School of Education

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<th>Course</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
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<tr>
<td>Semester</td>
<td>Dr. Randy Soffer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number-Section</td>
<td>EDUC-5331- KP 67</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Differentiating Instruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office</td>
<td>Malloy Hall 124</td>
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Prerequisites
- none

Textbook(s) Required

Textbooks(s) Recommended

Course Description
- The course is designed to enhance students’ understanding of differentiating instruction, the rationale for its use, and how to differentiate instruction. Students’ understanding of the ‘how to’
of differentiation is multifaceted. This includes an understanding of what is most important for students to learn, the critical importance of assessment for differentiating instruction and various assessment strategies that can be used in support of differentiating instruction, differentiation instructional strategies, and classroom management strategies that support differentiating instruction. The course will provide students with an opportunity to analyze, apply, and evaluate various approaches and methods for differentiating classroom instruction to help better meet the needs of all learners, including special needs learners and English Language Learners. Finally, a major focus of the course will be on students investigating and developing differentiated strategies and lessons.

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<th>National/State/Professional Association Standards Guiding Course</th>
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**TExES PEDAGOGY AND PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES (EC-12) COMPETENCIES:**

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

**Domain I**
- Design instruction appropriate for all students that reflects an understanding of relevant content and is based on continuous and appropriate assessment.

**Domain II**
- Create a classroom environment of respect and rapport that fosters a positive climate for learning, equity, and excellence by
  - Using knowledge of the unique characteristics and needs of students at different developmental levels to establish a positive, productive classroom environment (e.g., encourages cooperation and sharing among younger students; provides middle-level students with opportunities to collaborate with peers, encourages older students’ respect for the community and the people in it).
  - Establishing a classroom that emphasizes collaboration and supportive interactions, respect for diversity and individual differences, and active engagement in learning by all students.
  - Using a variety of means to convey high expectations for all students
  - Knowing characteristics of physical spaces that are safe and productive for learning, recognizing the benefits and limitations of various arrangements of furniture in the classroom and applying strategies for organizing the physical environment to ensure physical accessibility and to facilitate learning in various instructional contexts.
  - Creating a safe and nurturing inclusive classroom environment that addresses student’s emotional needs and respects students’ rights and dignity.
  - Organizing and managing group activities that promote students’ ability to work together cooperatively and productively, assume responsible roles and develop
collaborative skills and individual accountability.

Domain III

- Promote student learning by providing responsive instruction that makes use of effective communication techniques, instructional strategies that actively engage students in the learning process, and timely, high-quality feedback by
  - Employing various instructional techniques and varying teacher and student roles in the instructional process and providing instruction that promotes intellectual involvement and active student engagement and learning
  - Applying various strategies to promote student engagement and learning (e.g., by structuring lessons effectively, using flexible instructional groupings, pacing lesson flexibly in response to student needs, including wait time).
  - Applying criteria for evaluating the appropriateness of instructional activities, materials, resources, and technologies for students with varied characteristics and needs.
  - Engaging in continuous monitoring of instructional effectiveness.
  - Creating assessments that are congruent with instructional goals and objectives and communicating assessment criteria and standards to students based on high expectations for learning.
  - Responding flexibly to various situations (e.g., lack of student engagement in an activity, the occurrence of an unanticipated learning opportunity, etc.) and adjusts instructional approaches based on ongoing assessment of student performance.
  - Engaging in reflection and self-assessment to identify strengths, challenges, and potential problems, to improve teaching performance, and to achieve professional goals.

Course Objectives/Learner Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, the student will:

1. Explain differentiating instruction
2. Discuss the rationale for differentiating instruction and its relationship to the curricular framework
3. Describe the role that assessment plays in differentiating instruction and describe assessment strategies
4. List ten differentiating strategies
5. List five classroom management strategies that support differentiating
6. Analyze the instructional factors that can be used to help differentiate instruction
7. Develop plans for differentiating instruction that respond to individual learner needs including:
   (a) Assessment of learning preferences of students
   (b) Assessment of the academic needs of students
(c) Assessment of the interests and social needs of students
(d) Assessment of the grade level TEKS
(e) Plan teaching/learning activities which consider multiple intelligences
(f) Plan a classroom which incorporates the key principles of differentiated instruction
(g) Plan a room arrangement for differentiating instruction
(h) Plan differentiated lessons

8. Differentiate instruction by:
   (a) Using a variety instructional approaches to accommodate various learning and instructional needs
   (b) Setting up various groupings for instruction and study
   (c) Arranging individualized contracts with students
   (d) Adjusting teaching methods and materials to meet individual needs of learners

**METHODOLOGY/TECHNOLOGY**

This is an on-line course. Blackboard (BB) will be used as the course delivery and management tool. Students will be expected to utilize BB on a regular basis. Components of BB that will be used on a regular basis include the Announcements, Syllabus, Discussion Board, Grade Center, and Course Documents (for specific assignments and course materials). You are expected to be active learners and submit your assignments on time via BB when possible. You are expected to download course documents, listen to mini-lectures, and keep up with the assigned readings.

**Major Assignments / Final Exam**

**DISCUSSION BOARDS AND OTHER ASSIGNMENTS (65% of course grade)**

You will find specific weekly discussion board and other assignments in the Course Documents section of BB. Both types of assignments must be completed and submitted within the weeks that they are assigned. A description of each type of assignment follows.

**Discussion Board Assignments:** Students are expected to ‘log-on’ on a regular basis and to be active and thoughtful discussion board participants. Students are expected to ‘log-on’ at least three times a week.

**Assigned readings and initial/main postings must be completed within the first five days of each assignment week** so that a full discussion can occur among students in the course. **Two reaction posts to two classmates’ initial main posts must be completed on day six or day seven of each assignment week.** Reaction posts should specify what you agree with or disagree with in your classmate’s main post and indicate why you agree or disagree.

Assigned readings and postings are to be completed within the specified time period so that
discussions related to the assignments may occur. Appropriate contributions should always be professional and courteous (e.g., no personal attacks).

For your discussion board first postings, your thread must be at least 10 lines or 245 words in length and reference at least two course resources—readings by page number and Power Points by slide number. Again, you must also respond (by clicking on reply) to at least two peers. Your responses to peers must be substantial—at least 5 lines of text in length. If you miss two Discussions in a row the course instructor will assume you have dropped the course, unless you have notified him/her of your absence in advance.

The total value for all postings for a particular learning module’s discussion board forum is 2.5% of your course grade. Thus, with the 13 forums for this course, your discussion board participation represents 32.5% of your course grade. A grading rubric for discussion board assignments is in the Syllabus section of Blackboard.

Other Assignments: There is an ‘other assignment’ for each assigned learning module (LM). Hopefully, you will find these assignments varied, interesting, engaging, and helpful. You will submit these assignments through BB.

Each other assignment has a value of 2.5% towards your final course grade. Thus, with the 13 other assignments for this course, your participation in other assignments represents 32.5% of your course grade. A grading rubric for other assignments is in the Syllabus section of BB.

MENU ASSIGNMENTS (20% of course grade):

You will need to choose two (2) of the following six (6) assignments. Each of your menu assignments is worth 10% of your course grade. Although you may complete and submit your menu assignment anytime during the course, both menu assignments will be due no later than the week of Learning Module 13.

Pick 3. You may not win a Lottery with this assignment but hopefully you will learn a lot!

Your first step with this assignment is to pick three strategies for differentiating instruction or assessment on the Differentiating Instruction Strategy List provided to you in the Orientation Module of the Course Documents section of Blackboard. Each of the strategies you select should be a strategy that you are not familiar with but interests you. You may need to do some preliminary research on the strategies to identify three that appeal to you and thus will make it possible for this assignment to be differentiated for you by interest.

Once you have selected your three ‘new to me’ strategies, the first step is to research each of your strategies. You should gather data to respond to the following questions: How would you describe your strategy? What are the specific steps in planning and using the strategy? Are there any special materials or preparations that are needed for your strategy? What student needs, interests or learning profiles are best met by this strategy? What do you see as the advantages
and disadvantages of using this strategy? What recommendations do you have for your strategy’s use—for example, when would it work best to use this strategy (i.e., for test review, when teaching vocabulary, etc.) and in what content areas and at what grade levels would it be best to use your strategy? Finally, what research, if any, supports the use of your strategy?

After researching your strategies, **for each of your three strategies**, you should prepare a written report on your response to the above questions. It should be in the format of a sub-heading for each question. A list of your references, in APA Style, should be included at the end of each of your written responses. Your written response for each strategy should be from three to six double-spaced pages in length.

The grading rubric for this assignment may be found in the Syllabus section of Blackboard. Using this grading rubric, please do a self-assessment. This self-assessment should holistically reflect your assessment of your three written strategy reports. Your self-assessment should be turned in with your three written reports. Remember, you will only need to do one self-assessment—not three.

**Walk the Pick 3 Talk.** For this assignment, you will implement your three DI strategies that you researched and reported on in your Pick 3 assignment. Obviously, you will need to complete the Pick 3 assignment before completing the Walk the Pick 3 Talk assignment. You have a choice of how you will verify and report on the actual use of your three DI strategies in an actual classroom situation. These choices will build on your preferred learning profile.

Your first choice is to verify and report your use of your strategies in this assignment by videotaping your use of each of your three strategies in a classroom situation. A second option is to photograph key aspects of the implementation of each of your strategies.

You can also video yourself reporting on what worked with each of your strategies, what you felt did not work, and what you would do differently the next time with each strategy. For each strategy, I am also requesting that you video three of your students for their reactions to each of the DI strategies that you used.

Providing your response in writing is another response format option you can use. If you choose this format, you will provide a detailed lesson plan indicating how and in what activity you implemented your DI strategy. You should also clearly and specifically describe what you did regarding each of your DI strategies. Again, in written format, you should report on what worked with each of your strategies, what you felt did not work, and what you would do differently the next time. Your response to these questions should be at least one and a half double spaced pages. Finally, within your written response, please include the reactions of three students to each of the DI strategies that you used in class.

For this assignment, you should also do a self-assessment. This self-assessment should be turned in with your Walk the Pick 3 Talk assignment. There is a grading rubric in the Syllabus section of Blackboard.
section of Blackboard for this purpose. Your self-assessment should holistically reflect your implementation of your three strategies. Your self-assessment should be turned in with your video and/or written documentation of your implementation of your DI strategies.

The grading rubric for this assignment is based on how well you maintained the fidelity of each of your strategies. That is, the extent to which your implementation adhered to the critical features of each of your strategies as described in the literature. The fidelity of your use of each of your strategies will account for 50% of your grading on this assignment. The remaining 50% will depend on the extent to which you addressed all the required issues described above in your response (20%), the clarity, thoughtfulness and organization of your response (20%), and the timeliness of getting this assignment completed along with your self-assessment (10%).

**Plan a DI Lesson.** For this assignment, you will plan a lesson (i.e., not just use a strategy) in your classroom using a differentiated instructional approach. If you are not currently teaching, this assignment involves your planning a differentiated lesson in a content area that reflects your level of ‘readinesses with the curriculum’. Whether your DI lesson is a real lesson or one based on your understanding of curriculum, your lesson can reflect any of the possible ways to differentiate in Tomlinson’s content-process-product by readiness-interest-learning profile matrix. This matrix will be explained early on in the course.

For your lesson plan, you can either use your school or school district’s format or the one that you will find in the Orientation Module. Regardless of the form you use, it should include the following information. Each numbered item on the following list should have a corresponding number on the lesson plan you use to verify where it has been addressed:

1. In view of Tomlinson’s matrix, how you will be differentiating your lesson.
2. The grade level and content area of your lesson and any important background information about your students.
3. Your specific instructional objective(s) and your TEKS objective(s), if applicable.
4. What will be acceptable evidence that your students mastered the lesson’s objective(s)—that is, how you will assess your students’ learning/mastery of the content and the grading rubric/criteria you will use to do this.
5. Any special preparations or materials you have to make/gather ahead of time for your lesson
6. Any pre-assessment you will do before your lesson. This pre-assessment can address student readiness, interests, or learning profiles.
7. A step-by-step description of your instructional activities—including your opening activity, what you will differentiate, how you will differentiate, what the students will do, and how what students will do will vary.

After completing your lesson plan, please also do a self-assessment of your lesson plan. To do this, please use the grading rubric provided in the Syllabus section of Blackboard. This self-assessment should be turned in with your response to this assignment.
Grading for this assignment will be based on the extent to which your lesson plan addresses all seven items above (3 points), the clarity and specificity of your lesson plan (3 points), the extent to which the lesson plan builds on student variance in a creative and manageable/feasible way (3 points), and the timeliness of submitting this assignment along with a self assessment (1 point).

**Implement Your Lesson Plan.** This assignment requires you to use the lesson plan you developed in an actual lesson. You can document your use of your lesson plan in two ways. First, you can videotape the implementation of your lesson. If you videotape your lesson, the lesson you submit should be from 10-20 minutes in length. To get your video to this length, it may be necessary to edit out parts of your video involving, for example, extended individual seat work.

The second way to document your lesson plan is to photograph key parts of your lesson. If you use photos, please provide a brief explanation as to how each photo depicts a key aspect of the implementation of your lesson.

In a report in response to the implementation of your lesson plan, please provide the following:

1. A copy of your lesson plan with notes on it reflecting your reactions on how the lesson went. For example, as part of your lesson plan, you may have had included a pre-assessment to see which sports group to include students in for the mathematics example—baseball, soccer, and golf. Based on your survey results, you may write a note that next time you would use football as a category.
2. Reactions from your students—what they liked, what they did not like about your lesson, and what they think you could have done differently to improve it. Please survey formally or informally a minimum of three students.
3. Your overall reactions to your lesson-- what you liked, what you did not like about your lesson, and what you think you would do differently next time to improve it (items #2 and #3 above can be provided on video as alternative to being in writing)

For this menu assignment too, you will self-assess your performance relative to the grading criteria for this assignment. Again, for this purpose, a grading rubric is provided in the Syllabus section of Blackboard.

**Participating in Field Experience:** For this assignment, you will spend five (5) hours observing/assisting in one or more classrooms where differentiating instruction is being implemented. You should complete a brief report of each lesson you observe or assist with as part of this assignment. In your report on each lesson you observed or assisted with, you should indicate what aspects of classroom practices were differentiated, what impressed you about the differentiation of instruction occurring in the lesson, and what ideas you would have for improving the differentiation of instruction in the lesson you observed/assisted.

To determine if a class qualifies as a ‘differentiating classroom’, both the classroom teacher and a campus administrator should attest to such practices occurring in the class. Care should also be taken to observe/assist in a particular classroom when differentiation is occurring within a particular lesson/instructional activity or set of activities.

Please keep a record of your fieldwork experiences. A fieldwork documentation form is included in the Orientation Module for this course. Please complete one form for each classroom in which you observe. This one form may list multiple lessons which you observed/assisted within this one classroom.
For this menu assignment too, you will self-assess your performance relative to the grading criteria for this assignment. Again, for this purpose, a grading rubric is provided in the Syllabus section of Blackboard.

**Creating an Alternative Product** - For this assignment, you will create an alternative product that demonstrates significant learning you have experienced from this course. This could be in the form of a collage or poem or some other creative endeavor. Prior approval of the course instructor of your plan for this assignment is required.

**FINAL EXAM** (15% of course grade):

The final exam, a ‘take-home/on-line’ exam, will serve as a cognitive organizer for your course experience. It will require critical and higher order thinking skills. The exam will draw on what you have learned from your course related readings/videos, your completion of the menu assignment, and your active and thoughtful participation in discussion boards and the other assignments. The exam will consist primarily of short essay questions and address course essential understandings. You will complete your final exam during Learning Module14 of the course.

### Grading Information

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grade Points</th>
<th>Numeric Range Set by Instructor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>95-100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>90-94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>88-89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>84-87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>80-83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>78-79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>74-77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>70-73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>68-69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>65-67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>Below 65%</td>
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### Grading:

1. Discussion Boards (2.5% X 13 weeks= 32.5%), Other Weekly Assignments (2.5% X 13 weeks= 32.5%) = 65%
2. Two Menu Assignments @ 10% each = 20%
3. Final Exam (15%)

### Student Accommodations
If you have a documented disability that will impact your work in this class, please contact your instructor to discuss your needs. Additionally, you will need to register with the University of St. Thomas Counseling and Disability Services Office in Crooker Center. This office can be reached at (713) 525-2169 or 6953.

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<th>Professional Standards of Behavior for Students and Faculty</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Integrity</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Other Issues</strong></td>
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(Course Schedule on next page)
### Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Module (LM) Number &amp; Topic</th>
<th>Topic Dates</th>
<th>Information on Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orientation Module</td>
<td>Thursday, Jan 19- Tues, Jan 24</td>
<td>Read the course syllabus and grading rubrics and let the course instructor know if you have any questions about them. Complete sample ‘other assignment’ in the Orientation section of Course Documents in BB. This assignment is not a requirement and will not count towards your course grade. Explore the contents of the course on Blackboard. More specifically, check out the various sections of BB and their contents. If you have questions, please contact your course instructor.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning Module (LM) #1- The Differentiating Instruction (DI) Framework: What It Is and Its Beliefs and Rationale</td>
<td>Wednesday, Jan 25- Tuesday, Jan 31</td>
<td>Read your Tomlinson &amp; Imbeau (T&amp; I) textbook chapters on Understanding Differentiation in Order to Lead and Teaching What You Believe. Read your Tomlinson (2014) textbook chapter on What Is a Differentiated Classroom? Go to LM#1 section of Course Documents in BB for your specific assignments for this module.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LM#2- The DI Teacher and Learning Environment</td>
<td>Wednesday, Feb 1- Tuesday, Feb 7</td>
<td>Read your Tomlinson (2014) textbook chapters on The Underpinnings of Differentiation and the chapter on Learning Environments That Support Differentiated Instruction. Also, read your T&amp;I textbook chapter on Learning Environment. Go to LM#2 section of Course Documents in BB for your specific assignments for this module.</td>
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<tr>
<td>LM#3- Planning lessons Differentiated by Readiness</td>
<td>Wednesday, Feb 8- Tuesday, Feb 14</td>
<td>Read your Tomlinson (2014) textbook chapter on Good Curriculum as a Basis for Differentiation and the Appendix—Tools 2 &amp; 3. Read your Tomlinson (2001) textbook chapter on The How To’s of Planning Lessons Differentiated by Readiness. Go to LM#3 section of Course Documents in BB for your specific assignments for this module.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LM#4- Planning Lessons Differentiated by Interests</td>
<td>Wednesday, Feb 15- Tuesday, Feb 21</td>
<td>Read your Tomlinson (2001) textbook chapter on The How To’s of Planning Lessons Differentiated by Interests. Go to LM#4 section of Course Documents in BB for your specific assignments for this module.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LM#5- Planning Differentiated Lessons Including Differentiating by Learning Profile</td>
<td>Wednesday, Feb 22- Tuesday, Feb 28</td>
<td>Read your Tomlinson (2014) textbook chapter on Teachers at Work Building Differentiated Classrooms. Read your Tomlinson (2001) textbook chapter on The How To’s of Planning Lessons Differentiated...</td>
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<tr>
<td>LM#6 - Differentiating Content</td>
<td>Wednesday, March 1- Tuesday, March 7</td>
<td>Read your Tomlinson (2001) textbook chapter on Differentiating Content. Go to LM#6 section of Course Documents in BB for your specific assignments for this module.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LM#8 - Differentiating Products</td>
<td>Wednesday, March 22- Tuesday, March 28</td>
<td>Read your Tomlinson (2001) textbook chapter on Differentiating Products. Go to LM#8 section of Course Documents in BB for lecture link or, if applicable, team presentation link and your specific assignments for this module.</td>
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<tr>
<td>LM#9 - Classroom Management Strategies for a DI Classroom</td>
<td>Wednesday, March 29- Tuesday, April 4</td>
<td>Read your T&amp;I textbook chapter on Classroom Routines and Routines in a Differentiated Classroom. Also read in your Tomlinson (2001) textbook the chapter on Strategies for Managing a Differentiated Classroom. Lastly, read your Tomlinson (2014) textbook chapter on How Do Teachers Make It All Work? Go to LM#9 section of Course Documents in BB for your specific assignments for this module.</td>
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<tr>
<td>LM#10 - Grading and Related Issues in a DI Classroom</td>
<td>Wednesday, April 5- Tuesday, April 11</td>
<td>Read your Tomlinson (2001) textbook chapter on Grading in a Differentiated Classroom. Also read in your T&amp;I textbook the chapter on Yes But… Common Sticking Points regarding Grading to the Concluding Thoughts section of the chapter. Go to LM#10 section of Course Documents in BB for your specific assignments for this module.</td>
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<tr>
<td>LM#11 - Alternative Approaches to DI: Retrofitting and Majority Rules</td>
<td>Wednesday, April 12- Tuesday, April 18</td>
<td>Go to LM#11 section of Course Documents in BB for your specific assignments for this module.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LM#12 - Winning Others Over to DI</td>
<td>Wednesday, April 19- Tuesday, April 25</td>
<td>Read your Tomlinson (2001) textbook chapter on Preparing Students and Parents for a Differentiated Classroom. Also read in your T&amp;I textbook the chapter on The Invitation to be Part of the Vision. Go to LM#12 section of Course Documents in BB for your specific assignments for this module.</td>
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<tr>
<td>LM#13 - Overcoming Obstacles to DI</td>
<td>Wednesday, April 26- Tuesday, May 2</td>
<td>Read your Tomlinson (2014) textbook chapter on Education Leaders as Catalysts for Differentiated Classrooms. Read your T&amp;I textbook chapter on Yes But…</td>
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</table>
Common Sticking Points from the start of the chapter up to the Grading section. Please also read the Concluding Thoughts section of this chapter too. Go to LM#13 section of Course Documents in BB for your specific assignments for this module. **Deadline for two Menu Assignments to be submitted to course instructor via an attachment to an e-mail**

| LM#14- On-Line Final Exam | Wednesday, May 3- Tuesday, May 9 | Go to the Course Documents section of BB to download a copy of the final exam. Please note the directions for completing and returning your exam to the instructor at the top of the first page. This will be an ‘open book’ untimed exam. |

Please note that this syllabus was developed building on the prior work of Dr. Richardson.