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## Meeting Student Needs through Differentiated Instruction

### Course Syllabus

#### Course 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, *Differentiating Instruction to Accommodate Learning Styles*, will be introduced to learning theory related to learning styles and multiple intelligences, as well as web-based resources to assist teachers in both identifying students' learning styles and intelligences and engaging students in activities which 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

This workshop will enable participants to:

- Understand the principles of addressing individual learning styles and multiple intelligences;
- Identify techniques to use in lesson design to address a variety of learning styles;
- Identify and use a variety of assessment techniques to provide for students' learning styles and intelligences; and
- Develop a technology-rich, standards-based lesson plan which provides for students' learning styles and multiple intelligences

#### 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 the [International Association for K-12 Online Learning](#) (iNACOL).

This course provides teachers with an opportunity to meet the Engage in Professional Growth and Leadership standard as defined in the [National Educational Technology Standards and Performance Indicators for Teachers](#), published by the [International Society for Technology in Education](#) (ISTE).

#### Intended Audience

This is an introductory course for K-12 teachers, technology and curriculum specialists, school administrators, and other school personnel. Participants should be proficient with

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using email and browsing the Internet in order to participate in the course.

## **Course Outline**

### **Session One: Defining Differentiated Instruction**

In this session you will be introduced to the differentiated instruction (DI) framework.

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 that exist about DI. You will also view a short introductory video from Carol Tomlinson in which she articulates the imperative for differentiating classroom instruction for today's students, and review the final project for this course. In the discussion area, you will 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 the learning goals of all of your students by being proactive rather than reactive. In this session, you will review strategies for preparing both your classroom and your students to learn via differentiated instruction. You will also watch a video to see how a team of teachers at an elementary school plan interdisciplinary lessons together and challenge each other to incorporate strategies to differentiate instruction.

### **Session Three: Identifying Student Strengths and Needs**

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 to you 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 Your Instruction**

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

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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 you will add your ideas about differentiated assessment to your planning template 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.