

# Meeting the Needs of Students Through Differentiated Instruction Course Syllabus

## Course Overview

Every classroom includes learners with diverse strengths, backgrounds, interests, and approaches to learning. Understanding and responding to students' varied learning needs can be both rewarding and challenging for educators.

In this course, participants will explore the foundations of differentiated instruction and strategies for supporting diverse learners through content, process, product, and learning environment. Participants will also examine instructional and assessment approaches that support flexibility, access, and student engagement while developing a differentiated lesson plan throughout the course.

## Goals

During this course, participants will:

- Understand the foundational principles and key elements of differentiated instruction.
- Explore strategies for differentiating content, process, product, and learning environment.
- Consider how students' readiness, interests, and learning preferences can inform instructional decisions.
- Identify instructional and assessment strategies that support flexibility, access, and student engagement.
- Develop a lesson plan that reflects the principles of differentiated instruction.

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## Alignment to Standards

This course meets the standards for Content, Instructional Design, and Technology as defined in the [National Standards of Quality for Online Courses](#), published by Aurora Institute (formerly iNACOL).

This course also provides educators with opportunities to explore and apply several Maryland Digital Learning Standards for Educators as well as the Learning Forward Standards for Professional Learning.

## Intended Audience

This introductory course is designed for K–12 teachers, technology and curriculum specialists, school administrators, and other school personnel interested in supporting diverse learners through differentiated instruction.

Participants should be comfortable using email, accessing online resources, and navigating web-based course materials throughout the course.

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## Course Outline

### **Session One: Foundations of Differentiated Instruction**

Participants will explore the foundational principles of differentiated instruction and examine common misconceptions about DI. Through readings, videos, discussion, and reflection, participants will identify strategies to support diverse learners while beginning a lesson plan that will be developed throughout the course.

### **Session Two: Strategies for Differentiating Instruction**

Participants will explore strategies for differentiating instruction through content, process, and product while considering students' readiness, interests, and learning preferences. Participants will reflect on how instructional decisions can support different learners while continuing to develop their differentiated lesson plan.

### **Session Three: Designing a Differentiated Learning Environment**

Participants will examine how classroom environment and design can support differentiated instruction. Through readings, classroom design activities, and discussion, participants will explore ways to create flexible learning spaces that support student independence, collaboration, access, and engagement.

### **Session Four: Assessment in the Differentiated Classroom**

Participants will explore strategies for differentiating assessment and providing students with multiple ways to demonstrate understanding. Participants will finalize their differentiated lesson plans, participate in peer feedback discussions, and reflect on how their understanding of differentiated instruction has evolved throughout the course.