives clearly state the content/essential understandings of the lesson sequence and individual lessons. The objectives target appropriate higher order and real life learning opportunities. The objectives are tied to state/national standards. As necessary, multiple sub-objectives are stated representing differentiation.</p>	<p>The majority of the objectives state what students will do during each lesson. The majority of the objectives are tied to state/national standards. The majority of the objectives are tied to assessment and it is clear how the learning will be assessed.</p>	<p>No objectives are stated or inappropriate objectives are used. Objectives are not distinguishable from state/national standards. Few of the objectives are tied to the assessment. It is not clear how learning will be assessed.</p>	.05
Materials	<p>A list of materials necessary for each lesson is included. Copies of the materials are included as possible. A variety of materials are used in each lesson (manipulatives, technology, etc.). Appropriate materials are selected for the concepts being taught. Worksheets, if used, are generally used in ways that promote higher order thinking. Materials are differentiated as appropriate.</p>	<p>A partial list of necessary materials is provided. A copy of some of the materials is provided. There is a lack of variety of materials used. Most of the materials are appropriate for the concepts being taught, but some need more modifications.</p>	<p>No list of materials is provided or materials chosen are not appropriate for the concepts being taught. The materials chosen do not reflect differentiation. The lessons <i>rely on</i> worksheets. Materials are not differentiated.</p>	.05
Procedures (includes Technology Integration as appropriate)	<p>The lesson sequence is <i>substantive</i> in length, breadth, and depth. The sequence should be so explicit that a substitute could teach from the plan. Actions are described throughout each lesson (e.g., lesson does not merely state “review lesson from yesterday” but describes HOW you plan to review and WHAT content you plan to review)</p> <p>For each lesson:</p> <p>The procedures thoroughly and completely outline what the</p>	<p>The lesson sequence is <i>adequate</i> in length, breadth, and depth. The majority of the procedures outline what the teacher will do during the lessons, but parts are vague and unclear. The majority of the procedures outline what students will do during the lessons, but parts are vague and unclear. Estimated times are provided, but seem unreasonable (either too short or too long). There is a lack of teacher questions. The procedures include either an introduction for activating</p>	<p>The lesson sequence is not adequate in length, breadth, or depth. It is not clear what the teacher will do during the lessons. It is not clear what the students will do during the lessons. Estimated times are not provided. No questions or content the teacher uses during the lessons are included in the procedures. The procedures do not include an introduction for activating prior knowledge or a plan for closing the lessons and checking for understanding. There are many omissions of key lesson</p>	.2

	<p>teacher will do during the lessons: How will you present and guide the lesson?</p> <p>The procedures thoroughly outline what the students will do during the lesson. Estimated times for each phase are provided.</p> <p>Important questions to ask during the lesson are included. The procedures include an introduction for surfacing and activating prior knowledge. The procedures include a plan for closing the unit and checking for understanding.</p> <p>If you have different groups doing different activities, each group's activity is clearly explained.</p>	<p>prior knowledge or a plan for closing the lessons and checking for understanding, but not both. There is a general lack of specificity across the lessons.</p>	<p>components across the lessons.</p>	
Assessment	<p>The assessment methods directly relate to the objectives. A variety of formal <i>and</i> informal assessments are described for before, during, and after the lesson. The assessment is differentiated as necessary. Assessment descriptions include exactly how each method will contribute to student learning evidence for your (1) Conceptual question and (2) your lesson specific measurable learning objectives.</p>	<p>A variety of formal <i>and</i> informal assessments are listed in each lesson, but descriptions are vague and may only vaguely tie to lesson objectives. The assessment is differentiated as necessary. Learning of each and all students is clearly able to be demonstrated by the methods selected.</p>	<p>Formal <i>or</i> informal assessments are listed in each lesson. Descriptions may not be included or be vague. The assessment is not differentiated as necessary. It is not clear what the students will do to demonstrate their understanding in the lessons.</p>	.3
Differentiation	<p>Identifies and then explains how the lesson is organized to address the interests, readiness, and/or learning profiles of the students. Provides a strong rationale for differentiation decisions that provides clear reference to literature.</p> <p>Names and then explains how the features of the lesson address the 2nd means of differentiation (content, process, and/or product). Provides a strong rationale for differentiation decisions that provides clear reference to</p>	<p>Identifies and then explains how the lesson is organized to address the interests, readiness, and/or learning profiles of the students. Provides an adequate rationale for differentiation decisions that provides some, but limited, reference to literature.</p> <p>Names and then explains how the features of the lesson address the 2nd means of differentiation (content, process, and/or product). Provides an adequate rationale for differentiation decisions</p>	<p>Identifies but does not explain how the lesson is organized to address the interests, readiness, and/or learning profiles of the students. Provides no, or <i>very</i> weak, rationale for differentiation decisions that provides no reference to literature.</p> <p>Identifies but does not explain how the features of the lesson address the 2nd means of differentiation (content, process, and/or product). Provides no, or <i>very</i> weak, rationale for differentiation</p>	.35

	<p>literature.</p> <p>Differentiation described here is evident throughout procedures.</p>	<p>that provides some, but limited, reference to literature.</p> <p>Differentiation described here is somewhat evident throughout procedures.</p>	<p>decisions that provides no reference to literature.</p> <p>May confuse differentiation with accommodations.</p> <p>Differentiation described here is not evident throughout procedures.</p>	
Accommodations	<p>Identifies and describes students who need individualized special support to be successful during instruction. Lists the specific accommodations planned for each of these unique learners, whether they need special accommodations for a learning disability, for language development, for attention problems, for behavioral support, for giftedness, etc. It is clear from the description that accommodations are distinct from the differentiated instruction planned in the lessons.</p>	<p>Identifies and vaguely describes students who need individualized special support to be successful during instruction. Lists the specific accommodations planned for each of these unique learners. It is clear from the description that accommodations are distinct from the differentiated instruction planned in the lessons.</p>	<p>Does not identify or describe students who need individualized special support to be successful during instruction. Does not list the specific accommodations planned for each of these unique learners. It is <i>not</i> clear from the description that accommodations are distinct from the differentiated instruction planned in the lessons.</p>	.05

PBA Task 2 Rubric: Assessing

Criteria	Exceeds Requirements (A) 5 Points	Meets Requirements (A-, B+, B) 2-4 Points	Needs Improvement (C and below) 0-1 Point	Weight
Analysis of learning	Analyzes each piece of student learning evidence. The analysis goes beyond identification of correct/incorrect. Student learning is analyzed in terms of skills and sub-skills. The analysis identifies patterns and trends within and among students. The data is clearly analyzed in terms of instructional objectives.	Analyzes each piece of student learning evidence. The analysis goes beyond identification of correct/incorrect but student learning is only weakly analyzed in terms of skills and sub-skills. The analysis is weak in identification of patterns and trends within and among students. The data is only vaguely analyzed in terms of instructional objectives.	Does not analyze each piece of student learning evidence. The analysis does not go beyond identification of correct/incorrect. The analysis is missing identification of patterns and trends within and among students. The data is not analyzed in terms of instructional objectives.	2
Implications for learning and instruction	Implications for instruction are thoroughly discussed. The implications are explicitly tied to the learning analysis. Implications include both student learning implications and instructional implications. If the lesson was taught, how differentiation decisions did/did not impact learners is explored.	Implications for instruction are vaguely discussed. The implications are somewhat tied to the learning analysis. Implications include either student learning implications <i>or</i> instructional implications. If the lesson was taught, how differentiation decisions did/did not impact learners is somewhat explored.	Implications for instruction are not discussed, or are discussed very limitedly. If the lesson was taught, how differentiation decisions did/did not impact learners is not, or is only very limitedly, explored.	2

## Course Schedule:

Date	Topics/Learning Experiences	Assignments
1/22 Face-to-Face	Introduction to differentiated instruction Principles of differentiated instruction Examining current practice Knowing your learners	Reading: Tomlinson Ch. 1-3
1/29 Online	Module: Getting to Know Your Students	Reading: Complete readings in assigned module.
2/5 Face-to-Face	Essentials of a differentiated instruction learning environment The learner-centered classroom <b>Bring mini inquiry</b>	Reading: Tomlinson Ch.4- 6 Reading: Burke Introduction and Ch. 1
2/12 Online	Module: Understanding Differentiation	Reading: Complete readings in assigned module.
2/19 Face-to-Face	Differentiating Content Meeting student needs with varied depth and complexity of content	Reading: Tomlinson Ch. 7- 10 Reading: Burke Ch. 2
2/26 Online	Module: Implementing Differentiation	Reading: Complete readings in assigned module.
3/5 Face-to-Face	Differentiating Process and Product Flexible grouping, varying pace, interest-based Learning <b>Bring a lesson plan you're going to teach</b> <b>Bring mini inquiry</b>	Reading: Tomlinson Ch. 11 -12 Begin working on student profiles
3/12	<b>No Class – GMU Spring Break</b>	
3/19 Face-to-Face	Exploring various differentiation strategies. Practicing differentiated planning  Introduction to Assessment <b>Bring a lesson plan you've already planned</b> <b>Bring mini inquiry</b>	Reading: Tomlinson Ch. 13 -14 Reading: Burke Ch, 3 and 8
3/26 Online	Module: Special Needs and ESL Students <b>Student Learning Profiles Due</b>	Reading: Complete readings in assigned module.
4/2 Online	Module: Assessment for Learning <b>Lesson Plan 1 Due</b>	Reading: Complete readings in assigned module.
4/9 Face-to-Face	Defining assessment Effective and equitable assessment Before and during-lesson assessment Connecting Assessment and Instruction <b>In-class Activity: Scaffolding Assignments</b> <b>Bring mini inquiry</b>	Reading: Burke Ch. 4, 5, and 9
4/16	<b>NO Class – SPRING BREAK for Public Schools</b>	Reading: Burke Ch. 6 and 7
4/23	Performance Assessments	Reading: Complete readings in

<b>Online</b>		assigned module.
<b>4/30 Face- to- Face</b>	Assessment Evidence Understanding and Selecting Assessment Tasks Designing Assessment Tasks <b>In-Class Activity; Creating Effective Rubrics</b> <b>PBA #1: Lesson Plan 2 Due, submit to Taskstream</b> <b>Bring mini inquiry</b> <b>Teach Lesson Sequence by this date and bring learning data to class</b>	
<b>5/7 Face- to- Face</b>	Linking Differentiation and Assessment Putting it all together <b>PBA #2: Assessment Analysis Due</b>	