Mar 7th, 11:00 AM - 11:45 AM

Differentiation of Assignments in Higher Education: A SoTL Project

Patty Rieman
Carthage College, prieman@carthage.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/sotlcommons

Part of the Curriculum and Instruction Commons, Educational Assessment, Evaluation, and Research Commons, Educational Methods Commons, Higher Education Commons, and the Social and Philosophical Foundations of Education Commons

Recommended Citation
https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/sotlcommons/SoTL/2012/13

This presentation (open access) is brought to you for free and open access by the Conferences & Events at Digital Commons@Georgia Southern. It has been accepted for inclusion in SoTL Commons Conference by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@Georgia Southern. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@georgiasouthern.edu.
DIFFERENTIATION OF ASSIGNMENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A SoTL Project

Patricia L. (Patty) Rieman, Ed.D.
Carthage College
prieman@carthage.edu
WHAT IS DIFFERENTIATION?

To differentiate instruction is to recognize, and approach teaching and learning for, students’ varying background knowledge, readiness, language, preferences in learning, and interests, and to react responsively. The intent of differentiating instruction is to maximize each student’s growth and individual success by meeting each student where he or she is, and assisting in the learning process (Hall, 2002).
Differentiation is a framework of instruction and assessment that provides students with multiple avenues for taking in and processing information, and demonstrating what they have learned (Tomlinson, 1999; Dodge, 2005).
Response to Intervention (RtI)

- both a strategy & one part in a process
- schools identify students at risk
- monitor student progress
- provide evidence-based interventions
- adjust the intensity and nature of those interventions
- and identify students with learning disabilities or other disabilities.

(http://nichcy.org/schools-administrators/rti)
THE PROBLEM AND THE PARTICIPANTS

• undergraduate students who are in elementary ed, special ed, and secondary ed;

• graduate students who are classroom teachers;

• adult ed students who are used to a different, accelerated framework of instruction;

• Target Language Experts who are English Language Learners and graduate students
THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Will there be a difference in the quality and quantity of student course evaluations after instruction of the course has been differentiated?

2. How will the themes of pre-differentiation students’ comments vary from those of post-differentiation students?
THE TRADITIONAL WAY…

- Same specific assignments for all
- Same specific due dates for all
- Little-to-no choice for students re: how to demonstrate knowledge
- Few opportunities for me to see what engages each student
SPRING 2011 ASSIGNMENTS

- Grading Chart—keep track!
- Reading Records  50
- Storytelling  25
- Book Talk  40
- Theme Basket  40
- Children’s Literature
- at the Movies  30
- Midterm  50
- Professionalism  25

523 students: your score is out of 300, not 260! See me to plan your graduate project!! (40)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Useful</th>
<th>Professor Traits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I really liked the theme book project.</td>
<td>I will be using the majority of my work in my classroom in the future.</td>
<td>She is knowledgeable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The book talks were great too because it exposed me to a lot of literature in a short amount of time.</td>
<td>Yes, I can learn much from this class.</td>
<td>The professor was very enthusiastic about the class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The professor assigned a lot of assignment. I felt like I was assigned too many books to read for this class.</td>
<td>Great class.</td>
<td>Patty is very passionate about what she teaches and she passed on her love for literature to me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The materials and assignments are really perfect</td>
<td>I truly learned a lot from Patty</td>
<td>I want to say Thank you to the instructor. She is really nice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Patty is great.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Excellent and engaging.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Environment
The class was well taught and I felt very comfortable participating in class.

### Textbook
Book was very helpful and had lost of information

### Teaching methods
Maybe mix it up a little bit when exploring the books. There are so many. Most of them are great but sometimes its a lot all at once.

and enjoyed being in her class every week.
THE SOLUTION: DIFFERENTIATED ASSIGNMENTS!

Students choose:
- Which assignments to complete
- Whether or not they want to present
- When they wish to complete
THE “MENÚ”

EDUC 4130/5230 ASSIGNMENTS SUMMER 2011

This summer we’re trying something new! In this table, you see all the possible assignments, along with their possible point values. The assignment descriptions are listed in alphabetical order. By our next class meeting, you are to have created a contract that indicates which assignment in each of the levels you plan to complete. You cannot complete any assignment more than once, and your total must equal a possible 100 points for undergraduates, 130 or more for graduates. Along with these assignments, there will also be points for professionalism (which includes participation, preparation, & attendance) and the final exam.

Reading Records - 40 pts.  
Author/Illustrator Study - 40 pts.  
Literature-Based Lesson & Research - 40 pts.

Theme Basket — 30 pts.  30  
Content Area Text Set - 30 pts.  
Listening Center - 30 pts.

Story Telling - 20 pts.  
Poem Sharing - 20 pts.  
Book Talk — 20 points

(3-5 books on same theme)

Book to Movie — 10 points  10  
Website Evaluation - 10 pts.  
Interview two children - 10 pts.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Texts</th>
<th>I loved this class!</th>
<th>Having options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>well worth the price</td>
<td>I loved this course!</td>
<td>it was nice to have options about assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for me. the book was one of the most useful books ive used and it is</td>
<td>Loved this class!</td>
<td>I was very grateful for how the instructor assigned work. We chose our projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is one that i will be keeping to utilize in my classroom.</td>
<td></td>
<td>and the due dates. This helped me coordinate with other classes and pick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>assignments that challenged and interested me in areas I could use in my own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>all was eye-opening &amp; an enormous resource</td>
<td>I loved this class!</td>
<td>I appreciated the fact that this was NOT a class of jumping through silly hoops.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have been able to use more of the books suggested as well as the</td>
<td>Great course! Highly recommended!</td>
<td>My favorite was the deligation of the assignments. Nice job!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>text in my classes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt I learned a lot that will help me in the future.</td>
<td>I know way more about the subject than before I took this course.</td>
<td>I greatly enjoyed all aspects of this class, especially the option of tailoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>or assignments to make them practical to the area of our teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PR used a variety of asssmts we could use in our classrooms.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Enthusiasm

PR was very enthusiastic about the course, content, & teaching profession. She even commented/complimented this class because she stated that due to something she learned from us, she would be making changes to how she would teach this class in the future.

This instructor was the first to exhibit the teaching method of how sincerity and excitement can truly make a difference to the desire to be in class and the desire to learn.

Professor Rieman was extremely enthusiastic and helpful.

knowledgeable

about the course, content, & teaching profession

This instructor really knows her subject matter.

She obviously has a great deal of experience

The instructor was knowledgable and helpful. She returned emails quickly and gave great suggestions when I got stuck on assignments. Instructor was very knowledgeable

She knows alot about literature and being able to pick out books for children and she was able to give us a better understanding of how to do that as well.

I was evaluated thoughtfully & given add'l constructive criticism.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understanding/Compassionate</th>
<th>Engaging</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>about her students</td>
<td>most classes we ran out of time because we were too engaged in discussion &amp; coursework--the sign of a great teacher!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Despite the obstacles (Blackboard &amp; classroom not being unlocked) this class was very interesting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There was feedback in class regarding how to run it that I think the instructor listened to and will employ in the future.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I appreciated the instructors flexibility in allowing us to be individuals with our teaching styles and methods as well as the constructive advice and comments that were never negative or empty words but were helpful and sincere.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The honest enthusiasm the instructor displayed was noted every class period and was one of the most honest I feel I have been exposed to since being a student at Carthage.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enthusiastic about children's literature and it showed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P always prepared &amp; organized</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She was very prepared and told us at the beginning of class what we were covering so we knew exactly what to expect.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The in class activities were fun as well and I enjoyed them because they were something that I would use with students in my own classroom.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instead this was a class that challenged intellectually and provided useful and practical applications that will truthfully be copied in my future!!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the whole class set up and atmosphere was great.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. i really enjoyed and learned alot from this class. im sad to see its over</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank you for making this course so enjoyable!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. I would gladly sign up for classes under this professor in the future!!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONCLUSIONS & DISCUSSION

- Spring 2011 themes
- Summer 2011 themes
- Higher volume of comments in Summer 2011
- Why I didn’t compare numerical ratings
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- How do the numerical ratings in an undifferentiated course compare to those of a differentiated course?
- How do the volume and tone of the comments in an undifferentiated course compare to those of a differentiated course?
QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?
REFERENCES


