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## **COURSE OUTLINE**

**Course Title:** Differentiating the Curriculum for Gifted Students: Using an Integrated, Interdisciplinary, Thematic Approach.

**Course Conducted By:** Curriculum Design for Excellence, Inc.  
P.O. Box 4505  
Oak Brook, IL 60522-4505

**Instructor:** Dr. T. Roger Taylor

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## **Course Description**

This five-day course will assist educators in developing a differentiated curriculum that will challenge K-12 students to understand the relationship among content areas, global issues, problem-solving, and the creation of new and unique ideas. The curriculum is designed to match the specific abilities, needs, and interests of the students. The intended audience includes classroom teachers, department chairs, curriculum coordinators, teachers of gifted students, gifted program coordinators, administrators, counselors, mentors, and school board members.

School to career programs, gifted education programs, and learning communities at the secondary level specifically benefit from the design and strategies for differentiating the curriculum.

The seminar focuses on organizing thematic units into a workable interdisciplinary structure for building academic and research skills, creativity, and motivation. The strategies taught in this program will help educators understand how to differentiate the curriculum by utilizing the key elements from the cognitive processing models, Bloom's Taxonomy, Kohlberg's decision-making model, Piaget's model for cognitive development, the creative problem-solving model, and synectics in building an integrated, interdisciplinary curriculum for students. Based on the latest research and on proven curriculum design, participants will explore ways to build student achievement and motivation through an understanding of excellent academic, affective, and creativity models. These models can be adapted to any classroom and program.

Instructional techniques will include: input from the instructor via presentations using media, role-playing, large and small group discussions, large and small group activities, research for required unit plan, outside readings, guided practice, evaluation of individual and group projects, and individual conferences with the instructor.

The participants will be required to develop a differentiated curriculum unit plan based upon specific components of Taylor's AHA! Model for Differentiated Curriculum. and other research related to exemplary curriculum writing practices, which will be presented during the course. The participants will design these units for the students in their respective classrooms.

## **Course Goals**

The course is designed for educators who are responsible for creating and/or teaching differentiated curriculum, which will offer understanding and techniques that will enable them to:

1. apply sound research concerning curriculum design;
2. develop criteria for planning differentiated curriculum based on their own state and local standards;
3. create a differentiated curriculum unit plan for students;
4. develop and use materials and strategies for effective teaching of students within a differentiated curriculum;
5. utilize human resources to support the program and to acquire mentors for students;
6. create an environment for students to accept risks for learning, and
7. build the academic, affective, and creative skills of students.

## Course Outline

This course will include five nine-hour sessions of discussion, lecture, and participant involvement to total 45 clock hours.

### SESSION 1

1. Introduction and class orientation Writing teams assigned. Determine team responsibilities.
2. Presentation: **The Big Idea: Using the AHA! (Analyzing Human Activities) Model to Differentiate Curriculum**
3. Pre-assessment activity
4. **What's Expected?** Course requirements, materials, evaluation procedure.
5. Presentation: **Your Mind is Better Than You Think, or Two Sides of Your Brain Are Better Than One.**

Classroom environments that contribute to developing academic and creative abilities in students.

Identifying teacher learning and teaching styles and student learning styles Looking at how students are affected by their own environmental, emotional, sociological, and physical needs.

Assessing the needs of students.

6. Individual assessment of learning style. Each participant will complete the survey, "Your Style of Thinking and Learning."  
  
Interaction in large and small groups concerning learning styles and appropriate teaching styles.
7. Meet in small groups by grade level and content interest level to discuss theme and plan of action in developing unit plans. Group decision about thematic unit title which participants will be writing.
8. Review topics of day and "What was learned." Questions and Answers.
9. One-to-one conferencing with instructor.

### SESSION 2

1. Presentation: **Building Academic Skills and Improving the Quality of Student Thinking**

Synthesizing Williams' Model of cognitive processing, Bloom's Taxonomy, and the Structure of the Intellect into a workable curriculum plan that can be effectively applied to any academic content area.

Asking questions that invite a variety of responses. Using “wait time” to encourage more creative, thoughtful responses. Developing higher level thinking skills, Helping students to be conscious of their own thinking processes.

2. Presentation: **Giving Students the H.O.T.S. (Higher Order Thinking Skills)**  
Working towards content mastery and improving local, state, and national test results and mastery learning using Gardner’s Eight Intelligences.

3. Small group interaction of the models and activities presented  
Work in groups to create thematic, interdisciplinary unit.

4. Questions and Answers

5. Presentation: **Brain Aerobics: Pumping Knowledge for Critical Thinking**

Activities within this session will be based on Kohlberg’s Model of Moral Decision-making.

Synthesizing the research of Dewey, Montessori, Piaget, Coles, and Gilligan concerning character education, “Encouraging students to do the right thing when no one is looking.

Building Affective Skills and ways to structure character education, Kohlberg’s moral decision-making model, and Philosophy for Children into a practical and integrated program.

6. Small group role-playing activity based on Kohlberg’s Model.
7. Questions and answers concerning models presented in above presentation.
8. Group work on writing thematic unit.
9. Review of topics of the day.
10. Questions and Answers.
11. One-to-one conferencing with instructor.

### **SESSION 3**

1. Short review of the previous two days.
2. Presentation: **Building Student Achievement and Motivation.**

An overview of the best curriculum models available and how to adapt them to any content areas.

Communicating with students and parents.

Encouraging independence and responsibility in students.

Teaching strategies for an integrated curriculum.

Selecting materials appropriate for an integrated, interdisciplinary curriculum.

3. Questions and Answers.
4. Previewing materials to get ideas for resources to use when preparing written unit.
5. Small group work in planning written unit. Instructor available to groups and individuals for questions, interaction, feedback, etc.
6. Presentation: **Wake Up Your Creative Genius: Encouraging and Enhancing Creative Abilities in Students.**

Utilizing the key elements from Torrance's Creativity Model, Creative Problem Solving, Divergent Questioning Model, and Synectics—all outstanding models for building students' creativity which can be applied to any content area or grade level.

7. Large and small group creativity activities. Applying the models to students and the classroom.
8. Questions and Answers.
9. One-to-one conferencing with instructor.
10. Small groups concerning writing project with guidance from instructor working with individual groups when needed.

#### **SESSION 4**

1. Presentation: **Using the Differentiated Curriculum Research Model**

Organizing thematic units into a workable interdisciplinary structure for building academic and research skills, creativity, and motivation.

Utilizing the key elements from the cognitive processing model, Bloom's Taxonomy, Structure of the Intellect, Kohlberg's decision-making model, Piaget's model for cognitive development, the creative problem-solving model and synectics in building a workable integrated, interdisciplinary curriculum.

Continuation of the AHA Model focusing on the teacher's role in developing academic and research skills, motivation, and creative growth so that students become producers of ideas rather than just consumers of knowledge.

2. Questions and answers concerning the AHA! Model.
3. Small group work in planning and writing the thematic unit.
4. Instructor available to assist small groups and/or individuals in writing and planning the units.
5. Materials displayed for use in unit writing.

6. Large group to share ideas and progress on units.
7. Questions and Answers.
8. One-to-one conferencing with instructor.

## **SESSION 5**

1. **Presentation:** Outline of Intra vs. Inter disciplinary units.
2. Questions and Answers concerning an Intra-disciplinary unit.
3. Continuation of small group work in writing thematic units.
4. Instructor available to assist small groups and/or individuals in planning the units.
5. Each small writing team will present in a unique way the BIG IDEA (theme) of the written curriculum unit.
6. Reflection of week.
7. Questions and Answers.
8. Post-assessment.

## **CLASS ACTIVITIES**

Pre-assessment

Class Lecture and presentations

Large group interaction—role-playing, problem-solving activities, sharing of ideas

Small group interaction—creativity activities, role-playing of different stages of Kohlberg's Model, planning and writing thematic units

Independent study and research for thematic units

Previewing materials

Recommended reading

One written thematic unit plan for use in classroom

Presentation of thematic unit topics to large group

One-to-one conferencing with instructor

Post-assessment  
**EVALUATION**

Participants will be required to:

1. Attend all sessions and be present for the entire scheduled day.
2. Participate and contribute to large and small group activities and discussions.
3. Complete one thematic unit and send to instructor before deadline.
4. Show evidence of recommended reading in discussion groups and in written unit.
5. Show evidence of curriculum writing process on a post-assessment exam.

The instructor will determine the quality of the written units. The instructor will be looking for evidence of comprehension of teaching strategies and curriculum models and if each was applied correctly to the theme and content. All components of the unit plan presented during the sessions must be included in the written assignment. Three copies of each unit plan will be due in the office of Curriculum Design for Excellence, Inc. no later than two weeks following the last day of class.

**TEXTBOOK, MATERIALS AND OTHER RESOURCES**

1. Textbook: Taylor, Dr. Roger. *Differentiating the Curriculum: Using an Integrated, Interdisciplinary, Thematic Approach*. Oak Brook, IL: Curriculum Design for Excellence, Inc., 2007
2. Handbook to be created by instructor.
3. Books and materials for display.
4. A bibliography, **Taylor's Recommended Reading List**, is attached.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Students are required to attend all classes and to participate in class discussions, small group activities, discovery and experiential group exercises and projects.

To receive an A in the course, all requirements listed above must be met in an exemplary manner consistent with criteria established for writing curriculum units.

A grade of B will be assigned if units are not received before deadline and/or presented to instructor in a form that is not consistent with criteria established for writing curriculum units.

- Appleby, A. (2002). *America's all-time favorite songs; over 200 best-loved songs in one volume*. New York: Music Sales Corp. (ISBN 0-8256-1230-6)
- Austin, J. (1991). *Applications of Secondary School Mathematics*. Virginia: National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, Inc. (ISBN 0-87353-336-4)
- Braddon, K., Hall, N. & Taylor, D. (1993) *Math Through Children's Literature*. Colorado: Teacher Ideas Press. (ISBN 0-87287-932-1)
- Butzow, C & J. (2000). *Science Through Children's Literature*. (Second Edition) Colorado: Teacher Ideas Press. (ISBN 1-56308-651-4)
- Craddock, J. (2006). *VideoHound's golden movie retriever 2007*. Gale Group, 2006. (ISBN 0-7876-8980-7)
- Dubeck, L. (2003). *Fantastic Voyages: Learning Science through Science Fiction Films*. Springer Verlag, 2003. (ISBN 0-3870-0440-8)
- Green, J. (2002). *The green book of songs by subject. The thematic guide to popular music*. (5th ed. updated and expanded). Nashville, TN: Professional Desk References, Inc. (ISBN 0-939735-20-2 pbk)
- Grun, B. (2005). *The timetables of history: A horizontal linkage of people and events*. (4th revised edition). New York: Touchstone. (ISBN 0743270037)
- Hellems, A. & Bunch, B. (2004). *The history of Science and Technology: A Browser's Guide to the Great Discoveries, Inventions, and the People Who Made Them from the Dawn of Time to Today*. New York: Houghton Mifflin (ISBN 0-618-22123-9 pbk.)
- Hirsch, E. D. Jr. (1996). *Books to build on. A grade-by-grade resource guide for parents and teachers*. (The Core Knowledge Series). New York: A Delta Book, a division of Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc.
- Hirsch, E. D. Jr., Kett, J. F., & Trefil, J. (1988). *Cultural literacy. What every American needs to know*. New York: Vintage Books a division of Random House. (ISBN 0-394-75843-9 pbk.)
- Hirsch, E. D. Jr., Kett, J. F., & Trefil, J. (2002). *The new dictionary of cultural literacy: What every American needs to know*. (revised and updated edition) Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. (ISBN 0-618-22647-8)
- Levy, R. (1999). *The New York Times Guide to the Best Children's Videos*. New York: Pocket Books. (ISBN 0-671-03669-6)
- Miller, W. (1998). *Teaching U.S. History Through Children's Literature Post-World War II*. Colorado: Teacher Idea Press. (ISBN 1-56308-581-x)
- Miller, W. (1998). *U.S. History Through Children's Literature From the Colonial Period To World War II*. Colorado: Teacher Idea Press. (ISBN 1-56308-581-x)
- O'Brien, G. (1997). *The reader's catalog. An annotated selection of more than 40,000 of the best books in print in over 300 categories*. (second edition). New York: RC Publications, L.P. (ISBN 0-924322-01-2)
- Schnurnberger, L. (1991). *Let There Be Clothes*. New York: Workman Publishing. (ISBN 0-89480-833-8)
- Strouf, J. (1999). *Literature lover's book of lists: Serious trivia for the bibliophile*. New York: Prentice Hall. (ISBN 0735201218)
- Strouf, J. (2005). *The literature teacher's book of lists*. New York: Jossey-Bass (ISBN 0-78797-5508). Additional *Teacher's Book of Lists* in other content areas can be found on our Web site at [www.rogertaylor.com](http://www.rogertaylor.com). Click on the reference library link and then click on the recommended reading list link
- Wolfe, L. (2000) *The Literary Gourmet*. New York: Authors Guild. (ISBN 0-595-08928-3)

For an expanded bibliography or to order these materials online, visit our web-site at [www.rogertaylor.com](http://www.rogertaylor.com)