

**Strategies for Working with Diverse Learners**  
**Teacher Competency Course**  
**Weber School District**

**Topic 1:** Knowledge and skills designed to meet the needs of diverse student populations in the general education classroom. *(approximately 2-4 hours)*

**Learning Outcomes:** Teachers will:

- Understand the importance of accommodating diverse learning needs in the classroom
- Identify different alternative ways of demonstrating learning that are sensitive to student diversity
- Develop strategies for implementing alternative assessments in the classroom
- Understand alternative ways to demonstrate learning that are sensitive to student diversity

**Activities:**

Read the following article that highlights the importance of accommodating diverse learning needs in the classroom, and how alternative assessments can help us achieve that goal. [Ensuring That Instruction is Inclusive for Diverse Learners](#)

**Assignments:**

- Write a 250 word (minimum) reflection on your own learning experiences. Have you ever struggled to demonstrate knowledge in a traditional assessment format? What might have made it easier for you to demonstrate that knowledge?
- Using Adobe Express or Canva, build a graphic that showcases the difference between a traditional assessment and an alternative assessment. Be sure and use terms like “performance-based assessment,” or “oral presentation,” or even “project based learning,” etc. Use file upload to turn in that graphic in .pdf format in Canvas.
- Now let’s practice adapting a lesson plan for diverse learners in which you’ll demonstrate your understanding of accommodating diverse learning needs and identify alternative ways of demonstrating learning that are sensitive to student diversity.
  - Take an existing lesson plan that you have previously worked on or plan to work on in the future and think about the importance of accommodating diverse learning needs.
  - In a casual tone (not a formal essay) identify the different ways that you could modify this existing lesson plan to better accommodate diverse learners. Think beyond traditional teaching methods such as lectures and written tests, and explore alternative ways of demonstrating learning that are sensitive to student diversity. For example, you might incorporate

- more online discussions, multimedia presentations, peer feedback or interactive simulations.
- Discuss the benefits and drawbacks of different assessment methods, such as self-assessment, peer-assessment, rubrics, portfolios and project-based assessments.
  - Discuss potential challenges you might face in implementing this modified lesson plan.
  - Finally, reflect on what you have learned from this activity, and how you might apply these principles in your future teaching practice.
- Use this rubric to guide your thinking in this assignment:
    - *Understanding of diverse learning needs:* The writing demonstrates an understanding of diverse learning needs and provides specific examples of how a lesson plan can be modified to better accommodate diverse learners.
    - *Use of alternative teaching and assessment methods:* The writing explores alternative teaching and assessment methods beyond traditional lectures and written tests, and provides examples of how these methods can be used to demonstrate learning that is sensitive to student diversity.
    - *Benefits and drawbacks of assessment methods:* The writing discusses the benefits and drawbacks of different assessment methods, and provides specific examples of how each method can be used in the modified lesson plan.
    - *Reflection on learning:* The writing reflects on what has been learned from the activity and how these principles can be applied in future teaching practice, demonstrating a deep understanding of the importance of accommodating diverse learning needs and the benefits of using alternative teaching and assessment methods.

## Topic 2: Creating an environment that is sensitive to multiple experiences and diversity (approximately 2 - 4 hours)

### Learning Outcomes:

- Build positive relationships with students.
- Create a classroom that is visually inclusive of multiple experiences and diversity.
- Create an environment that is safe for all students and free from discrimination, harassment, and interactions that are disrespectful and harmful to students.

### Activities:

Using the provided slide deck, participants will gain information and understanding about creating an environment that is sensitive to multiple experiences and diversity.

[Link to Slide Deck](#) (Module 2)

**Assignments:****Part 1: Building Positive Relationships with Students**

- Assignment: Create and submit two lesson plans that demonstrate how you will incorporate building connections in your classroom and promote a positive learning environment consistently in your lessons.

**Part 2: Creating a classroom that is visually inclusive of multiple experiences and diversity. Please complete both sections of this part of the assignment.**

- Assignment:
  - Section 1: Take a picture of your classroom. This picture should demonstrate your understanding of incorporating diversity seamlessly into your classroom.
  - Section 2: Create and submit one lesson plan that demonstrates your understanding of using diversity in every lesson.

**Part 3: Creating an environment that is safe for all students and is free from discrimination, harassment, and interactions that are disrespectful and harmful to students. Please choose one scenario to respond to.**

- Assignment: Read through these two scenarios and choose one scenario to explain how you would de-escalate the situation, work with the students involved, and report the incident to your administrator.
  - Scenario 1: A student comes into your classroom and yells a racial slur across the room. The student is angry and has targeted a student of color when they say the slur. Please outline the steps you would take to de-escalate the situation, work with the students involved, and report it to your administrator.
  - Scenario 2: A group of students walk by singing a song that, as they are singing, they yell out a racial slur that is used in the song. Students around the group turn and look uneasy by what was said. Please outline the steps you would take to de-escalate the situation, work with the students involved, and report it to your administrator.

**Topic 3: Incorporating language development into planning, instruction, and intervention for students learning English, using their first language as an asset while supporting development of English proficiency (approximately 3 - 4 hours).**

**Learning Outcomes:** Participants will:

- Identify the language abilities of the language learners in the classroom.
- Provide support for students while they are building their language proficiency.
- Implement strategies to build language acquisition for language learners in the classroom.

**Activities:**

Using the provided slide deck, participants will gain information and understanding about providing support for students who are learning English.

[Link to Slide Deck](#) (Module 5)

**Assignments:**

Assignment 1:

- Using this Vocabulary Explicit Routine and following Anita Archer's video (in the Slide Deck), video yourself explicitly teaching a vocabulary word for an upcoming lesson. Upload the video.

Assignment 2:

- Using the assignment template complete the following tasks:
  1. Locate WIDA scores for one of your MLL students, or use a [sample WIDA report](#) and add scores to the [assignment template](#).
  2. Find the *Can Do Descriptors* for the students grade level for all four language domains and add the appropriate ones to the template.
    - [Can Do Descriptors Grades 1-2](#)
    - [Can Do Descriptors Grades 3-5](#)
    - [Can Do Descriptors Grades 6-8](#)
    - [Can Do Descriptors Grades 9-12](#)
  3. Think of an ELL student in your class (or use the sample report) and consider where the student is in their language development according to their WIDA scores and the Can Do Descriptors.
  4. Write a 3-5 paragraph reflection on what type of support and scaffold you might provide for this student to enable them to participate in grade-level content and activities.
  5. Think of an upcoming lesson. Write the learning objective(s) and language objective(s) for the students.

**Topic 4: Effectively communicating and collaborating with parents, colleagues, and administration (approximately 1 - 2 hours).**

**Learning Outcomes:**

Teachers will build strong connections with parents/guardians and families, faculty and staff in each building and administrators to support students in the school.

**Activities:**

Using the provided Slide Deck participants will listen and read through the presentation to gain information and understanding about communicating and collaborating with parents, colleagues, and administration.

[Link to Slide Deck](#) (Module 4)

Additional Resources can be found in Module 4 (Restorative Practices, Title VI, Section 504, Equal Rights for All Students, Student Learning Cycle)

### **Assignments:**

#### **Assignment 1:**

- Submit one example of a way you have or plan to communicate with parents, one example of a way you plan to communicate and collaborate with colleagues and one example of how you plan to communicate and collaborate with administrators. There should be a total of three samples submitted in this section.

Here are some ideas for submissions for this assignment:

- Email to parents/guardians
- Newsletter to parents/guardians
- Notes home about student successes
- Any type of example that demonstrates how you have collaborated with your colleagues
- Any type of example that demonstrates how you have collaborated and communicated with your administration

#### **Assignment 2:**

- Choose one of the following scenarios and submit a sample of an email or a conversation script you would use.
- Scenario 1: You notice a student who was previously excited about learning in your class has come to your class the last few days upset. The student comes to class and is disruptive and shouts across the room. Write a sample email or a script of a phone conversation you may have with a parent about your concerns about the student.
- Scenario 2: Your department chair has asked you to bring your grade-level data to your next meeting. You are happy to do this but are not sure how the team gathers their data. Write an email or a script you would use to work with your colleagues regarding this situation.
- Scenario 3: You notice there is a student on your roll who has been absent from your class for the last two weeks. You are concerned about this student because you have tried to contact their parent/guardian, but have not heard back from them. Write an email or script you would use to communicate your concerns to your administrator.