

T&L 2900 — Why DI?: An Introduction to Differentiated Instruction

Course at a Glance

Instructor: Steve Dahl

Length: Approximately 45 hours, complete in 4 months

Dates: Rolling admission

Number of Graduate Professional Development Credits: 3, from the University North Dakota

Introduction

Why DI?: An Introduction to Differentiated Instruction is an interactive computer-based instruction course designed to give you an understanding of the framework of and need for creating supportive learning environments for diverse learning populations. In this course you will learn what is meant by Differentiated Instruction (DI) and the common myths associated with creating the differentiated classroom. We will discuss the legal, theoretical, and pedagogical foundations in the field of education that support the utilization of differentiated instructional practices and principles. We will reflect on best practices and national trends in the design of the educational setting to meet the needs of a diverse learning population. *Why DI?: An Introduction to Differentiated Instruction* will also provide connections to a variety of concepts, variables, and resources that will assist practitioners in aligning their own professional practices with those found in the differentiated classroom.

This course is designed for anyone working with a diverse learning population across the K-12 spectrum. While the information presented may have relevance to any student-centered educational setting, it will have the most relevance for K-8 mixed ability classrooms.

This online, self-paced program can be started and completed at the student's own leisure **within four months from the UND assigned course start date after enrollment.**

Learning Objectives

1. Understand how differentiated instruction is defined.
2. Articulate why differentiated instruction is not a prescriptive approach.
3. Outline the major elements within a classroom that teachers typically differentiate.
4. Explain the role of curriculum and instruction in a differentiated classroom.
5. Relate ways in which differentiated instruction may be useful when creating a personal teaching philosophy.
6. Identify the core principles of classrooms reflecting a differentiated instructional approach.
7. Outline the current systems-level, theoretical, legal, and pedagogical foundation for differentiation.
8. Identify ways in which differentiated instruction compares and contrasts with specially designed instruction for students with disabilities.
9. Explain how assessment in a classroom best exemplifies a differentiated approach.
10. Articulate the primary methods for obtaining information about student interests, preferences, and overall learning profile.
11. Understand the rationale for synthesis between leading curricular design method, Understanding by Design (UBD), and the differentiated instruction approach.

12. Distinguish elements of a differentiated approach from those of a non-differentiated, or “one size fits all” approach.
13. Articulate the range of barriers when implementing a differentiated classroom.
14. Analyze ways in which a differentiated approach addresses the role of NCLB in shaping professional practice and understanding of quality teaching.
15. Understand the systemic pressures placed upon teachers and ways in which differentiation helps re-focus attention on the needs of students.
16. Outline a framework for motivating all students in a way that is respectful, student-centered, and reflective of a differentiated approach.
17. Relate to differentiated instruction’s concept of reciprocity of accountability for success of both teachers and students.
18. Articulate how the current emphasis on teacher beliefs about learning and dispositions toward students are embraced within a differentiated approach.
19. Articulate barriers that exist for those who are genuinely interested in implementing a differentiated approach.
20. Articulate the role of the teacher, student, and parents in a differentiated classroom.
21. Articulate the ways in which administrators can support teachers who are implementing a differentiated classroom.
22. Discuss an expanded concept of diversity and learner variance to which teachers must respond.
23. Identify characteristics of and initial strategies for creating a culturally responsive approach to student diversity.
24. Assess current understanding of and willingness to implement a classroom aligned with differentiated instructional approach.

Session Topics

This course, *Why DI?: An Introduction to Differentiated Instruction*, has been divided into four chapters. The organization of the course covers the **What**, **Why**, and **Who** of a classroom that reflects a Differentiated Instruction approach.

- Chapter 1: The What of Differentiated Instruction
- Chapter 2: The Why of Differentiated Instruction (Part 1)
- Chapter 3: The Why of Differentiated Instruction (Part 2)
- Chapter 4: The Who of Differentiated Instruction

Course Materials

This computer-based instruction course is a self-supporting program that provides instruction, structured practice, and evaluation all on your home or school computer. Technical support information can be found in the Help section of your course. There are NO required textbooks.

Assignments & Examinations

Assignments-

This course has two required writing components. **ALL ASSIGNMENTS ARE REVIEWED.**

1) **Essay Requirement: Critical Thinking Questions**

There are four Critical Thinking Questions that you must complete. You will do research on the questions and write brief essay responses relating it to the course content (and your personal experiences, when possible).

2) **Essay Requirement: Journal Articles**

This task requires you to write a review of three peer-reviewed or scholarly journal articles (blogs and news articles are not acceptable) of your choice on a topic related to this course.

Examinations-

At the end of each course section, you will be expected to complete an examination designed to assess your knowledge. There are a total of 4 exams in this course. You may take these exams a total of three times.

Grading

This online course uses **Letter Grading (A, B, C, or F)**.

- **Writing assignments for this course comprise 50%** of the final grade.
- **The remaining 50% of the grade will be the average from the four (4) course examinations.**

Course Grading Scale for Letter Grades:

A = 90 - 100% of total score

B = 80 - 89%

C = 70 - 79%

F= below 70%

Scholastic Dishonesty

Students enrolled in this course are expected to be aware of the seriousness of scholastic dishonesty. Unacceptable behavior such as submitting someone else's work as your own, cheating on exams, or plagiarizing can result in failure of the course or other sanctions. For a more detailed description of these policies, please refer to the UND Code of Student Life; Appendix IIIa-3, at: <http://und.edu/student-affairs/code-of-student-life/>