Differentiation for Exceptional Learners Across the Curriculum

Course Number	Course Name	Concepts and Strategies Addressed
EDU 222 & 223	Education Psychology (required)	• Discuss Vygotsky's "zone of proximal development" • Identify student level of mastery & provide scaffolding • Highlight how differentiation is for all students
EDU 330	Emergent Literacy (required all K-8)	• Share various reading readiness screening instruments; together we explore how instruction might follow based on hypothetical student responses. High-achieving students are, for example, able to begin reading chapter books whereas their less-skilled counterparts still need the structure offered by predictable books with repeated lines, or refrains. • Provide a wide range of phonics assessments. For example, Gifted and talented students are able to do advanced word sorts based on a phonics pattern—for example -ch vs. -tch whereas more tentative readers might do a word sort based on an initial sound (phoneme), which is a far easier task. I explain that children love to manipulate word cards. "Sorting words" is a pedagogically sound activity that gives all our learners practice with word study. • Examine authentic writing samples from students in a particular grade (e.g., second grade) and apply what we've learned from the readings, identifying what stage they are at based on their spelling approximations (English orthography). Then we discuss how teachers might plan instruction for struggling spellers as well as the high-flyers, who understand phonetic and morphological patterns.
EDU 342	Managing the Learning Environment (required all K-8)	• Differentiated classroom culture • Model "Graphing Me" activity – how to establish differentiation as part of the classroom community (differentiation is normalized)
EDU 370	Integrating Technology into Education (required)	• Use Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework to address the needs of all learners, including exceptional learners, and in many cases, G&T learners. • A UDL-designed environment provides learners appropriate level of challenge aligned to their abilities and interests (in the form of multiple means of

		engagement), allows students choice and flexibility to access the content and ideas in whatever way works best for them (in the form of multiple means of representation), as well as provides students latitude to demonstrate what they know (in the form of multiple means of expression). What this means is that a G&T student can move through a technology-based UDL activity at their own pace via a path that is personalized (teacher supported), and be provided extension activities.
EDU 382	Assessment, Curriculum & Instruction (required)	• Stress flexible grouping and dynamic, student-centered differentiation with very purposeful activities aligned with the ways students learn best • Create class profile cards based on academics, learning preferences, and interests, and these profile cards are compiled by the instructor to create a classroom profile spreadsheet; this spreadsheet remain as part of our differentiation focus through the class • Use the Danielson Framework Lesson Plan Format, which requires students to present ideas for differentiation across a continuum looking at a variety of criteria
EDU 395	Elementary Practicum (required all K-8)	• Use data to differentiate • Plan for differences from the beginning (using Universal Design for Learning which differentiates for learning style, interest, and level of mastery) • Present new information in a variety of ways • Allow students to have options • Modify outcomes (outcomes for some students might be RL.4.1 while G&T student might have a learning outcome of Standard RL.5.1) • Use State Standards to differentiate (using the standard from the grade above or below can be useful since the standards get more complex with each grade level) • Observe and record successful differentiation on Danielson Observation Tool • Emphasize that more of the same is NOT differentiation • Employ Tomlinson's Four Types of Differentiation: Content, Process, Product, Affect/Environment
EDU 395	Secondary Practicum (required all 5-12)	• Dispel differentiation myths (Tomlinson) • Assess content based on differentiation considerations including challenging advanced learners

		• Preservice teachers are challenged to select one strategy from each of Tomlinson's four differentiation categories and incorporate it in their practicum lesson
EDU 397	Methods: Language Arts (required all K-8)	• Text selection • Professional Learning Communities that focus on G&T Students
EDU 397 & 497	Science Methods (required all K-8 & General Science Broadfield: 5-12)	• Ability Grouping • Flexible pacing • Self-directed learning • Learning centers • Problem-based learning • Making learning more engaging by focusing on metacognition, investigation, and science as "doing"
EDU 397R & 497	Social Studies Methods (required all K-8 & Social Studies Broadfield: 5-12)	• Grouping students (beyond ability grouping) to develop leadership and academic skills • Emphasize that "levels" of development are not statistically defined – learners move through those levels at various rates • Learning centers – G&T differentiation station • Discuss implications of social norm sand constructs surrounding (dis)ability • Mock trials – using different roles in the activity to differentiate • Reading circles (emphasize not having the G&T student always being the teacher of the group and other common pitfalls of this activity) • Develop lesson plans that differentiate for at least 3 different types of learners (Ex. English language learners, learning disability, and G&T learner) • Practice responsiveness and flexibility with mock students in a practice lesson
EDU 495R	Student Teaching (required)	• Use the Danielson Framework Lesson Plan Format, which requires students to present ideas for differentiation across a continuum looking at a variety of criteria • Teacher Work Sample (TWS – the culminating capstone assignment of Student Teaching) Section One requires our students to collect information about the learners in their classrooms—information specific to differentiating the five TWS lessons

		• TWS Section Two requires our students to reflect on the collected information and how they will use it to differentiate for their diverse student classroom (and includes an IEFA component) • TWS Section Four requires students to analyze achievement data for whole class, groups of students, and take an in-depth look at one student who either did not meet proficiency or did not improve during the sequence (often students who began and ended with a perfect or near perfect score). • Differentiation data in Sections One, Two, and Four is reviewed by trained clinical evaluators who provide careful feedback on the first draft and scoring on the second draft. Section Three (Danielson Lesson Plan Format) is graded by the cooperating teacher.