

STUDENT LEARNING GROUPS IN THE CLASSROOM (1 credit)

Course Description:

Instructional grouping of students can be a powerful tool for both teaching and classroom management. However, without planning and careful thought, it can lead to loss of quality student and teacher time.

We will review research, reflect, discuss and implement many valuable instructional grouping strategies to best meet the changing needs of your students. Following implementation, we will have the opportunity to journal and discuss with other class participants the effectiveness of the various strategies.

Course Goals:

1. To help students enhance and update their teaching practices and instructional strategies to best meet the needs of students.
2. To assist in structuring group interaction and group strategies to meet the cognitive/social developmental needs of students.
3. To understand and utilize multiple ways that students process information.
4. Consideration of alternative assessments appropriate for evaluating pupil understanding that will accommodate variant ways of thinking.

Instructor Information:

Name Wanda S. Erwin
Contact Information 715-268-6632 (h)
715-377-2315 (cell)
wanda@amerytel.net (h)
wanda.schlessner@uwrf.edu (w)

Wanda S. Erwin has worked with instructional strategies through professional staff development and continues to focus on this area as she works toward her Ph.D. She has been a teacher and administrator in Minnesota and Wisconsin for the past twenty-five years. She has been an adjunct faculty member at UW-RF for the past 6 years.

Textbooks and Materials:

Tomlinson, Carol Ann (1999) *The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of All Learners*. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
Cost: ASCD member: \$17.95; ASCD nonmember: \$21.95

Other materials will be available throughout the sessions via attachments or web sites.

Course Format and Technology:

This course operates as an intensive seminar in order to maximize the degree of involvement of participants with the subject matter and the application to the classroom.

The general format will be as follows:

Monday - Reading assignment

Tuesday/Wednesday - Homework assignment/Quiz

Thursday - Work on assignment

Friday - Work on assignment/Turn in homework assignment/Quiz

Saturday midnight - Final date and time to turn in homework assignment/Quiz

Class Assignments/Final/Grading:

1. Weekly participation - You will be responsible for signing in once per week and contributing to the discussion that is generated. If you have questions about any portion of the assignment or class, you are welcome to call me or e-mail me. I will respond within 24 hours.
2. Weekly assignments - You will be responsible for five weekly assignments. These will be in the form of a question to reflect on. The question will ask for your application of a specific strategy within your classroom and the results of its use. These will be due at 12:00 midnight on Saturday.
3. Journal - You will be responsible for keeping a journal over the course of the six weeks. It will be turned in two times - once at the end of the third week and then at the end of the sixth week. This course journal is a “learning log” for you to reflect on the material we read, the strategies discussed/used in your classroom and your personal feelings about many of these approaches.
4. Lesson design - Create a 3-day lesson design on a content area of your choice. Utilize instructional grouping strategies we have read about, discussed and incorporated into your classroom. Include in your lesson design:
 - The larger unit of study of these lessons. Name the class, school (if applicable), grade level, and stage of year.
 - The particular learning skills, behavior and attitude goals of these three lessons.
 - The topics and materials to be covered.
 - The mode of instruction and aims of the mode:
 - Explain what instructional grouping strategy/strategies you are using and why it will be effective for particular student(s).
 - How will you know students understand what you are teaching?

Students will be evaluated as follows:

Participation:	20%
Weekly assignments	30%
Journal	25%
Lesson Design	25%

The Class Schedule:

Week #1

Required Reading:

Chapter 1 and 2 of The Differentiated Classroom

Assignment (due on Saturday at 12:00 midnight):

Provide a brief description of your current classroom. What grade level? What subject area? How many students? How do you currently meet the various instructional needs of your students? What frustrates you? What gives you pleasure? (This paper should be 1-2 pages double spaced.)

Other tasks for this first session:

We will review the syllabus and any questions you may have.

We will perform a technology “check up” to assure you have the necessary functions on your computer.

Week #2

Required Reading:

Chapter 3 and 4 of The Differentiated Classroom

Assignment (due on Saturday at 12:00 midnight):

Teachers tend to be “activity designers” and not “assessors” of student understanding. Stephen Covey said, “Begin with the end in mind”. Think of something you would teach this week. What would you want your students to understand at the conclusion of the lesson? How would you know you achieved that with your students? How would you know that they truly understand? Word of Caution: Don’t think about the activities that you will do. Only think about what you want to achieve and how will you know your students understand? (This paper should be 1-2 pages double spaced.)

Week #3

Required Reading:

Chapter 5 and 6 of The Differentiated Classroom

Hand out

Assignments (due on Saturday at 12:00 midnight):

With the identified grouping strategies handed out, identify one or three grouping strategies that you will use in your classroom this week. Describe how you used these and their effectiveness with the content taught and instructional strategies. (This paper should be 1-2 pages double spaced; this could also be a dialogue designed assignment.)

Submit Journal

Week #4

Required Reading:

Chapter 7 and 8 of The Differentiated Classroom

Hand out

Assignment (due on Saturday at 12:00 midnight):

With identified grouping strategies handed out, identify one to three grouping strategies that you will use in your classroom this week. Describe how you used these and their effectiveness with the content taught and instructional strategies. (This paper should be 1-2 pages double spaced; this could also be a dialogue designed assignment.)

Week #5

Required Reading:

Chapter 9 and 10 of The Differentiated Classroom

Assignment (due on Saturday at 12:00 midnight):

With the various grouping strategies that we have read about, written about and used within our classrooms, how will you assess that students understand what your goal is? Use specific examples from your lesson this week in which you used a grouping strategy and the type of assessment that you used to assess student performance. (This paper should be 1-2 pages double spaced.)

Week #6

Required Reading:

Read “A Final Thought”

Assignments (due on Monday at 12:00 midnight):

In “A Final Thought”, Lewis Thomas says, “...but it should be a deeper satisfaction, even an exhilaration, to realize we still have such a distance to go.” In your journal, describe the “distance” you are striving for.

Complete 3-day lesson plan design

Complete Journal