Excluding materials for purchase, syllabus information may be subject to change.

Course and Instructor Information

Course Title: Strategies for Differentiating the Grade Level Curriculum  
Credits: 3  
Format: online, June 8 – July 10, 2020  
Prerequisites: N/A  
Professor: Catherine Little

Email: catherine.little@uconn.edu  
Telephone: 860-486-2754  
Office Hours/Availability: Office hours by appointment; available regularly by email

Course Materials

Required course materials should be obtained by or during the first week of class.  
Texts are available through a local or online bookstore of your choice. The UConn Bookstore ([https://uconn.bncollege.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/BNCBHomePage?storeId=88191&catalogId=10001&languageId=-1](https://uconn.bncollege.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/BNCBHomePage?storeId=88191&catalogId=10001&languageId=-1)) carries the required text(s), which can be shipped (shipping fees will apply).

Required Materials:

Additional course readings and media are available within HuskyCT, through either an Internet link or Library Resources

Course Description

Course Description from Course Catalog:

Instructional and managerial techniques for use within or between classrooms to address learning differences among students. Strategies for improving academic achievement and success of diverse learners. Current and promising practices, as well as relevant research.

Additional faculty description:

This course will outline instructional and managerial techniques used to address the varied learning needs, strengths, styles, and preferences of students in a classroom. Emphasis will be placed on differentiation strategies that improve student achievement through the use of instructional strategies targeting large groups, small groups, and individuals, with a particular focus on addressing the needs of advanced learners. Historical and current practices will be explored, with review of relevant research.
Course Objectives

The central goal of the course is to prepare students to develop instructional and assessment techniques that are responsive to specific characteristics and needs of different students in the classroom. Research suggests that currently the majority of teachers make few, if any, changes in the grade level curriculum to address individual levels of achievement, learning rate, learning styles, or talent areas, particularly to address the needs of advanced learners. Research also suggests that modifications are implemented less effectively than they could be, resulting in minimal changes in student achievement and self-esteem. For these reasons, the following instructional objectives will guide the course structure and content.

As a result of this course, participants should be able to…

- Describe and justify key principles of differentiation.
- Identify and use varied tools to assess the relevant differences among students that influence learning.
- Evaluate their own teaching, or the teaching of others, to identify and analyze present practices with respect to curriculum modification and instructional differentiation.
- Describe promising practices, grounded in the literature, for addressing student differences and increasing academic achievement.
- Align assessment strategies with objectives and classroom activities to document and promote growth in student learning.
- Develop lessons that reflect key differentiation principles and strategies.
- Explain how specific strategies maintain high expectations for all students while responding to documented differences in student need.
- Differentiate content, process, product, and learning environment to address students’ varying readiness levels, prior experiences, and interests/preferences.

Course Outline

Module 1: Conceptions of Differentiation/Understanding Student Differences (Week 1, June 8–14)
Module 2: Common Approaches and Strategies for Differentiation (Week 2, June 15–21)
Module 3: Features of Differentiation and Questions of Assessment (Week 3, June 22–28)
Module 4: Differentiation Issues and Management (Week 4, June 29–July 5)
Module 5: Differentiation Issues, continued (Week 5, July 6–10)

*Note: More detail on expectations for each week will be shared through the HuskyCT site as we progress.

Course Requirements and Grading

Summary of Course Grading:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Components</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion participation/</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion of Weekly Tasks</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Differentiation in the Literature</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Choice Activities</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tiered Assignment</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concluding Issue Paper and Reflection</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion Participation/Completion of Weekly Tasks

A significant percentage of the grade for the course relies on participation in online discussions and related activities. These discussions represent, in part, the time that would be spent in class during a face-to-face class, as well as some of the smaller in-class and homework tasks I might give a regular class for this course.

For each week of the course, several specific discussion areas/questions will be provided, with specific instructions for participation. In general, students are expected to post at least twice per week per discussion “area,” with at least one posting responding to readings or assigned activities and at least one posting responding to another student’s comment. This is to encourage discussion among students.

In general, each week, there will be two or three activities/areas for discussion, with some specific questions and directions. There will be an expectation to complete at least some parts of the week’s tasks early in the week (usually by Wednesday or Thursday) and other parts by the end of the week (usually by Sunday). Each week’s TOTAL discussion and participation will be worth up to 8 points. Your work will be graded according to the following criteria:

8 points = In addition to criteria for 6-7 points, posts introduce new insights or interpretations of the readings, make connections beyond required readings and discussions, and/or introduce questions that result in substantive further discussion. [Please note that this represents an “exceeds expectations” score.]

6-7 points = Most posts and activities completed by due date. Posts demonstrate good understanding of the material and appropriate interpretations of the tasks. Posts make some connections among required readings and/or responses, and/or introduce questions that result in substantive further discussion. [Please note that this represents a “meets expectations” score.]

4-5 points = Most posts and activities completed by due date. Posts demonstrate some understanding of material but may be limited in scope or may demonstrate inaccurate or weak interpretation of the task.

2-3 points = Student contributes minimally to discussion with at least two comments/posts that demonstrate understanding of material, but leaves many assigned posts incomplete.

0-1 point = Student makes limited but insufficient attempt to participate OR student does not contribute to discussion/activities.

PLEASE NOTE: Posts that merely indicate agreement with another student’s comment without furthering the discussion with additional comments or questions will NOT be considered to meet the requirements.

You may post as many times as you like in a given week, and if you exceed the requirements, your best posts toward each week’s requirements will be considered for grading. Considering our short and intensive course, we will be valuing conciseness as well as the other criteria. Posts to be graded should be between 1 and 3 paragraphs in length and should cite any outside readings/sources consulted. (Parenthetical citations with author/year only are sufficient for course readings; any outside readings should be cited fully.)
Differentiation in the Literature (due June 21)

In this assignment, you will explore the educational literature for sources about differentiation. You will locate and read two different articles (beyond required course readings) in professional journals (or other approved sources) that discuss differentiation in general and/or for a specific subject area or student group. You will prepare brief summaries of your sources with a discussion of strengths, weaknesses, and implications for your professional role. {15 points} Specific details of format and content for this assignment appear in assignment detail document to be distributed.

Choice Activities (due June 28)

This assignment involves the development of a set of learning activities that are related to the same learning outcomes but offer students choices based on interests and/or learning preferences. The assignment will include identification of the intended outcomes and assessment procedures as well as the activities themselves. {15 points} NOTE: This assignment may be completed by modifying an existing lesson or by creating a new one; more details on these options in assignment detail document to be distributed.

Tiered Assignment (due July 5)

In this assignment, you will develop a lesson or project for students that incorporates tiering as a method of differentiation. The lesson or project must identify the learning objectives for all students, provide at least three tiers of expectation with analysis of your tiering structure, and describe how students will be evaluated. {15 points} NOTE: This assignment may be completed by modifying an existing lesson or by creating a new one; more details on these options in assignment detail document to be distributed.

Concluding Problem/Reflection (some components due throughout; final reflection due July 10)

During the second half of the course, our discussions will include some exploration, debate, and sharing in small groups around real-world problem simulations. This project will include expectations for participation in the group and for a final brief paper that will outline and express a position on an issue, with brief reflection requiring a synthesis of various readings, discussions, and earlier assignments. {15 points}

Grading Scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>GPA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94-100</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>90-93</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83-86</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>80-82</td>
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<tr>
<td>77-79</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
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<tr>
<td>70-72</td>
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<tr>
<td>60-62</td>
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<tr>
<td>&lt;60</td>
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**Due Dates and Late Policy**

All course due dates are identified in the syllabus and in the assignment detail documents, and reminders will be included in each week’s module. Deadlines are based on Eastern Daylight Time; if you are in a different time zone, please adjust your submittal times accordingly. *The instructor reserves the right to change dates accordingly as the semester progresses. All changes will be communicated in an appropriate manner. No assignment due dates will be moved earlier than indicated in the syllabus.*

Late Policy: All assignments should be submitted on time. If an unexpected conflict presents a problem with submitting on time, it is the student’s responsibility to contact the instructor before the deadline to discuss a plan. Note that in the points outline for discussion participation and weekly activities, response by the due date is included in the score.

**Feedback and Grades**

I will make every effort to provide feedback and grades within a week of each due date. To keep track of your performance in the course, refer to My Grades in HuskyCT.

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**Student Responsibilities and Resources**

As a member of the University of Connecticut student community, you are held to certain standards and academic policies. In addition, there are numerous resources available to help you succeed in your academic work. This section provides a brief overview to important standards, policies, and resources.

**Student Code and Scholarly Integrity**

You are responsible for acting in accordance with the University of Connecticut's Student Code ([https://community.uconn.edu/the-student-code-preamble/](https://community.uconn.edu/the-student-code-preamble/)). Review and become familiar with these expectations. In particular, make sure you have read the policy on Scholarly Integrity in Graduate Education and Research: [https://policy.uconn.edu/2014/04/11/policy-on-scholarly-integrity-in-graduate-education-and-research/](https://policy.uconn.edu/2014/04/11/policy-on-scholarly-integrity-in-graduate-education-and-research/)

**Copyright**

Copyrighted materials within the course are only for the use of students enrolled in the course for purposes associated with this course and may not be retained or further disseminated.

**Additional Resources**

Please refer to resources at the following link for additional University of Connecticut academic policies and procedures: [https://provost.uconn.edu/faculty-and-staff-resources/syllabi-references/](https://provost.uconn.edu/faculty-and-staff-resources/syllabi-references/). Key policies are also referenced below.
Policies and Procedures

Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment and Related Interpersonal Violence
The University is committed to maintaining an environment free of discrimination or discriminatory harassment directed toward any person or group within its community – students, employees, or visitors. Academic and professional excellence can flourish only when each member of our community is assured an atmosphere of mutual respect. All members of the University community are responsible for the maintenance of an academic and work environment in which people are free to learn and work without fear of discrimination or discriminatory harassment. In addition, inappropriate amorous relationships can undermine the University’s mission when those in positions of authority abuse or appear to abuse their authority. To that end, and in accordance with federal and state law, the University prohibits discrimination and discriminatory harassment, as well as inappropriate amorous relationships, and such behavior will be met with appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the University. Additionally, to protect the campus community, all non-confidential University employees (including faculty) are required to report sexual assaults, intimate partner violence, and/or stalking involving a student that they witness or are told about to the Office of Institutional Equity. The University takes all reports with the utmost seriousness. Please be aware that while the information you provide will remain private, it will not be confidential and will be shared with University officials who can help. More information is available at equity.uconn.edu and titleix.uconn.edu.

Statement on Absences from Class Due to Religious Observances and Extra-Curricular Activities
Faculty and instructors are expected to reasonably accommodate individual religious practices unless doing so would result in fundamental alteration of class objectives or undue hardship to the University’s legitimate business purposes. Such accommodations may include rescheduling an exam or giving a make-up exam, allowing a presentation to be made on a different date or assigning the student appropriate make-up work that is intrinsically no more difficult than the original assignment. Faculty and instructors are strongly encouraged to allow students to complete work missed due to participation in extra-curricular activities that enrich their experience, support their scholarly development, and benefit the university community. Examples include participation in scholarly presentations, performing arts, and intercollegiate sports, when the participation is at the request of, or coordinated by, a University official. Students should be encouraged to review the course syllabus at the beginning of the semester for potential conflicts and promptly notify their instructor of any anticipated accommodation needs. Students are responsible for making arrangements in advance to make up missed work.

For conflicts with final examinations, students should contact the Dean of Students Office. Faculty and instructors are also encouraged to respond when the Counseling Program for Intercollegiate Athletes (CPIA) requests student progress reports. This will enable the counselors to give our students appropriate advice.

Center for Students with Disabilities
The University of Connecticut is committed to protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities and assuring that the learning environment is accessible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability or pregnancy, please let me know immediately so that we can discuss options. Students who require accommodations should contact the Center for Students with Disabilities, Wilbur Cross Building Room 204, (860) 486-2020 or http://csd.uconn.edu/.

Office of Emergency Management on Emergency Preparedness
In case of inclement weather, a natural disaster, or a campus emergency, the University communicates through email and text message. Students are encouraged to sign up for alerts through http://alert.uconn.edu. Students should be aware of emergency procedures, and further information is available through the Office of Emergency Management at http://publicsafety.uconn.edu/emergency/.
Evaluation of the Course

Students will be provided an opportunity to evaluate instruction in this course using the University's standard procedures, which are administered by the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness (OIRE, https://oire.uconn.edu).

Additional informal formative surveys may also be administered within the course as an optional evaluation tool.