

Course: ED641 N Differentiated Instruction
Credit: 3 credit hours
Semester: SPRING 2026 (Session 2)
Days: March 16th – May 8th
Location: Online Only
Instructor: Dr. Mary F. Briggs
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I. DESCRIPTION

This course introduces the graduate student to current thought, research, and best practices in understanding the particular needs of diverse learners in a mixed-ability classroom. Content focuses on the creation, design, and use of specialized strategies, curriculum, materials, and instructional methods for differentiated learning. (Prerequisite: ED610 or declare Elementary Education emphasis track.)

II. OBJECTIVES:

A. General competencies to be achieved. The student will:

1. Develop and refine a Biblical philosophy of differentiated instruction.
 - a. PLO-1, 2, 3, 4
 - b. Assignments: A.1, A.2, B.1, B.2, B.5, B.6, B.8
2. Gain relevant and useful information related to current thought, research, and best practices regarding differentiated instruction.
 - a. PLO-1, 2, 3, 4, 5
 - b. Assignments: A.1, A.2, B.2, B.5, B.6, B.8
3. Develop skills in thinking critically, discussing constructively, and writing synthetically regarding the use of differentiated instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners.
 - a. PLO-1, 2, 3, 4, 5
 - b. Assignments: A.1, A.2, B.1, B.2, B.3, B.4, B.5, B.6, B.7, B.8

B. The objectives of this course serve to prepare students to meet the *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders* as expressed in the following competencies. Specific competencies to be achieved. The student will be able to:

1. “Align and focus systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment within and across grade levels to promote student academic success, love of learning, the identities and habits of learners, and healthy sense of self.”
 - a. PLO-1, 2, 3, 4, 5; PSEL-4
 - b. Assignments: A.1, A.2, B.2, B.3, B.4, B.5, B.6, B.8
2. “Promote instructional practice that is consistent with knowledge of child learning and development, effective pedagogy, and the needs of each student.”
 - a. PLO-1, 2, 3, 4, 5; PSEL-4
 - b. Assignments: A.1, A.2, B.2, B.3, B.5, B.6, B.7, B.8
3. “Ensure instructional practice that is intellectually challenging, authentic to student experiences, recognizes student strengths, and is differentiated and personalized.”
 - a. PLO-1, 2, 3, 4, 5; PSEL-4
 - b. Assignments: A.1, A.2, B.2, B.3, B.5, B.6, B.8
4. “Provide coherent systems of academic and social supports, services, extracurricular activities, and accommodations to meet the range of learning needs of each student.”
 - a. PLO-1, 2, 3, 4, 5; PSEL-5
 - b. Assignments: A.1, A.2, B.2, B.3, B.4, B.5, B.6, B.8

III. MATERIALS

Heacox, D. & Cash, R. (2019). *Differentiation for gifted learners: Going beyond the Basics* (2nd ed.).

ISBN-13: 978-1631984327 ISBN-10: 1631984322
Printed Copy: \$42.99

Sousa, D. & Tomlinson, C. (2018). *Differentiation and the brain: How neuroscience supports the learner-friendly classroom* (2nd ed.).

ISBN-13: 978-1945349522 ISBN-10: 1945349522
Printed Copy: \$48.95

IV. REQUIREMENTS

A. Reading Assignments

1. **Textbook Reading:** You are expected to read the textbooks. Class interactions and activities depend upon you being thoroughly familiar with the readings.
2. **Supplemental Reading:** Read all supplemental materials (i.e., handouts, journal articles, websites, etc.) that may be assigned by the instructor during the course.

B. Written Assignments:

1. **Biblical Philosophy of Differentiated Instruction:** Write a 750 – 1,000 word paper describing your biblical philosophy of differentiated instruction. Further details for this assignment will be available in Files in CANVAS.
2. **Class Video Reports:** Online students will complete eight (8) reports. In-class students are also expected to complete reports for any class sessions missed due to absence from class.
3. **Discussion Questions:** A total of five (5) topics and associated questions will be posted in CANVAS. For each question, students should post a 250 – 300 word response. Cite at least one source to support your response. Students should then respond to at least one other post made by a classmate.
4. **Gifted Students Project:** Demonstrate your understanding of how adults can support the emotional and social needs of gifted elementary, middle, and high school students. You can write a story, record a scripted interview, draw a cartoon series with associated captions, prepare information for parents of gifted students, etc. Be creative! At the end of your assignment, be sure to include the references for the scholarly resources that further developed your understanding of the emotional and social needs of gifted students.
5. **Portfolio:** Create a digital portfolio that accurately represents what you have learned through this course. You can find more details for this assignment in CANVAS.
6. **Reflections:** When you have completed the majority of the course work for the week, write a 200 – 250 word reflection on how you have grown as an educator as a result of completing that week's assignments.
7. **Teacher In-service Day:** Plan an In-service Day for the staff at your school or an imaginary school. Your In-service Day should include five (5) sessions. You may want to consider making use of the Reproducible pages available in both of our textbooks.
8. **Final Exam**

V. METHODS

A. Teaching and Learning

1. Reading and research
2. Writing
3. Lectures
4. Discussions
5. Projects
6. Portfolio
7. Exam

B. Grading

1. Weight given to assignments:

Assignments:	Points:
Biblical Philosophy of Differentiated Instruction	150
Class Participation (In-Class Students) Report on Videos (Online Students)	80 (10 x 8 reports)
Discussion Questions	100 (20 x 5 questions)
Gifted Students Project	150
Portfolio	150
Reflections	70 (10 x 7 reflections)
Teacher In-Service	200
Final Exam	100
Total:	1000 points

2. Late Assignments

Late assignments may be penalized 10 percent of the grade on that assignment per week.

3. Letter / Numerical Grade Scale

The grading scale listed in the current College Catalog will be used for this course.

VI. POLICIES

A. The Bible as Required Textbook

The Bible is a required textbook in every course at Calvary University. To facilitate academic level study, students are required to use for assignments and research an English translation or version of the Bible based on formal equivalence (*meaning that the translation is generally word-for-word from the original languages*), including any of the following: New American Standard (NASB), English Standard Version (ESV), New King James (NKJV), or King James (KJV). Other translations and versions based on dynamic equivalence (*paraphrases and thought-for-thought translations like NLT and NIV*) may be used as supplemental sources. Please ask the professor if you have questions about a particular translation or version.

B. Academic Honesty

Plagiarism is defined as copying any content without identifying the source. This also includes taking another person's or AI entity's ideas or constructs and presenting them as your own. Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated.

Most assignments at Calvary require the student to produce original work. Therefore, unless specifically permitted by the instructor, the use of AI-generated content is

prohibited (even if cited) as it does not represent original work created by the student and is an unreliable aggregate of ideas from other sources.

AI, however, may be utilized in cases where the instructor has explicitly permitted its use to accomplish specific tasks. It is only in these cases that AI-generated (or modified) content may be submitted by the student. If there are any questions as to the permissibility of AI use for an assignment, please ask your instructor for clarification.

Additionally, submission of work for this class must express original thought and should be written in the voice of the student. Research should be conducted using academic, peer-reviewed sources (not blogs or other opinion/editorial sites). However, even when citing sources, students must explain the ideas/concepts presented in their own words. Extensive copying of source material is not permitted, even if the source is cited on the reference page.

C. Academic Activity & Participation

Students learn best when they take an active part in the learning process. Students will be expected to engage in the material presented weekly and be able to summarize the content to meet learning objectives. Punctuality is expected out of professional courtesy and to minimize the disruption of the classroom dynamics.

D. Technology

Using technology to enhance the learning experience is an integral part of this course. However, technology can also cause distraction and inattentiveness. Cell phones should be set to silent and placed on the table or in a backpack/purse. ***Working on other assignments during class or using electronic devices for anything other than class activities or taking notes for the course will not be permitted.***

E. Accommodations Statement

Students with disabilities have the responsibility of informing the Accommodations Support Coordinator (aso@calvary.edu) of any disabling condition that may require support.

F. Style Guide

All class papers must follow the APA style guide according to *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 7th edition.

G. The Clark Academic Center

The Clark Academic Center (learning@calvary.edu), located in the library building, is dedicated to providing free academic assistance for all Calvary University students. CAC assists with all facets of the writing process, tutors in various subject areas, prepares students for exams, facilitates with time management options and proctors tests. Please take advantage of this service.

VII. COURSE OUTLINE AND CLASS SCHEDULE: The following course outline indicates the informational material and the general direction for the content of this class:

Week	Dates	Class Topics:	Assignments for the Week:
1	March 16 th	Introduction to Differentiation IDEA: 4 Goals Mindset and Learning Environment Focus: ADHD	<i>Due by Midnight on March 23rd :</i> 1. Complete Class Video Report. 2. Complete DQ#1. 3. Complete assigned reading. 4. Complete Reflection #1.
2	March 23 rd	Curriculum and Differentiation Assessment and Differentiation Focus: Speech and Language Impairments	<i>Due by Midnight on March 29th:</i> 1. Complete Class Video Report. 2. Complete DQ#2. 3. Complete assigned reading. 4. Complete Reflection #2. 5. Choose a topic for your Teacher In-service.
3	March 30 th	Differentiating in Response to Student Readiness Differentiating in Response to Student Interest Focus: Intellectual Disabilities	<i>Due by Midnight on April 5th:</i> 1. Complete Class Video Report. 2. Complete DQ#3. 3. Complete assigned reading. 4. Complete Reflection #3.
4	April 6 th	Differentiating in Response to Student Learning Profile Managing a Differentiated Classroom Focus: IEPs	<i>Due by Midnight on April 12th:</i> 1. Complete Class Video Report. 2. Complete DQ#4. 3. Biblical Philosophy of Differentiated Instruction 4. Complete assigned reading. 5. Complete Reflection #4.

5	April 13 th	Giftedness Defined Characteristics of Gifted Learners Addressing the Potential for Underachievement Focus: Emotional and Behavioral Disorders	<i>Due by Midnight on April 19th:</i> 1. Complete Class Video Report. 2. Complete DQ#5. 3. Complete assigned reading. 4. Complete Reflection #5.
6	April 20 th	Educators of Gifted Students Grading and Assessing Gifted Learners Leadership of Gifted Education	<i>Due by Midnight on April 26th:</i> 1. Complete Class Video Report. 2. Complete assigned reading. 3. Gifted Student Project 4. Complete Reflection #6.
7	April 27 th	IDEA: 6 Principles Focus: Autism	<i>Due by Midnight on May 3rd :</i> 1. Complete Class Video Report. 2. Complete Teacher In-Service. 3. Prepare for Final Exam. 4. Complete Reflection #7.
8	May 4 th	5 Federal Laws Schoolwide Systems Final Exam	<i>Due by Midnight on May 8th:</i> 1. Complete Class Video Report. 2. Complete Final Exam. 3. Complete Portfolio.

About Changes to this Syllabus: The instructor reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus at any time during the course, but any change made will only be done after clearly communicating the need for the change and the specific change to be made via in-class announcement and Canvas announcement.