

Differentiated Instruction for Today's Classroom® Online

Differentiated Instruction for Today's Classroom Online provides opportunities for educators to acquire key knowledge and skills to implement differentiated instruction successfully in their classrooms. After gaining expertise making practical and flexible instructional decisions based on their own diverse students' learning needs, participants will create a standards-based learning environment where all students can thrive and achieve.

To the right are the key areas of focus for the eight-week online asynchronous course. For more information, refer to the syllabus, which provides a detailed outline of the course material as well as a bibliography of research on which the course is based.

In this course, participants will

- ▶ Identify and explain the core principles of DI and how these principles inform and guide all aspects of DI implementation.
- ▶ Implement and evaluate the effectiveness of DI classroom management strategies and procedures.
- ▶ Use specific DI instructional strategies to flexibly differentiate before and during implementation of DI lessons.
- ▶ Create a tiered lesson plan that applies a range of DI instructional strategies supporting lesson content, processes, and/or products based on the readiness, interests, and/or learning profiles of specific students.
- ▶ Implement formal and informal assessment tools to collect data on the readiness, interests, and learning profiles of students.
- ▶ Design plans to support the development of thirteen skills of self-directed learners.

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Course Description

Differentiated Instruction for Today's Classroom is a Performance Learning Systems® online course that equips experienced and beginning educators with the essential knowledge and skills they need to implement differentiated instruction (DI) successfully in their own classrooms. As a widely respected, research-based instructional approach, DI provides teachers with effective, manageable strategies for meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse student population within the context of today's challenging standards-based curriculum. In a highly interactive learning environment that models the DI principles and processes, class members will gain expertise in understanding and implementing a broad range of strategies associated with three essential, distinguishing components of DI: first, the teacher's role as guide and facilitator in a classroom environment specifically designed to support self-directed student learning and teacher-student collaboration; second, the interdependent nature of assessment and instruction in a DI classroom; and third, the implementation of specific instructional strategies to adapt the curriculum content, processes (activities), and products to provide students with entry points to learning that match their readiness, interests, and/or learning profiles.

Course Outcomes

Upon completion of this class, the learner is expected to be able to:

1. Discuss and apply current, validated research underlying the theory, principles, and practices of differentiated instruction (DI).
2. Discuss the spectrum of learner variance that teachers in today's classrooms must address.
3. Identify and explain the core principles of DI and the ways in which these principles inform and guide all aspects of DI implementation.
4. Identify and explain the role of a DI teacher as facilitator and guide in the learner-centered environment of a differentiated classroom.
5. Evaluate personal growth in the skills associated with effective DI teachers.
6. Identify, explain, implement, and evaluate DI classroom-management strategies and procedures that increase student success in a DI learning environment.
7. Identify, explain, and implement plans to support the development of the 13 skills of self-directed learners in his or her classroom.
8. Analyze the ways in which the FRAME-CAB principles, the DI teacher's role, DI classroom-management basics, and student self-directed learning work together to create the essential elements of the DI learning environment.
9. Discuss the interdependent relationship between assessment and instruction in a DI learning environment.
10. Explain how assessment in a DI classroom is assessment *for* learning.
11. Use formal and informal assessment tools to collect data on the readiness, interests, and learning profiles of his or her students as the basis for differentiation before and during instruction.
12. Use the Model for Differentiated Instruction to create units of study based on standards and major assessment K-U-Dos (what a student *knows*, *understands*, and can *do*).

13. Create lessons that focus on the core knowledge and skills identified through the planning process outlined in the Model for Differentiated Instruction.
14. Experience, evaluate, and apply a range of DI instructional strategies designed to support DI lesson content, processes, and/or products, based on the readiness, interests, and/or learning profiles of specific students in his or her classroom.
15. Use specific DI instructional strategies to balance choice and self-directedness; flexibly differentiate before and during implementation of DI lessons; support the development of self-directedness in students; orchestrate fully differentiated lessons for two or more groups of students at the same time; provide individualized instruction for specific students in the context of the DI learning environment.
16. Experience, evaluate, and apply a range of flexible DI grouping strategies for whole-class, small-group, and individualized learning experiences during a DI lesson in his or her classroom.
17. Generalize course content to reflect how the multicultural, special-needs and gifted, and other diverse populations within classrooms have their needs met by the application of the skills, strategies, and knowledge gained in this course.
18. Reflect continuously on personal expertise, using the knowledge and skills associated with this course, and use these insights actively as the basis for ongoing professional growth.
19. Work collaboratively to share knowledge, skills, and experiences; refine understanding of content; give and receive feedback; and improve expertise.

Required Text

Tomlinson, C. A. (2001). *How to differentiate instruction in mixed-ability classrooms* (2nd ed). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Instructors and learners will also use instructor-generated materials, learner-generated materials, and Web-based resources to facilitate learning.

Topical Outline

Introduction to Differentiated Instruction

List of Concepts

How differentiated instruction (DI) is a means of meeting the learning needs of today's diverse student population; what DI is and is not; initial self-assessment on the proficiencies participants will achieve in the course; the Course Conceptual Framework; eight principles of differentiated instruction (FRAME-CAB); DI classroom scenarios demonstrating the FRAME-CAB principles in action; the learner-centered classroom; the collaborative nature of the teacher-student relationship in a DI classroom; characteristics of a DI teacher as facilitator and collaborator; the Agenda and Anchor strategies as tools for effective classroom management in a DI classroom

Connecting Assessment and Instruction

The interconnected nature of assessment and instruction in a DI classroom; the difference between assessment of learning and assessment for learning; three kinds of information DI teachers need to know about their students: readiness, interests, and learning-profile preferences; assessments DI teachers can use to obtain these three types of student data; combining questioning skills based on Bloom’s Taxonomy with a range of quick assessment tools

A Standards-Based Model for Differentiating Instruction

The K-U-Dos acronym (Know, Understand, Do) and its relationship to standards-based instruction; how differentiation is connected to essential knowledge; a model for connecting K-U-Dos from standards and major assessments to create K-U-Dos-based units as the basis for differentiation of content, processes, and products of the teacher’s curriculum; Zone of Proximal Development and scaffolding as tools for providing appropriate challenge

Differentiated-Instruction Learning Environment

A closer look at the eight FRAME-CAB principles in action; how FRAME-CAB principles inform implementation of DI; uses of DI strategies for specific purposes of differentiating content, processes, and products of instruction based on students’ readiness, interests, and learning-profile preferences (the DI³ model); the relationship between choice, responsibility, and motivation; a framework for understanding DI instructional strategies, using variables of choice and self-directedness (the Success Ladder); DI instructional strategies with moderate levels of choice and moderate requirements for self-directedness (Agendas, Choice Boards, Tic-Tac-Toe Boards, and Jigsaws); how instructional design, such as using choice-based strategies, can be used to motivate student learning; addressing the needs of diverse student subgroups (Part 1): challenges of English language learners in a traditional classroom; research-based guidelines DI teachers can use to meet their needs in a mixed-ability classroom

Creating Instructional Flexibility, Using Differentiated-Instruction Strategies

DI strategies with high instructional flexibility; distinguishing characteristics of and differences between two flexible DI strategies for differentiating content and processes (centers and stations); Problem-Based Learning applications of the centers and stations strategies for the purposes of differentiation; strategies for individualized learning; addressing the needs of diverse student subgroups (Part 2): techniques for scaffolding differentiated-learning materials and activities for students with learning disabilities

Reinforcing Student Self-Directedness

DI strategies to reinforce student self-directedness; role-based DI instructional strategies that support the development of student self-directedness (RAFT); DI instructional strategies for investigation and discovery that support the development of student self-directedness (Group Investigation, I-Search); myths and truths about gifted learners; how to reach and teach gifted learners in a mixed-ability classroom; a DI strategy to accommodate the needs and abilities of gifted or high-ability learners (Curriculum Compacting); using the Learning Contract strategy to orchestrate individualized learning

Tiered Instruction

The Tiered Instruction strategy and its essential nature as the “meat and potatoes” of DI strategies; criteria for creating tiered lessons; analysis of prepared DI tiered lessons using specific criteria; a planning process that helps DI teachers build tiered lessons (Decision Points); building a tiered lesson based on specific K-U-Dos and pre-assessed student needs; refining tiered lessons

Preparing for DI Implementation

Preparing for full implementation; possible issues DI teachers will confront when they begin to implement DI in their own classrooms; how to prepare students for full implementation of DI; distinguishing between what is *fair* and what is *equal*; grading *for* learning in a DI classroom; grading issues in a DI classroom; recommendations and resources from experienced DI teachers; major issues that parents may have with the implementation of DI; position statements in response to major issues

Course Assessments and Links to Course Outcomes

Throughout the course, the learner will be assessed and evaluated on the completion of the following assessments. Learning activities include large- and small-group discussions and assessments, for a total of 933 points.

| Modules | Topics of Modules | Points | Correlations With Course Outcomes |
|--------------|---|------------|---|
| Module 1: | Introduction to Differentiated Instruction | 117 | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 17, 18, 19 |
| Module 2: | Connecting Assessment and Instruction | 100 | 1, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, 18, 19 |
| Module 3: | A Standards-Based Model for Differentiated Instruction | 119 | 1, 3, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 19 |
| Module 4: | DI Learning Environment | 123 | 1, 3, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 |
| Module 5: | Creating Instructional Flexibility, Using DI Strategies | 103 | 1, 3, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 |
| Module 6: | Reinforcing Student Self-Directedness | 139 | 1, 3, 7, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 |
| Module 7: | Tiered Instruction | 59 | 1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 |
| Module 8: | Preparing for DI Implementation | 173 | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 |
| Total | | 933 | |

Criteria specific to each assessment will be explained in conjunction with the instructional activities.

Instructional Methodology

The instructional methodology of this course focuses on developing, enhancing, and improving the instructional expertise and pedagogical knowledge base of practicing educators. Strategies include presentation of new content through online readings, active construction of knowledge through practice and problem solving, collaborative group work, personal reflection, structured small-group or whole-class discussion, analysis of assigned reading, and the application of course content and skills to participant's individual grade level, subject area(s), and classroom.

Grading Scale

The course facilitator will post the grading scale.

Performance Learning Systems' Late Policy

There will be a 10% deduction of points per day for all posts and submitted assignments which are late. Replies posted after the due date will earn no points. In rare cases, partially or poorly completed assignments may be resubmitted for partial credit at the discretion of the instructor. The following exceptions apply:

- If a participant is sick/hospitalized or has a death in the family, the timing of makeup work may be arranged with the course facilitator. No points will be deducted if the work is completed according to the agreement.

- If a participant is on vacation/traveling/etc., the participant must contact the course facilitator ahead of time to avoid a penalty. This type of absence may occur only once during a course. All posts should be submitted for the missed module before leaving; replies may be completed according to agreed-upon timing when the participant returns.
- If a participant has difficulty completing everything in a week, an extension can be granted if the participant contacts the facilitator during the week (not at the last minute).

Performance Learning Systems' Participant Drop Policy

- Participants are eligible to receive a refund if they attend class for one week or less. This means participants must withdraw by the end of Module 1 to receive a refund.
- Refunds of the balance of tuition paid will be given, minus the \$50 deposit.

Performance Learning Systems' Academic Integrity Policy

Performance Learning Systems expects absolute academic honesty and integrity from every course participant. The specific Academic Integrity and Honor Code policies of our partner colleges and universities are embraced and enforced by PLS instructors. The following are considered to be serious violations:

- Plagiarism: the use of another's ideas, data, or words without proper acknowledgment.
- Fabrication: the use of invented information or the falsification of research or other findings with the intent to deceive.
- Collusion: improper collaboration with another in preparing assignments or projects.
- Cheating: an act of deception by which a student misrepresents that he or she has mastered information on an academic exercise that he or she has not mastered.
- Academic Misconduct: tampering with grades, or taking part in obtaining or distributing any part of student work that is not his or her own.

Violation(s) or suspected violation(s) will be investigated and pursued according to specific college/university procedures.

Identity Authentication

The college/university, Performance Learning Systems (PLS), and students share a joint responsibility to ensure that each student's contribution in an online course activity comes from that student alone. For the student, this responsibility has two parts:

1. Students are responsible for positively ensuring that every contribution to an online course created with the students' computer account is made by the student alone. Contributions covered under this policy include: written assignments; quiz and exam submissions; discussion forum postings; live participation in text-based chat sessions, phone conferences, and videoconferences. If a student allows another person to write or make any kind of submission to an online activity in the student's name, then this constitutes cheating and will be treated as a violation of academic honesty.
2. Students are responsible for ensuring the integrity of their computer account security by following the actions required of them by the PLS Acceptable Use Policy. These actions include keeping passcodes private, updating passcodes

Course Evaluation

The evaluation of learner work will be based on the defined criteria for learner assessments. The criteria for learner assessments will be outlined for students prior to instructional activities and engagement with student learning targets (outcomes). Grading is based solely on the evaluation of student learning targets and defined criteria for learner assessments.

Formative assessment of learning outcomes is conducted throughout the course, using a variety of means that include the following: completion of assessments; constructive contributions to class discussions (whole-class as well as small-group); sharing of valuable, pertinent, and/or applicable ideas and experiences; and active participation in online interactions. It is expected that each participant will contribute to the academic quality of the course.

Summative assessment includes the completion of weekly learning activities and assignments for which the participant will need to synthesize class content, apply it to his or her own practice, and complete a plan for implementing the major components of content and skill acquired during the course.

Course Outcome Correlations With INTASC Standards for Teachers

| | Course Outcomes |
|---|---|
| Standard 1: Subject Matter The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and can create learning experiences that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful for students. | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 |
| Standard 2: Student Learning The teacher understands how children and youth learn and develop, and can provide learning opportunities that support their intellectual, social and personal development. | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 |
| Standard 3: Diverse Learners The teacher understands how students differ in their approaches to learning and creates instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners. | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 15, 17 |
| Standard 4: Instructional Strategies The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage students' development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills. | 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 |
| Standard 5: Learning Environment The teacher uses an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation. | 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 |
| Standard 6: Communication The teacher uses knowledge of effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom. | 4, 8, 15 |
| Standard 7: Planning Instruction The teacher plans and manages instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the community, and curriculum goals. | 6, 7, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17 |
| Standard 8: Assessment The teacher understands and uses formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure the continuous intellectual, social and physical development of the learner. | 9, 10, 11 |
| Standard 9: Reflection and Professional Development The teacher is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of her/his choices and actions on others (students, parents, and other professionals in the learning community) and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally. | 5, 18, 19 |
| Standard 10: Collaboration, Ethics, and Relationships The teacher fosters relationships with school colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support students' learning and well-being. | 17, 18, 19 |

The Interstate New Teacher Assessment and the Support for Consortium (INTASC) standards were developed by the Council of the Chief State School Officers and member states. Copies may be downloaded from the Council's website at <http://www.ccsso.org>.

© Council of Chief State School Officers. (1992) Model standards for beginning teacher licensing, assessment, and development: A resource for state dialogue. Washington, DC: Author. <http://www.ccsso.org/content/pdfs/corestrd.pdf>.

Course Outcome Correlations With National Board for Professional Teaching (NBPTS) Propositions and Standards

| Proposition 1: Teachers are Committed to Students and Their Learning. | Course Outcomes |
|--|---|
| NBCTs are dedicated to making knowledge accessible to all students. They believe all students can learn. | 1, 2, 3, 4 |
| They treat students equitably. They recognize the individual differences that distinguish their students from one another and they take account for these differences in their practice. | 1, 2, 3, 4, 17 |
| NBCTs understand how students develop and learn. | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 |
| They respect the cultural and family differences students bring to their classroom. | 17 |
| They are concerned with their students' self-concept, their motivation and the effects of learning on peer relationships. | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 |
| NBCTs are also concerned with the development of character and civic responsibility. | 18, 19 |
| | |
| Proposition 2: Teachers Know the Subjects They Teach and How to Teach Those Subjects to Students. | |
| NBCTs have mastery over the subject(s) they teach. They have a deep understanding of the history, structure and real-world applications of the subject. | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 18, 19 |
| They have skill and experience in teaching it, and they are very familiar with the skills gaps and preconceptions students may bring to the subject. | 8, 14, 15, 16 |
| They are able to use diverse instructional strategies to teach for understanding. | 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 |
| | |
| Proposition 3: Teachers are Responsible for Managing and Monitoring Student Learning. | |
| NBCTs deliver effective instruction. They move fluently through a range of instructional techniques, keeping students motivated, engaged and focused. | 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 |
| They know how to engage students to ensure a disciplined learning environment, and how to organize instruction to meet instructional goals. | 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 17 |
| NBCTs know how to assess the progress of individual students as well as the class as a whole. | 9, 10, 11, 12 |
| They use multiple methods for measuring student growth and understanding, and they can clearly explain student performance to parents. | 9, 10, 11, 12 |
| | |
| Proposition 4: Teachers Think Systematically about Their Practice and Learn from Experience. | |
| NBCTs model what it means to be an educated person – they read, they question, they create and they are willing to try new things. | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 18, 19 |
| They are familiar with learning theories and instructional strategies and stay abreast of current issues in American education. | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 |
| They critically examine their practice on a regular basis to deepen knowledge, expand their repertoire of skills, and incorporate new findings into their practice. | 5, 18 |

Proposition 5: Teachers are Members of Learning Communities.

| | |
|--|---------------|
| NBCTs collaborate with others to improve student learning. | 18, 19 |
| They are leaders and actively know how to seek and build partnerships with community groups and businesses. | 18, 19 |
| They work with other professionals on instructional policy, curriculum development and staff development. | 18, 19 |
| They can evaluate school progress and the allocation of resources in order to meet state and local education objectives. | 18, 19 |
| They know how to work collaboratively with parents to engage them productively in the work of the school. | 18, 19 |

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