

Title

Creating Units to Support Differing Learning Styles

Target Audience

This course is designed for in-service and pre-service teachers of grades K-12.

Description

This course is designed to help educators develop a curriculum that meets the diverse learning needs of their students. First, learners will assess and identify the learning styles of their students. Then, they practice planning lessons that address many learning styles simultaneously by creating a cross-curricular unit topic with technology-based activities designed to support learning. Learners will build adaptations and accommodations into their plans, so that they may easily integrate what they've learned into their teachings.

Facilitator

See instructor/facilitator sheet

Credit

To be determined by a college or university

Standards

This course will help educators meet NETS standards 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6.

Learning Outcomes

After completion of this course, learners will be able to:

- Identify the learning styles of their students.
- Create a cross-curricular (thematic) unit topic.
- Plan activities for a thematic unit.
- Make adaptations and accommodations to activities to support their students' learning styles.
- Use technology to support a variety of learning styles.

Course Outline and Assignments

Assignment 1: Identify the Learning Styles of Your Students

In this assignment you will identify how each of your students learns best. You will determine your students' learning styles through observation, surveys, and reflection. Recognizing your students' learning styles will help you better meet their needs when you develop your unit.

Read

- "Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory"
- "The Issues: Learning Modalities"

Explore

- “Learning Styles Modality Preference Inventory”
Inventory for determining auditory, visual, or kinesthetic learners.
- “Multiple Intelligence Inventory”
Provides information on and a downloadable version of an inventory based on Gardner's work.

Complete activities and assignments

- Submit a completed chart with the initials or a pseudonym for each of your students, their learning style(s), a brief statement of how you determined the styles, and any notes that help you better understand each student.

Participate in an online discussion

- Examine your own learning style and how this might affect the way you teach.

Write in online journal

- Reflect on a time when you changed your teaching style mid-day or even mid-lesson. What prompted you to do so? What were you reacting to? Why did you change, and what was the result?

Assignment 2: Select a Topic for Your Unit Based on Your Curriculum Requirements and the Interests and Needs of Your Students

In this assignment, you will decide on a topic for your integrated thematic unit.

Read and explore

- The Center for Effective Learning Web site
- ITI Overview
This resource provides a summary of the main components of ITI.
- Theme-related resources on the World Wide Web

Complete activities and assignments

- Submit (3-4) potential topics, along with the lists of what would be accomplished through each topic. Indicate which topic you have selected for your unit and briefly explain why you selected it.

Participate in an online discussion

- What do you see as the most challenging aspect of implementing ITI? Think about your current teaching position.

Write in online journal

- Reflect on how you think ITI can help your students learn. In what ways would ITI be beneficial to their academic growth?

Assignment 3: Identify Unit Activities Based on the Principles of Integrated Thematic Instruction

In this assignment, you will identify ways to address your topic in four different curricular areas. These activities will be a part of your final unit plan.

Read and explore

- PBS Teachers
- Kathy Schrock's Guide for Educators
The Teacher's Corner

- A Model for Creating Thematic Units

Complete activities and assignments

- Submit at least two activity ideas for at least four curricular areas. Describe the activities in detail.

Participate in an online discussion

- Which unit of study do you think is the most difficult to use with ITI? Give some examples as to why you think it may be difficult. Respond to other posts by sharing ideas as to how to overcome these difficulties.

Write in online journal

- Describe how you could use both shared and sequenced integration in your current teaching practice. Give one example for each.

Assignment 4: Apply the Principles of Universal Design to your Unit

In this assignment, you will examine the principles of “Universal Design for Learning” to begin planning adaptations to the activities in your unit in order to meet the learning needs of all your students. You will re-examine the observations you made about students in Assignment 1 to help you make adaptations to the activities you identified in Assignment 3.

Read and explore

- “Adapting the Curriculum to Meet the Needs of Diverse Learners”
This paper provides an overview of how to adapt your instructional strategies and materials and your assessment practices to meet your students’ individual needs.
- “Responses”
This resource provides simple suggestions and strategies for improving students’ attention difficulties.

Complete activities and assignments

- Submit a list of adaptations and accommodations for at least four (one per curricular area) of the activities you developed in Assignment 3.

Participate in an online discussion

- A colleague in the grade 4 who does not use ITI /UDL comes to see you for advice regarding Tyler, who is a student you had the previous year in grade 3. She knows from reviewing Tyler’s student records that his scores in Science improved greatly throughout the course of his year with you. She is frustrated that Tyler is not performing up to his ability in her classroom and she thinks that your use of ITI/UDL is what helped Tyler last year. She would like advice on how to help Tyler, (as well as any other struggling students), by using some ITI/UDL methods and techniques that proved effective in your classroom.

Write in online journal

- Reflect on an example of a lesson or assignment for which you made special accommodations for a certain student(s). Explain why the accommodations were made and if it affected the objectives of the lesson or assignment.

Assignment 5: Generate Ideas for How Technology can be used to Support Your Unit

In this assignment, you will generate ideas for using technology to support your unit. You will base your use of technology on the accommodations you planned for your students in Assignment 4 and the technology available in your school.

View video

- David Duffee, director of the DePaul School, discusses differing learning needs and styles.
- Elizabeth Mikolaj, student, talks about how technology was used to enhance a unit on the Wetlands.

Read and explore

- Learning.now
- Technology and Teaching Research

Another way to make accommodations is to change the format of your materials. The following resources walk you through the steps of making these types of adaptations:

- What is Universal Design for Learning?
- CAST Teaching for Every Student
- Universal Design for Learning: Frequently Asked Questions
- Text Transformations

Complete activities and assignments

- Submit a description of how you can use technology to assist with at least one adaptation in each curricular area of your unit. Your description should provide enough detail for an outside reviewer to understand how the technology will be used.

Participate in an online discussion

- If you have any questions about a particular technology or how it can be used, go to the discussion board, and find the appropriate forum. Agree or disagree with the following statement. Give examples to illustrate your position. As teachers, we don't have time or energy to integrate aspects of technology into our lessons as accommodations for our students. All of the students can learn just as well using a pencil and paper.

Write in online journal

- Reflect on 3 technologies that can be used for instruction and write how you might use them in your classroom with specific lessons or specific students.

Assignment 6: Develop an Outline for Your Unit

In this assignment, you will build on the activities you have developed to outline your entire thematic unit.

Read and explore

- "Planning Guide for Thematic Units"

Complete activities and assignments

- Submit a complete outline of your unit plan that includes the activities developed in this course.

Participate in an online discussion

- Discuss some aspect of your experiences in developing your unit. What parts are you most pleased with? What parts did you have the most difficulty with?

Write in online journal

- If you wanted to have ITI implemented school-wide in your building, what points would you use and what evidence would you present to convince your school principal (and perhaps the PTA) to make ITI a focus of all the teachers?

Final Project

Before you submit your final project, review your submissions to be sure you are meeting each of the final project criteria. Review each section to ensure that all are complete and have been edited for content and

grammar. You may want to submit your project draft to a peer or colleague to assist with editing. When you are ready to submit your final project, compile the following sections:

- A description of the learning styles of your students.
- A description of the unit topic and a brief explanation of how it fits into your curriculum.
- A complete unit outline that designates potential activities and resources.
- A description of at least four activities in your unit (including the use of technology).

Schedule

This course is scheduled to take approximately 30 hours. The number of hours identified for each course reflects time spent online, but does not reflect the total time spent completing offline coursework and assignments. All learners are different and learners will likely spend double the indicated number of hours completing all coursework depending on learning styles and work habits.

Requirements

Learners are expected to:

- Complete all assignments
- Maintain an online journal
- Participate and actively engage in discussions with fellow learners while contributing to the social construction of knowledge.
- Be self-directed and self-motivated.
- Ask for assistance when they need it

Materials (hardware, software, plug-ins)

Technical Requirements

- Word processor
- Internet service provider
- E-mail
- TeacherLine required plug-ins

Academic Dishonesty Policy

To be inserted by university institution only

Evaluation

This course is evaluated on a letter grade basis, and may be available for graduate credit. See graduate credit details pertaining to specific graduate credit institutions.

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