

Differentiated Instruction for Today's Classroom®

Differentiated Instruction for Today's Classroom equips experienced and beginning educators with the essential knowledge and skills to implement differentiated instruction (DI) successfully in their own classrooms. Class members will gain expertise in understanding and implementing a broad range of strategies associated with three essential, distinguishing components of DI:

- (1) the teacher's role as guide and facilitator in a classroom environment specifically designed to support self-directed student learning and teacher-student collaboration;
- (2) the interdependent nature of assessment and instruction in a DI classroom; and
- (3) 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.

To the right are the key areas of focus for the 45-hour 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

- ▶ Discover practical responses to diverse student learning needs.
- ▶ Explore the role of a DI teacher as a guide and facilitator in the learner-centered environment of a DI classroom.
- ▶ Practice effective DI classroom management strategies and procedures.
- ▶ Engage and motivate students with lessons connected to the essential knowledge and skills of a standards-based curriculum.
- ▶ Learn key DI instructional strategies and a decision-making tool to maximize learning.
- ▶ Transform assessment and grading routines into dynamic, interactive practices that generate deep learning.
- ▶ Prepare students for the exciting changes they will experience in a differentiated classroom.

Differentiated Instruction for Today's Classroom[®]

Course Description

Differentiated Instruction for Today's Classroom is a Performance Learning Systems[®] course that equips experienced and beginner educators with the essential knowledge and skills 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 flexible grouping and assessment in a DI classroom; and third, the adaptation of 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 13 skills of self-directed learners in his/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/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 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 differentiated instruction of lesson content, processes, and/or products based on the readiness, interests, and/or learning profiles of specific students in his/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; and 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/her classroom.
17. Generalize course content to reflect how the multicultural, special needs, gifted students, 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 upon 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.

Institutional Outcomes

(To be listed here)

Required Text

Selected research articles, research summaries, and topical articles drawn from educational literature

Topical Outline

List of Concepts

The Compelling Why

Diversity statistics; learner variance; a picture of diversity in today's classrooms; what differentiated instruction (DI) is and is not; the what, why, and how of DI; the course model; the FRAME-CAB principles of differentiation (flexibility; respectful work; attention to student differences; modifications in content, process, and products of instruction; essential concepts as the basis for differentiation; collaboration between teacher and students; assessment and instruction are inseparable; and belonging); the DI basis in theory; supportive research

DI Essentials	Metaphors for the teacher’s role in a DI classroom, basic skill set of a DI teacher (knows students, creates a classroom environment that supports successful DI, adapts instruction to meet existing and emerging student needs), policies of effective DI classroom management (assign students to groups efficiently, establish a “home base,” establish procedures for students to get help, minimize noise, establish procedures for students to turn in work, minimize stray movement, establish the expectation for excellence in all work, make a plan for calling a halt, regularly ask students for their input), developing student self-directedness, classroom management strategies that support self-directed learning, using DI to create a student-centered classroom environment, the anchor strategy, giving clear directions, the nature of flexible grouping in a DI classroom, the interdependent nature of flexible grouping and assessment, exit question strategy, reflective journal strategy
The 3 x 3 x 3 Model for Differentiating	Preparing students for differentiation; “fair” vs. “equal”; the 3 x 3 x 3 model of DI; using assessment to identify student readiness, interests, and learning profiles; differentiating three aspects of the curriculum: content, process, and product; simple, whole-class, and individualized adaptations based on specific student needs; 3 x 3 x 3 scenarios
Readiness-Based Differentiation	Introduction to readiness-based differentiation, the zone of proximal development as the basis for readiness differentiation, purposes of readiness differentiation, readiness-based assessments, the Agenda strategy; readiness-based strategies for differentiation from special-education literature; the Think Dots strategy, the Tiered Instruction strategy, the Equalizer
Interest-Based Differentiation	The range of interests even in heterogeneous groupings, the Tic-Tac-Toe strategy, goals of interest-based differentiation, the power of choice, interest-based tiered lessons, DI for gifted learners, strategies for individualized and interest-based differentiation: Orbitals, Learning Contracts, I-Searches, WebQuests, Curriculum Compacting
Learning Profile-Based Differentiation	Introduction to learning profile-based differentiation, tiered lessons based on learning profile, goals of learning-profile DI, types of learning-profile–based differentiation (based on social, environmental, and cognitive preferences), the theory of multiple intelligences (MI), a comparison of centers and stations strategies used for learning-profile–based DI, activities for DI using both Bloom’s taxonomy (readiness) and Gardner’s eight intelligences, project menu designs using Bloom and MI

DI Megastrategies	Using DI strategies for multiple types of differentiation; complex strategies with multiple levels of differentiation that are built in: Literature Circles, Socratic Seminars, Group Investigation, Complex Instruction, Problem-Based Learning; content-specific applications
A Focus on Assessment	Role of assessment in DI instructional planning, teacher assessment tools, student self-assessment tools, teacher-student collaborative assessment, pre-assessment strategies, interim-assessment strategies, culminating assessments, tiered rubrics, performance assessment, grading for success in a DI classroom, assessment as a tool connecting DI and standards-based instruction
A Closer Look at Flexible Grouping	Connections between flexible grouping and flexible instruction, using informal assessment to guide in-the-moment grouping, differences between tracking and DI ability grouping, types of grouping in a DI classroom (whole-class, small-group, heterogeneous, homogeneous, teacher-selected, student-selected, readiness-based, interest-based, learning-profile-based)
DI Flow and Lesson Implementation Planning	Comparison of traditional-classroom flow and DI-classroom flow, a lesson-planning format including all elements of DI-classroom instructional flow, case studies of how teachers started to implement DI
Where Do I Go From Here?	Preparing parents for DI, DI position statements, solutions to problem scenarios, advice from experts, reflective action plans

Course Assessments and Links to Institutional Outcomes and Course Outcomes

Throughout the course, the learner will be assessed and evaluated on the completion of the following assessments. There are ten assessments in this course, for a total of 100 points.

		Points	Correlations With Institutional Outcomes	Correlations With Course Outcomes
Assessment No. 1:	Learner Variance	5		1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 13, 14, 17, 18
Assessment No. 2:	Essentials of a DI Learning Environment	7		1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18
Assessment No. 3:	Connecting Assessment and Instruction	5		1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18
Assessment No. 4:	A Standards-Based Context for Differentiating Instruction	10		1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18
Assessment No. 5:	Introduction to DI Instructional Strategies	8		1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18
Assessment No. 6:	Gaining Instructional Flexibility in Using DI Strategies	8		1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18
Assessment No. 7:	DI Strategies to Reinforce Student Self-Directedness	12		1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18
Assessment No. 8:	Fully Differentiated Instruction	18		1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18
Assessment No. 9:	DI Strategies for Individualized Learning	8		1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18
Assessment No. 10:	Preparing for Full Implementation	19		1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19
	Reflection and Application Journal	No points		1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19
Total		100		

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

Instructional Materials

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

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 instructor presentation of new content through short lecturebursts, active construction of knowledge during hands-on practice and problem solving, collaborative group work, personal reflection, in-class presentations and demonstrations, ad hoc and structured small-group or whole-class discussion, analysis of assigned reading, and application of course content and skills to each participant's individual grade level, subject area, and classroom.

Evaluation

The evaluation of learner work will be based on the defined criteria for learner assessments, which will be processed with learners prior to their instructional activities and engagement with the 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; involvement in the inductive process; interactive journal entries with written instructor feedback; critical or reflective responses to assigned readings; oral discussions in a whole-class or small-group setting; active participation and general attentiveness to the instructor and others. It is expected that each student will contribute to the academic quality of the course.

Summative assessment includes the completion of a culminating assignment that requires the participant to synthesize class content, apply it to his or her specific teaching situation, and complete a reflective action plan for implementing the major components of content and skill acquired during the course.

Grading Policy

(To be listed here)

Absence and Tardy Policy

(To be listed here)

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 acknowledgement.
- 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 or suspected violation 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 when required by Performance Learning Systems, and reporting breaches of the security policy to the IT Helpdesk.

Participant Professionalism Policy

As a courtesy to other participants and to your instructor, please refrain from text messaging, checking e-mail, or answering your cell phone during class time. Breaks are provided throughout the course so you can attend to personal matters. Using your personal electronic devices during class time is distracting and disrupts instruction and participant communication and collaboration. If you have an emergency or justifiable reason to leave your cell phone turned on during class time, please make arrangements with the instructor prior to the beginning of class.

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, 12, 13
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.	2, 3, 6, 8, 14, 15
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.	2, 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 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.	2, 6, 7, 8, 12, 14, 15
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.	2, 4, 6, 7, 14, 15, 16
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, 16
Standard 7: Planning Instruction The teacher plans and manages instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the community, and curriculum goals.	3, 6, 7, 12, 13, 14, 15
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, 12
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, 6, 8, 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.	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 of Professional Teaching (NBPTS) Five Core Propositions

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, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18
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, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18
NBCTs understand how students develop and learn.	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18
They respect the cultural and family differences students bring to their classroom.	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 11, 17, 18
They are concerned with their students' self-concept, their motivation and the effects of learning on peer relationships.	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18
NBCTs are also concerned with the development of character and civic responsibility.	1, 7, 8, 17
 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, 3, 4, 6, 17, 18
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.	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18
They are able to use diverse instructional strategies to teach for understanding.	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18
 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.	1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18
They know how to engage students to ensure a disciplined learning environment, and how to organize instruction to meet instructional goals.	1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18
NBCTs know how to assess the progress of individual students as well as the class as a whole.	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18
They use multiple methods for measuring student growth and understanding, and they can clearly explain student performance to parents.	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18
 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, 5, 6, 18
They are familiar with learning theories and instructional strategies and stay abreast of current issues in American education.	1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 17, 18
They critically examine their practice on a regular basis to deepen knowledge, expand their repertoire of skills, and incorporate new findings into their practice.	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 18

Proposition 5: Teachers are Members of Learning Communities.

NBCTs collaborate with others to improve student learning.	1, 2, 7, 8, 14, 15, 16, 18
They are leaders and actively know how to seek and build partnerships with community groups and businesses.	1, 17
They work with other professionals on instructional policy, curriculum development and staff development.	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18
They can evaluate school progress and the allocation of resources in order to meet state and local education objectives.	1, 6, 16, 17
They know how to work collaboratively with parents to engage them productively in the work of the school.	1, 2, 17

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