

Syllabus – Summer 2019

Excluding materials for purchase, syllabus information may be subject to change. The most up-to-date syllabus is located within the course in HuskyCT.

Course and Instructor Information

Course Title: Strategies for Differentiating the Grade Level Curriculum

Credits: 3

Format: online

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/TBWizardView?catalogId=10001&langId=-1&storeId=88191>) carries the required text(s), which can be shipped (shipping fees will apply).

Required Materials:

Tomlinson, C. A. (2017). *How to differentiate instruction in academically diverse classrooms* (3rd ed.). Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Wormeli, R. (2006). *Fair isn't always equal: Assessing and grading in the differentiated classroom*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.

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. 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 vast 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. 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 3-9)

Module 2: Common Approaches and Strategies for Differentiation (Week 2, June 10-16)

Module 3: Differentiation with Standards and Non-Standard Growth (Week 3, June 17-23)

Module 4: Managing Differentiation and Managing the Message (Week 4, June 24-30)

Module 5: Debating Differentiation (Week 5, July 1-5)

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

Course Requirements and Grading

Summary of Course Grading:

Course Components	Weight
Discussion participation/ Completion of Weekly Tasks	45%
Differentiation in the Literature	15%
Choice Activities	15%
Tiered Assignment	15%
Concluding Problem and Reflection	10%

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) and other parts by the end of the week (usually by Sunday). Each week's TOTAL discussion and participation will be worth 9 points. Your work will be graded according to the following criteria:

9 points = In addition to criteria for 7-8 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.

7-8 points = All 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.

4-6 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 does not complete all required posts and activities on time.

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

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}**

Choice Activities

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

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

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) written reflection that requires requiring synthesis of various readings, discussions, and earlier assignments. **{10 points}**

Grading Scale:

Grade	Letter Grade	GPA
94-100	A	4.0
90-93	A-	3.7
87-89	B+	3.3
83-86	B	3.0
80-82	B-	2.7
77-79	C+	2.3
73-76	C	2.0
70-72	C-	1.7
67-69	D+	1.3
63-66	D	1.0
60-62	D-	0.7
<60	F	0.0

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.

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

You are responsible for acting in accordance with the University of Connecticut's Student Code (<https://community.uconn.edu/the-student-code-preamble/>). Review and become familiar with these expectations. In particular, make sure you have read the section that applies to you on Academic Integrity:

- Academic Integrity in Undergraduate Education and Research (<https://community.uconn.edu/the-student-code-appendix-a/>)
- Academic 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.

Netiquette and Communication

At all times, course communication with fellow students and the instructor are to be professional and courteous. It is expected that you proofread all your written communication, including discussion posts, assignment submissions, and mail messages. If you are new to online learning or need a netiquette refresher, please look at this guide titled, The Core Rules of Netiquette (<http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>).

Adding or Dropping a Course

If you should decide to add or drop a course, there are official procedures to follow:

- Matriculated students should add or drop a course through the Student Administration System (<https://studentadmin.uconn.edu>).
- Non-degree students should refer to Non-Degree Add/Drop Information Page (<https://registrar.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1604/2017/08/Schedule-Revision-Request.pdf>) located on the registrar's website (<https://registrar.uconn.edu/forms/>).

You must officially drop a course to avoid receiving an "F" on your permanent transcript. Simply discontinuing class or informing the instructor you want to drop does not constitute an official drop of the course. For more information, refer to the:

- Graduate Catalog (<https://gradcatalog.uconn.edu>)

Academic Calendar

The University's Academic Calendar (<https://registrar.uconn.edu/academic-calendar/>) contains important semester dates.

Academic Support Resources

Technology and Academic Help (<http://ecampus.uconn.edu/help.html>) provides a guide to technical and academic assistance.

Policies and Procedures

Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment and Inappropriate Romantic Relationships

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 Romantic 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 Romantic relationships, and such behavior will be met with appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the University. More information is available at <https://policy.uconn.edu/2015/12/29/policy-against-discrimination-harassment-and-related-interpersonal-violence/>.

Sexual Assault Reporting Policy

To protect the campus community, all non-confidential University employees (including faculty) are required to report assaults they witness or are told about to the Office of Institutional Equity (<https://equity.uconn.edu>) under the Sexual Assault Response Policy (<https://policy.uconn.edu/2015/12/29/policy-against-discrimination-harassment-and-related-interpersonal-violence/>). 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 <https://titleix.uconn.edu/>.

Students with Disabilities

Students needing special accommodations should work with the University's Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD, <https://csd.uconn.edu>). You may contact CSD by calling (860) 486-2020 or by emailing csd@uconn.edu. If your request for accommodation is approved, CSD will send an accommodation letter directly to your instructor(s) so that special arrangements can be made. (Note: Student requests for accommodation must be filed each semester.)

Blackboard measures and evaluates accessibility using two sets of standards: the WCAG 2.0 standards issued by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act issued in the United States federal government." (Retrieved March 4, 2019 from <https://www.blackboard.com/accessibility.html>)

Software Requirements and Technical Help

- Word processing software
- Adobe Acrobat Reader (<https://get.adobe.com/reader/>)
- Internet access

This course is completely facilitated online using the learning management platform, HuskyCT (<https://huskyct.uconn.edu>). Students have 24x7 access to live chat, phone and support documents through https://uconn.edusupportcenter.com/sims/helpcenter/common/layout/SelfHelpHome.seam?inst_name=U_Conn.

Minimum Technical Skills

To be successful in this course, you will need the following technical skills:

- Use electronic mail with attachments.
- Save files in commonly used word processing program formats.
- Copy and paste text, graphics or hyperlinks.
- Work within two or more browser windows simultaneously.
- Open and access PDF files.

University students are expected to demonstrate competency in Computer Technology. Explore the Computer Technology Competencies (<https://geoc.uconn.edu/computer-technology-competency/>) page for more information.

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.