

Meeting the Needs of Students Through Differentiated Instruction | Course Syllabus

Overview

Every classroom is made up of individuals with diverse strengths, backgrounds, and approaches to learning. Understanding and responding to students' individual learning styles and needs can be a challenge for teachers. Participants in this workshop, Meeting the Needs of the Students through Differentiated Instruction, will be introduced to learning theories related to learning styles and multiple intelligences, as well as web-based resources to assist teachers in both identifying students' learning styles and intelligences in order to engage students in activities that best suit those styles and intelligences. Participants will become familiar with teaching strategies and tools targeted for each learning style and intelligence and develop a preliminary lesson plan using those strategies and tools.

Goals

During this workshop, participants will learn skills and strategies to:

- Understand the key elements of differentiation to be able to apply them to the content, process, and product
- Identify strategies to use lesson design to address multiple types of learners;
- Identify and use a variety of assessment techniques, including pre-assessments, to understand the strengths and needs of your students; and
- Develop a technology-rich, standards-based lesson plan which incorporates the key elements of differentiation.

Alignment to Standards

This workshop meets the standards for Content, Instructional Design, and Technology as defined in the [National Standards of Quality for Online Courses](#), published by Aurora Institute (*formally called the International Association for K-12 Online Learning or iNACOL*).

This workshop provides teachers with an opportunity to explore and meet several Maryland Digital Learning Standards for Educators as well as the Learning Forward Standards for Professional Learning.

Intended Audience

This workshop is designed for teachers, curriculum specialists, professional development specialists, or other school personnel. Participants are expected to have regular access to computers and be proficient with the use of email and web-browsers.

Course Outline

Session One: Defining Key Elements of Differentiated Instruction

In this session, you will explore the principles of differentiated instruction (DI). Through several readings from experts in the field, you will understand the guiding tenets of DI while also exploring some of the

criticism and misconceptions about DI. As an activity, you will share questions or concerns about trying to differentiate in your classroom on a collaborative digital board. You will also reflect on your current school and classroom practices regarding differentiated instruction.

Session Two: Preparing Your Classroom for Differentiated Instruction

A great deal of the confusion around, and resistance to, differentiated instruction is the belief that the practice involves more work for the classroom teacher. For the properly prepared teacher and classroom, however, differentiated instruction proves to be a more efficient means of meeting all of your students' learning goals by being proactive rather than reactive. In this session, you will review strategies for preparing your classroom and your students to learn via differentiated instruction. You will also watch a video to see how a first-year high school teacher tries to differentiate for her students.

Session Three: Knowing your Students

Students enter your classroom with different experiences, strengths, backgrounds, and they come to you at varying stages of mental, emotional, and physical development. All of these differences can impact how they learn in the classroom. As teachers, it is important to help students identify where they are in terms of their knowledge, skills, and competencies and also to understand what prior experiences may influence their attitudes towards school. Getting to know your students will help you to connect your own learning goals and expectations for your students to their personal goals and expectations so they can experience as much success as possible. This week you will learn strategies to get to know students and to pre-assess their knowledge to help you differentiate your lessons so that everyone can achieve their maximum potential.

Session Four: Strategies for Differentiating the Content, Process, Product

Educators want to meet the needs of all of their students but sometimes it can be overwhelming to try and address the great variety of needs and abilities in any given classroom. This session will provide you with resources and strategies that will help teach you how you can begin to differentiate instruction in your classroom so that all students are properly supported and challenged.

Session Five: Using Technology to Support Differentiated Instruction

While it is certainly possible to create a wonderful and successful differentiated learning experience without the use of technology, there are many great technology tools and resources that can help you as well. This session will focus on incorporating technology into your planning, and how technology can help your students display their learning and Instruction knowledge. You will explore many different technology tools that will help you to differentiate instruction to adapt to students varied learning needs.

Session Six: Assessment in the Differentiated Classroom

In addition to varying the strategies and methods used to instruct students, teachers must also differentiate how they assess student learning. In this session, you will explore a variety of strategies that you can use to assess student understanding and will add your ideas about differentiated assessment to your lesson plan which will be submitted to your facilitator at the end of the session. In the final discussion forum, you will reflect on how the strategies you plan to use to differentiate your assessment differ from previous strategies you used to assess learning in your classroom.