

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 and 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.

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.

Examine your own learning style and how this might affect the way you teach. Post your ideas on the discussion board. Respond to at least two other learners' posts.

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

- Susan Kovalik and Associates
This is the ITI homepage.
- ITI Overview
This resource provides a summary of the main components of ITI.
- Integrated Thematic Instruction
This resource shows one school's use of the principles of ITI in their school philosophy and curriculum.
- Theme-related resources on the World Wide Web

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.

Share any questions you have about ITI in general or in respect to the topic you are developing. Respond to two other learners' questions with suggestions or ideas.

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

- “Building an Integrated Thematic Unit”
This PowerPoint presentation provides eight steps to developing a thematic unit. This brief explanation presents a straightforward way to create a unit.
- “A Model for Creating Thematic Units”
This resource presents all of the components of a thematic unit, including tips on selecting an appropriate topic.
- “Creating a Thematic Unit for Grades K-6”
This resource provides examples of how another teacher selects topics for thematic units, and her examples.

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

Ask for ideas or suggestions on any of your activities that you think will be particularly challenging to implement, or ask how you can better address your topic in a particular curricular area.

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

- “Curricular Adaptations for (Learning Disabled) Students in Mainstream Classrooms”
This paper provides a detailed foundation for the reasons behind making adaptations, as well as tips on creating adaptations for students.
- “Develop Curricular Adaptations”
This resource provides examples of ways to make adaptations for students.
- *Reach Them All: Adapting Curriculum and Instruction with Technology in Inclusive Classrooms*
This is an invaluable resource for creating inclusive classrooms. This book is particularly useful for the collection of examples of uses of technology. See pages 8-19 for specific information about the applications of technology in accommodating all learners.

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

Share an adaptation you frequently make for students in your classroom, OR identify the category of adaptation you find most difficult to apply in your classroom and ask for suggestions.

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.

Read and explore

- “How to Weave Technology into Any Lesson You Teach,” a list of ways to connect technology activities to concepts you are planning to teach.

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:

- Digital Media
This resource provides a description of what digital media means and how it can be used to help you plan for accommodations for your students.
- Converting materials to digital form
This CAST resource provides detailed explanations of how to convert materials into different formats so they will be more accessible for all learners.
- Adding Universally Designed Enhancements
Use each of the three sections listed in this resource to help you plan for and create adaptations for your students. This is an invaluable resource, as each section literally walks you through making adaptations, even describing the exact technology you can use to accomplish this.

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.

If you have any questions about a particular technology or how it can be used, post them to the discussion board.

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”

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

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?

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 to complete this course. Each session should take approximately 4-5 hours. If you find yourself spending several hours more than this in any given session, please contact your facilitator to make sure this is necessary to complete the given assignments.

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 can be taken for graduate credit on a pass/fail basis, or for a letter grade and graduate credit. See graduate credit details pertaining to specific graduate credit institutions.



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