Learning Differences II: Unpacking Learning Differences

Course Description

In this course you will build and deepen your understanding of three core constructs among which we all differ: working memory, executive function, and motivation. In doing so, you will learn how to take a strengths-based approach help your students address any challenges that they might have in these areas. If you are unfamiliar with this type of approach, we would strongly recommend you exploring our Understanding Learning Differences course, which lays the foundation for the material covered in this course. You can also attempt and submit a micro-credential to demonstrate that you know or understand the content of the foundational course prior to beginning this course. While this is not required, we do recommend that you at least attempt a micro-credential so that you can get a sense of your current level of understanding of learning differences.

In this course, we encourage your to build your knowledge of any (or all) of the three constructs. You will have the opportunity to hear student voices, watch classroom videos, dig into foundational resources, and engage with one another in the discussion forums. You will then have an opportunity to explore some technology tools that support different learning needs, as well as learn how you might use content from this course in your own professional learning communities. Finally, you will have a chance to demonstrate your knowledge by earning a micro-credential for graduate credit. In this course we offer three micro-credentials - one for each construct - giving you the opportunity to earn up to 30 hours of credit.

Course Objectives:

- Understand how to identify students' working memory abilities and strategies to support them.
- Understand executive function and how it affects student learning.
- Understand various forms of "student motivation" and how they affect student learning.
- Apply strategies and principles of working memory in your own role.
- Develop skills, strategies, and resources to support students' executive functioning skills.
- Develop skills, strategies, and resources to support students' motivation in general and across content areas.
- Cultivate mindsets and beliefs related to working memory, executive function, and motivation

Intended Audience:

This course is written for K-12 teachers, librarians, edtech coaches and curriculum developers who wish to integrate learning differences into their classrooms. Participants will need prerequisite knowledge or skill in learning differences will be able to achieve success in this course. It is recommended that participants attempt to complete the micro-credential for the "Learning Differences II: Unpacking Learning Differences" prior to taking this course.

Learning Outcomes:

As a result of completing this course, you will achieve the following outcomes:

- Understand specific constructs of learning differences, how they appear in your learners, and the ways in which pedagogical strategies support or hinder specific learning differences.
- Implement strategies that support specific learning differences for each of your learners, moving toward more personalized learning for all students

ISTE Standards Alignment

The following ISTE Standards for Educators will be addressed in this course:

- *Primary:*
    - **1c.** Stay current with research that supports improved student learning outcomes, including findings from the learning sciences.

    - **5a.** Use technology to create, adapt and personalize learning experiences that foster independent learning and accommodate learner differences and needs.

    - **6a.** Foster a culture where students take ownership of their learning goals and outcomes in both independent and group settings.
- *Secondary:*
    - **1b.** Pursue professional interests by creating and actively participating in local and global learning networks.
    - **5c.** Explore and apply instructional design principles to create innovative digital learning environments that engage and support learning.

Course Completion Criteria

Successful completion of this course will require approximately 20 hours of coursework (*Note: You must earn at least one micro-credential to receive graduate-level credit. You will receive 20 hours of credit for completing the course and earning one micro-credential; the additional micro-credentials are worth a total of 5 professional development credit hours*). You will have the opportunity to engage in the following activities:

✔ Make sure that you are familiar with key concepts from Understanding Learning Differences such as learner variability, using a strengths-based approach to learning, and that "learning differences" are *not* the same thing as "learning disabilities."

✔ Watch one or more of the students discuss how they experienced learning challenges and how their lives were impacted by individual teachers.

✔ Review foundational resources and classroom strategies related to the one or more of the constructs.

✔ Participate in discussions to share your thoughts and practices related to what you have learned about the constructs.

✔ Build up your toolbox by checking out some technology tools that can support your students

✔ Take PLC guides back to your local professional learning communities

✔ Demonstrate your understanding of the constructs by earning up to three micro-credentials for graduate credit

Assignments and Assessments

In order to earn course credit you must successfully complete the following activities:
- Engage in all forums for each construct
- Complete polls and questionnaires for each construct
- Successfully earn micro-credential in each construct

Course Outline

Module Topics & Descriptions
Digging into the Constructs This section provides an overview of working memory, executive function, and student motivation and their importance in learning.
Student Voices This section provides an opportunity to hear from students who have experienced learning challenges and how individual teachers made a difference in their lives.

In the Classroom This section provides examples of teachers using one or more of the constructs in their own classrooms.
Foundational Resources This section provides a curated selection of foundational resources on each of the constructs.
Supporting Your Students' Learning Differences This section provides actionable strategies to leverage your students' strengths to support their learning challenges.
Technology Tools to Support All Learners This section provides a curated list of technology tools to help support your students.
Professional Learning Community Guides This section provides activities from the course that you can use locally in your PLCs.
Demonstrate What You've Learned This section provides an opportunity to earn up to three micro-credentials for graduate credit by demonstrating what you've learned from the course.