



Education 5850 Diverse Learners

Faculty of Education, University of Lethbridge

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*In all affairs it's a healthy thing now and then to hang a question
mark on the things you have long taken for granted.*

Bertrand Russell

EDUC 5850 Diverse Learners is a course that explores the very definition of what diversity entails when thinking about how humans learn; what exactly do we mean when we say diverse learners? This course also explores potential avenues to consider before designing instruction or learning opportunities for diverse learners. How can we design instruction to address diversity of all forms within classroom settings? To assist with this, students in this course will contribute to a shared library of resources and teaching approaches that they find and create. Finally, this course seeks to deconstruct, and then reconstruct, our personally held beliefs, assumptions, understandings and approaches to teaching when considering the variability of the learners we have in our classrooms.

Please Note: This is a self-directed online course. After just having completed a course with me online, you have a pretty good idea of how I look to you to be independent learners. As before, I expect that you will self-engage and take responsibility to glean everything you can from this course. You CAN choose to work with a friend on some of the assignments if you choose to, but for the most part you will work independently to complete this course.



I. Course Objectives

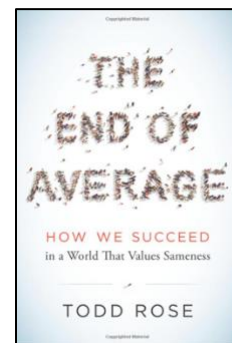
Upon completion of this course, you will;

1. ...be confronted with multiple viewpoints for consideration as you come to terms with what a Diverse Learner is to you.
2. ...develop a personal philosophy and constitution about what a Diverse Learner is.
3. ...create a representation (some form of work of art) of what Diverse Learner means to you.
4. ...add to your Resource Library (Go-to-Portfolio) methods and approaches to meeting the needs of the Diverse Learner. This may entail a collection of websites and articles and teaching ideas from your colleagues.
5. ...create a workshop/PD session to inform your colleagues of how to teach diverse learners.

II. Course Textbook

Rose, T. (2016). *The end of average: How we succeed in a world that values sameness*. New York: Harper Collins.

“Every day we are measured against the yardstick of averages, judged according to how closely we resemble it or how far we deviate from it. The assumption that metrics comparing us to an average—like development milestones, GPAs, personality assessments, standardized test results, and performance review ratings—reveal something meaningful about our potential is so ingrained in our consciousness that we rarely question it. That assumption, says Harvard’s Todd Rose, is spectacularly—and scientifically—Wrong.”



III. Course Format

This is an online course. We will use Moodle as the platform on which all assignments and readings will be posted. The format used in this course involves 4 on-line approaches:

- (1) **Readings & Viewings:** You are assigned to read *The End of Average* and other articles posted on Moodle (see *Reading Schedule*, section IX). As well, there will be other forms of media used to provide ideas and information about Diverse Learners, such as videos, interviews, podcasts, etc. These will provide some of the fodder needed to stimulate your thinking about diverse learners and how we think about human learning in general.
- (2) **Writing & Posting:** From these readings you will answer a series of Challenge Questions that are designed to have you think about issues pertinent to the topic, as well as reflect on your own assumptions and beliefs about diverse learners.
- (3) **Teaching & Learning:** You will work independently (not in groups for this assignment, sorry) to complete a Professional Development session for your colleagues in this course. You will choose a topic from the *Topics List* (See section X below) and post your session on Moodle for others to access and download to their own Go-To Portfolio. This is the method we will use to address the “How do I teach diverse learners?” section of the course.
- (4) **Resource Development & Sharing:** Based on all the resources from this course and others that you find, you will add to your Go-To Portfolio that you created or maintained in your last course. The idea here is that as your colleagues post their PD sessions to Moodle, along with the one that you will develop, you can copy it into your own Go-To Portfolio for later reference and use. Also, you will share with the group your creative response to the Interpretive Project (described later) and hopefully you will post several resources to the *Shared Resource Library* section on Moodle.

If man is to survive, he will have learned to take a delight in the essential differences between men and between cultures. He will learn that differences in ideas and attitudes are a delight, part of life's exciting variety, not something to fear.

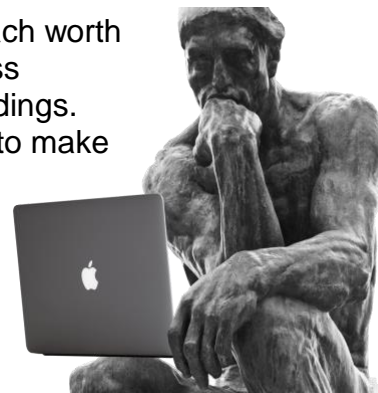
Gene Roddenberry

IV. Course Assignments and Evaluation Scheme

This course is designed primarily to address what you believe, what you think, what assumptions you hold about diverse learners and then facilitate the process of reconstructing a personal ethic that guides your future decision-making about diverse learners. The goal here is to encourage you to think about what you know—or think you know—about human learning as it relates to the great variability that characterizes all of us...and then confront the all-important question of ‘now what?’ as it relates to teaching.

• Assignment 1: Challenge Questions **40%**

You will choose 4 Challenge Questions from a menu of options (each worth 10%) during the course. These questions will be attempt to address concepts and issues raised in *The End of Average* and course readings. These are opinion pieces but you can add any references you like to make your point. This will occur approximately once a month, but unlike your last course with me, you DO NOT have to respond to your colleagues’ postings. Also, you don’t have to worry about APA or any particular format.



- 500-1000 words...or more if you’d like
- The option of expressing your opinion in another format (ie; concept diagram, handwritten notes, video, recording, podcast, etc.)
- Opinion pieces, philosophical, ideological, rants, poems, etc. However you want to address the question is fine.
- Submit written work as a pdf on Moodle. If you are using other formats please ensure that you can submit it in some way.

Please note: It is your responsibility to ensure that the material gets to me. If you need me to download an app or something to open your material, please help me know how to do this. I like to learn new things, but I no longer have a 14 year old living in my home to help me figure stuff out.

• Assignment 2: Professional Development Session **25%**

Part A: You will develop a professional development session for your colleagues to help cover all of the “How To” material in the course. You will choose from the *Topics List*, or suggest your own, on how to teach diverse students with specific characteristics. For

example, “How to teach students of culturally diverse backgrounds” or “How to establish a community of learners in a diverse urban classroom.” You can use your creativity here as well. Maybe you’d rather do a podcast, documentary, interview, TED Talk, Powerpoint or Prezi. Maybe you prefer to develop a handbook, a book chapter, or lecture. It’s up to you. The goal here is to have you deliver ‘must know’ material in a way that you want to deliver it.

Regardless of the method you use, there are a few stipulations:



- It must be accessible and storable on Moodle so everyone has access to it.
- It should be in the 30-45 minute time frame for speaking unless you are doing a TED Talk or interview. These may be shorter if necessary.
- It must be research-informed. This is not an opinion piece. Of course, there may be parts of it that have your experience-informed input, but think of this as an empirically-based presentation.
- You must cite your sources somewhere. You can submit a separate reference page if you need to. I just need to know where it came from.
- You are expected to introduce new material to the class.
- Part A is worth 20%

Part B: You will fill in a short critique form (3 Likert-scale items and one question) of your colleagues PD Session and submit it to me. I will compile all of the comments into one summary document and give it to the student. These critiques will be positive in nature and reflect the strengths of each presentation.

Part B is worth 5%. I know this isn't a lot of marks for viewing 17 presentations over the term, but this material is for you and I want you to review it. Besides, it amounts to only two presentations per week.

Your critiques are due by the end of the month...but you can do them any time after the PD session is posted. So, for example, all of February's PD session critiques are due by the last day of the month.



• **Assignment 3: Philosophical Stance & Personal Constitution** **25%**



The goal of this assignment is to develop and produce in written form a personal constitution of your stance regarding diverse learners. You are writing out your philosophical/ideological beliefs and standards and values and views about what you think about diverse learners. This is similar in nature to what you passed in before the course began, except perhaps it has undergone some refinements or changes.

- Two products come out of this assignment:
 - (1) A paper (no length specified) of your defense of your beliefs and views. This is your opportunity to justify the views you hold. You can provide anecdotes, personal vignettes, hunches, hopes and any idea you use to support your personal constitution regarding diverse learners.
 - (2) A 1-page Personal Constitution that summarizes your beliefs. This can be in point form or narrative. This should be something you'd be proud to frame. This is you...this is what you believe...it is a visual statement that governs your inside-out actions.

Your work will explain why you think the way you do. Why does this matter? How does it affect your behaviour and decisions as an educator, as a person?

• **Assignment 4: Interpretive Art Project**

10%

Okay, so this one is a hit-or-miss type of thing...some hate it, some love it. I want you to have some fun with this project. In this assignment you are to create some form of representation of your understanding of a diverse learner or diversity in education.

- Use your imagination: interpretive collage, sculpture, song, poem, painting, interviews, graphic, t-shirt, poster, etc.
- You need to post it on Moodle in some format; so, if you do a work of art, take a picture of it and post the picture.
- One-page description of the piece must accompany your interpretive art project.
- Your work must show intelligent design...in other words, there must be thought to it.



tesz.pl

There are lots of examples I could share with you, but here are just two:

1. Interviewing Teens: <https://youtu.be/LFNuRjM4LMs>
2. Blair Tulk (see our Moodle site)

V. Assignment Due Dates

Please note: Two PD sessions are posted each Monday to Moodle starting in week 3.

January						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	Course begins 7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	PD 1&2 posted 21	22	23	24	25	26
CQ 1 Due 27	PD 3&4 posted 28	29	30	Critiques due 31		
February						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	PD 5&6 posted 4	5	6	7	8	9
10	PD 7&8 posted 11	12	13	14	15	CQ 2 Due 16
Spring Break (no classes) 23						
24	25	26	27	Critiques due 28		
March						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2

3	PD 9&10 posted 4	5	6	7	8	CQ 3 Due 9
10	PD 11&12 posted 11	12	13	14	15	16
17	PD 13&14 posted 18	19	20	21	22	23
24	PD 15&16 posted 25	26	27	28	29	CQ 4 Due 30
Critiques due 31						
April						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	PD 17&18 posted 1	Assignment 3 and 4 are due by Saturday midnight				6
						13
					Good Friday	20
	Easter Monday					

Please note: As per the University Calendar, “essential elements of the course as specified in the course outline shall not be altered after the add/drop deadline. However, recognizing that teaching excellence requires a degree of flexibility and responsiveness to both students’ needs and emergent circumstances, adjustments to the course outline may sometimes be necessary, provided that no student is disadvantaged by the change.”

VI. Grading for Graduate Classes

Numeric Value	Letter Grade	Grade Point
97 – 100	A+	4.00
93 – 96	A	4.00
90 – 92	A-	3.70
87 – 89	B+	3.30
83 – 86	B	3.00
80 – 82	B-	2.70
Note: Any course with a grade of less than B- cannot be considered for credit in a Graduate Studies & Research in Education master’s level graduate program.		
77 – 79	C+	2.30
73 – 76	C	2.00
70 – 72	C-	1.70
67 – 69	D+	1.30
63 – 66	D	1.00
<63	F	0.00

VII. Student Conduct

Students are subject to the student discipline policy for academic and non-academic offences in accordance with the University Calendar. Student Discipline Policies available at this link: <https://www.uleth.ca/ross/sites/ross/files/imported/academic-calendar/sgs/sgs.pdf>

Additionally, in the Faculty of Education graduate programs, students are required to adhere to the conduct expectations as stipulated in Faculty of Education policies, and the Standards of Practice/Conduct, Code of Ethics, and/or the Code of Professional Conduct for the field, as noted below.

ATA Code of Professional Conduct:

<https://www.teachers.ab.ca/The-Teaching-Profession/ProfessionalConduct/Pages/default.aspx>

Standards of Professional Conduct for Master of Education Students:

<http://www.uleth.ca/graduate-studies/master-education/resources/beginning-your-program/professional-conduct>

Academic Honesty

The University of Lethbridge subscribes to Turnitin.com, a plagiarism detection service. Please be advised that assignments submitted in this course may have their originality verified using this system.

Professional Obligations and Standards

Failure to meet a deadline without the prior consent of the instructor (based on medical or extenuating circumstances) will result in a lower grade for that assignment. The University of Lethbridge subscribes to Turnitin.com, a plagiarism detection service. Please be advised that assignments submitted in this course may have their originality verified using this system.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Please do not use the names of people or schools or school boards in your discussions. Any writing or discussion board postings should use pseudonyms if it is necessary to mention a person or school. The idea here is not to use any identifying information about people in your conversations. That being said, if you do discuss situations and stories in your course work (written or online discussions) we would expect that these conversations remain confidential and not be discussed outside of the course.

The short video lectures in this course may not be distributed without prior consent from the course instructor.

VIII. Students with Disabilities/Other Needs Policy

If you are a student with a disability, special learning needs, or a recent injury that requires academic accommodation to complete the required activities and/or assignments, please follow the procedures outlined in the University Calendar.

You are encouraged to contact the Accommodated Learning Centre

(<http://www.uleth.ca/ross/accommodated-learning-centre/>) for guidance and assistance.

Counselling services (<http://www.uleth.ca/counselling/>) is another resources available to all students.

IX. Reading and Viewing Schedule

Week	Reading/Viewing	CQ
1 Jan.7-12	<i>The End of Average</i> : Introduction and Chapter 1 (pp.1-38)	CQ 1 is based on these readings
2 Jan.13-19	<i>The End of Average</i> : Chapter 2 (pp.39-58) Article:	
3 Jan. 20-26	<i>The End of Average</i> : Chapter 3 (pp. 59-76) Video:	
4 Jan.27-Feb 2	<i>The End of Average</i> : Chapter 4 (pp.77-98)	CQ 2 is based on these readings
5 Feb. 3-9	<i>The End of Average</i> : Chapter 5 (pp.99-122) Article:	
6 Feb. 10-16	<i>The End of Average</i> : Chapter 6 (pp.123-146) Video:	
7 Feb. 17-23	<i>The End of Average</i> : Chapter 7 (pp.147-164)	CQ 3 is based on these readings
8 Feb. 24-Mar2	<i>The End of Average</i> : Chapter 8 (pp. 165-182) Article:	
9 Mar.3-9	<i>The End of Average</i> : Chapter 9 (pp.183-192) Video:	
10 Mar.10-16	The Centre for Diversity and Inclusion Toolkit 1-3 Review the first three toolkits and resources	CQ 4 is based on these readings
11 Mar.17-23	Spring Break...no readings	
12 Mar.24-30	The Centre for Diversity and Inclusion Toolkit 4-5 Review the last two toolkits and resources	
13 Mar.31-Apr 6	No readings	

X. Topics List

- Differentiating for classrooms with a wide range of intellectual abilities
- Teaching culturally diverse students within the same classroom (ie: urban setting)
- How to help the eccentric, unconventional thinker in my classroom
- Helping children or adolescents be diversity-attuned citizens
- How to teach children who are prodigies or are gifted but their parents insist they remain with same-age peers
- Teaching English Language Learners and helping them stay at grade level
- Teaching that gym class, which has 5 or 6 non-athletes, to be fully inclusive, enjoyable and meet the 'needs' of all students
- The Geek, the "goof" and the Golfer: Is it possible to differentiate instruction for such a diverse group of students in Grade 12 English (30-1)?
- Is Inclusion fair? Should we even have inclusion in schools?
- Including students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing in an inclusive classroom
- Including students who have visual impairment in an inclusive classroom
- Helping Teachers be aware of the effects of Intergenerational Trauma on indigenous learners

- Teaching and community-building tips to help teachers of refugees from war-torn countries
- Bored to death: some kids say they have to 'power-down' when they come to school: How can we teach these students?
- It is often claimed that we teach in way that WE learn best. How can you help teachers think of expanding their own teaching preferences and adding to their teaching styles?
- Teaching in classrooms with a high percentage of indigenous learners
- Teaching students at-risk due to poverty or homelessness within an inclusive classroom
- Making your classroom a place of belonging for students with diverse sexual and gender orientation
- Classroom strategies to help diverse learners work together in collaborative groups
- Differentiating instruction for students with Learning Disabilities (not intellectual disabilities)
- Differentiating instruction for students with Attention deficits
- Helping students who are messy, struggle keeping organized, who lose things, and can't remember what to do next
- How can I teach the tough kid? Ideas to help the student with ODD or CD
- What is the difference between "inclusion" and "Belonging" in today's schools?
- More than watering the school plants: How to engage children with intellectual or developmental disorders in academic subject areas
- How to use the High School Athletics program to promote diversity, inclusion and belonging for all students within the school
- How to use the Drama program to promote diversity, inclusion and belonging for all students within the school
- How to use the Music program to promote diversity, inclusion and belonging for all students within the school
- How to foster a sense of belonging through school clubs within our schools

XI. Course Resources

- Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion: <https://ccdi.ca/>
Our work → Solutions → Toolkits
- <https://youtu.be/79JHMjA6tAA>
Humanize diversity and inclusion
- Heineken commercial: a great discussion starter on how we view others
<https://youtu.be/VM3A2nc4DJs>
- Inclusive Schools Network: lots of resources here for teaching all learners
<https://inclusiveschools.org/inclusion-resources/>
- Teaching Towards Consciousness
<https://inclusiveschools.org/inclusion-resources/>
- University of Calgary diversity links page: this link is FULL of great resources
<https://www.ucalgary.ca/dtoolkit/resources/ca>
- Why Teachers must face their own implicit biases

<https://www.edweek.org/tm/articles/2018/07/25/why-teachers-must-fight-implicit-biases.html>