

Differentiated Instruction: The Curriculum Connection

Differentiated Instruction: The Curriculum Connection directly addresses one of five nonnegotiables of differentiated instruction: the role of curriculum in designing and delivering high-quality differentiated instruction. In this course, you will explore the attributes of high-quality curriculum and what it means to teach for understanding. You'll discover how teachers in a differentiated classroom write objectives that adhere to standards documents. Finally, you will examine the role of rigor and relevance in designing differentiated curriculum that leads to these objectives.

By the end of this course, through video examples, in-depth readings and reflections, and practical applications, you'll be ready to design or adapt classroom work so that it reflects the attributes of what experts consider to be high-quality curriculum.

More specifically, as a result of the course, you will

- Examine and refine the quality of your curriculum.
- Identify key understandings in your curriculum.
- Develop learning targets (KUDs) for use in the classroom.
- Ensure that unit KUDs reflect applicable standards.
- Make a plan to address common student misunderstandings.
- Analyze tasks for rigor and relevance.
- Make a plan to increase rigor and relevance of student work.

In the spirit of differentiation, please feel free to choose the sequence of the course modules and module elements in the way that suits your readiness, interests, and learning profile.

Essential Questions and Key Objectives

The following table includes the essential questions that each module of this course is based on, as well as the key objectives—what you will know, understand, and be able to do (KUD) after completing each of the course modules.

Module 1: Curriculum and Differentiation: What's the Connection?	
Essential Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What distinguishes high-quality curriculum from curriculum that is not? Why is high-quality curriculum important for differentiation?
Know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The attributes of high-quality curriculum.
Understand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All learners deserve access to the highest-quality curriculum a school can offer. Effective differentiated instruction begins with high-quality curriculum.
Do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify key characteristics of high-quality curriculum. Examine and refine the quality of one's curriculum. Explain the relationship between high-quality curriculum and high-quality differentiated instruction.
Module 2: Teaching for Understanding	
Essential Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What really matters in learning? Why is understanding so important to student achievement and retention?
Know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The role of understanding in learning.
Understand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To teach knowledge and skill without understanding is an exercise in futility.
Do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain why understanding is key to achievement and retention. Identify key understandings in your own curriculum.

Module 3: Getting Ready for Differentiation: Setting High-Quality Learning Goals (KUDs)	
Essential Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the role of the KUDs in ensuring high-quality differentiated curriculum?
Know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attributes of Know (K), Understand (U), and Be Able to Do (D).
Understand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-quality differentiation begins with high-quality curriculum. • The K, U, and D act as individual parts of a system, working together to form the goals of a unit of study.
Do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify Ks, Us, and Ds. • Explain the role of the KUDs in high-quality curriculum. • Write KUDs for use in the classroom.
Module 4: Barriers to Teaching for Understanding	
Essential Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What gets in the way of teaching for understanding? • How can teachers overcome these challenges?
Know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barriers to teaching for understanding.
Understand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To teach knowledge and skill without understanding is an exercise in futility.
Do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify barriers to teaching for understanding. • Make a plan to address common student misunderstandings.

Module 5: Differentiated Instruction and Standards	
Essential Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can differentiation realistically coexist with standards? • In what ways do the KUDs reflect and expand upon standards?
Know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goals of standards-based instruction. • Goals of differentiated instruction. • How standards are incorporated into KUDs.
Understand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards and differentiation are not incompatible. Standards are <i>what</i> we teach; differentiation is <i>how</i> we teach. • Standards alone are not powerful enough for high-quality differentiation or for meaningful learning. Standards are incorporated into KUDs; they are not a substitute for KUDs.
Do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconcile the differences between the standards movement and differentiated instruction. • Ensure that unit KUDs reflect applicable standards.
Module 6: Rigor and Relevance for All	
Essential Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the roles of rigor and relevance in ensuring high-quality curriculum for all students? • What do rigor and relevance look like in the differentiated classroom?
Know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The roles of rigor and relevance in planning high-quality curriculum for the differentiated classroom. • Strategies for increasing rigor and relevance in the differentiated classroom.
Understand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-quality curriculum must be both rigorous and relevant to the needs of diverse learners. • All learners deserve access to the highest-quality curriculum.
Do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze tasks for level of rigor and relevance. • Make a plan to increase rigor and relevance of student work.

Course Syllabus

Module 1	Curriculum and Differentiation: What's the Connection? Module Welcome <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Video: Providing Quality Curriculum• Reading: The Curriculum Connection• Reading: <i>Educational Leadership</i>—Mapping a Route Toward Differentiated Instruction• Video: High-Quality Curriculum and Differentiation Check for Understanding <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Application: Planning for High-Quality Curriculum Reflection
Module 2	Teaching for Understanding Module Welcome <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reading: What Really Matters in Learning?• Video: Guiding Students to Understanding• Video: What Is Understanding?• Reading: Understanding Understanding Check for Understanding <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Application: Identifying Key Understandings Reflection

Module 3	Getting Ready for Differentiation: Setting High-Quality Learning Goals (KUDs) Module Welcome <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Video: Setting Learning Targets• Reading: Distinguishing Knows, Understands, and Do's• Reading: KUDs As a System• Video: Essential Questions and KUDs• Video: KUDs in Action—Elementary School• Video: KUDs in Action—Middle School Check for Understanding <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Application: Writing KUDs Reflection
Module 4	Barriers to Teaching for Understanding Module Welcome <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reading: <i>Educational Leadership</i>—Cover the Material—Or Teach Students to Think?• Reading: <i>Educational Leadership</i>—You Can Teach for Meaning• Video: Minds of Our Own• Reading: Student <i>Misunderstanding</i> and What We Can Learn from It Check for Understanding <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Application: Addressing Student Misunderstandings Reflection

<p>Module 5</p>	<p>Differentiated Instruction and Standards</p> <p>Module Welcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video: Standards and Differentiation • Reading: <i>Educational Leadership</i>—Reconcilable Differences? Standards-Based Teaching and Differentiation • Reading: <i>Educational Leadership</i>—Standards for Diverse Learners • Reading: Turning Standards into KUDs <p>Check for Understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application: Incorporating Standards into Unit KUDs <p>Reflection</p>
<p>Module 6</p>	<p>Rigor and Relevance for All</p> <p>Module Welcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading: What Is Rigor and Why Does It Matter? • Reading: <i>Educational Leadership</i>—Teach Up for Excellence • Video: The World Peace Game—Elementary School • Video: Rigor and Relevance in the Classroom—Middle School • Video: Rigor and Relevance in the Classroom—High School • Reading: <i>Educational Leadership</i>—High Expectations for All • Reading: <i>Educational Leadership</i>—Why We Run Our School Like a Gifted Program • Video: Differentiation: Rigor and Relevance for All <p>Check for Understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application: Increasing Rigor and Relevance <p>Reflection</p>

Resources

Texts

- Brady, M. (2008). Cover the material—Or teach students to think? *Educational Leadership* 65(5), pp. 64–67.
- Brandt, R. (1993). On teaching for understanding: A conversation with Howard Gardner. *Educational Leadership* 50(7), pp. 4–7.
- Erickson, L. (2002). *Concept-based curriculum and instruction: Teaching beyond the facts*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Kluth, P., & Straut, D. (2001). Standards for diverse learners. *Educational Leadership*, 59(1), pp. 43–46.
- McTighe, J., Seif, E., & Wiggins, G. (2004). You can teach for meaning. *Educational Leadership* 62(1), pp. 26–31.
- Marzano, R. J. (2010). High expectations for all. *Educational Leadership*, 68(1), pp. 82–84.
- Strickland, C. (2009). *Exploring differentiated instruction*. (The professional learning community series.) Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Strickland, C. (2007). *Tools for high-quality differentiated instruction: An ASCD action tool*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Strong, R.W., Silver, H. J., & Perini, M. J. (2001). *Teaching what matters most*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Tomlinson, C. A. (2003). *Fulfilling the promise of the differentiated classroom*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Tomlinson, C. A. (1999). *The differentiated classroom: Responding to the needs of all learners*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Tomlinson, C. A. (2000). Reconcilable differences: Standards-based teaching and differentiation. *Educational Leadership*, 58(1), pp. 6–11.
- Tomlinson, C. A., & Imbeau, M. B. (2010). *Leading and managing a differentiated classroom*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Tomlinson, C. A., & Javuis, E. L. (2012). Teach up for excellence. *Educational Leadership*, 69(5), pp. 28–33.

Tomlinson, C. A., & McTighe, J. (2006). *Integrating differentiated instruction and Understanding by Design: Connecting content and kids*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Wiggins, G., & McTighe, J. (2005). *Understanding by design*, 2nd ed. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Video

ASCD. (2001). *At Work in the Differentiated Classroom: Planning Curriculum and Instruction* [DVD]. Alexandria, VA: Author.

ASCD. (2008). *Differentiated Instruction in Action: High School* [DVD]. Alexandria, VA: Author.

ASCD. (2006). *High Schools at Work: Engaging Students in Learning* [DVD]. Alexandria, VA: Author.

ASCD. (2007). *Moving Forward with Understanding by Design* [DVD]. Alexandria, VA: Author.

ASCD. (1998). *Understanding by Design: What Is Understanding?* [Video program]. Alexandria, VA: Author.

Tomlinson, C. A. (Speaker). (2011). Interview by Nataliya Schetchikova [DVD]. Unpublished interview.