

Meaningful Activities to Generate Interesting Classrooms™

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Overview

This document contains information specific to the course. For general information on PLS Classes including our academic integrity policy and more, please visit this URL:

PLSClasses.com/our-courses/syllabi.

Course Description

Meaningful Activities to Generate Interesting Classrooms is a 3-credit hour course that shows educators how to design compelling activities that engage students more meaningfully in their own learning while developing practical life skills, as well as critical thinking skills. Throughout the course, participants learn to apply five specific criteria (the SCORE model) that are characteristic of highly effective, brain-compatible activities. Participants use these criteria continuously to analyze the activities in which they participate, as well as those they plan, ensuring that each includes relevant learning and life skills, meets curriculum requirements, addresses organizational issues, plans to meet desired outcomes, and assesses mastery. With a focus on unlocking the creative potential of both teachers and their students, participants learn how to position effective activities—introductory, informational, practice, review, and culminating—throughout the entire learning process, and provide multiple pathways to learning that are highly engaging while promoting depth of knowledge.

Course Materials

For on-site and remote learning courses, each participant will receive a folder of materials along with access to digital materials. Upon registration, participants may choose to receive a printed participant manual in addition to the digital version.

Participants will receive access to digital materials prior to the first day of class. For remote learning classes, printed materials will be sent to the participant's provided address. For on-site classes, printed materials will be distributed on the first day of class.

Online class materials will be accessible through the learning management system (LMS).

Course Outcomes

Upon completion of this class, the learner will be able to:

1. Evaluate course-related, research-based literature and resources, express opinions, and make correlations to the classroom and teacher practice.
2. Expand expertise and enhance teacher practice by researching, engaging in, and sharing methods, strategies, and activities related to activity-based learning.
3. Apply course concepts by reflecting on teaching and making correlations to the classroom and teacher practice.
4. Design, evaluate, and improve activities, using an established set of criteria that align to outcomes and ensure an engaging and impactful learning experience.
5. Design meaningful activities that integrate and develop skills of life, creativity, and critical thinking.
6. Design activities that provide multiple means of engagement, action, and expression to enhance learning and deepen understanding.
7. Design game-based learning opportunities that support the curriculum and engage learners.
8. Position activities for specific purposes that stimulate curiosity; provide multiple means of representation, engagement, action, and expression; review and debrief concepts; and synthesize learning.

Course Topical Outline

| | List of Concepts |
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| Section 1: Course Introduction | Welcome and overview; build a community of learners: symbols that represent oneself; opening acts that stimulate thinking and engage the |

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| | <p>brain; active learning; how to engage students in learning; graphic organizers in the classroom; graphic organizer to analyze one’s views of education and one’s personal and professional passions; relevant activities for the classroom; reflect on content learned and make correlations to the classroom and teacher practice; complete an assessment that requires reflective practice; complete an assessment that requires the research and review of educational literature; complete an assessment that requires research of methods, strategies, and activities that expand expertise.</p> |
| <p>Section 2: Designing Meaningful Activities</p> | <p>Section overview, objectives, and research excerpts; “right conditions” and obstacles to meaningful activities; ideas to manage obstacles; stimulate thinking and activate the brain; activity that requires analysis and classification; criteria for designing, evaluating, and improving activities (SCORE: Skills, Curriculum, Organization, Results, and Evaluation); skills of life for students (communicating, creativity, responsibility, flexibility, thinking critically, and productivity); Questions for Life thinking skills and cue words; make thinking visible; assessing activities; token-based assessment activity; relevant activities for the classroom; reflect on content learned and make correlations to the classroom and teacher practice; complete an assessment that evaluates and improves an activity-based learning experience.</p> |
| <p>Section 3.1: Unlocking Creativity</p> | <p>Section overview, objectives, and research excerpts; Opening Act: third eyeball innovation; Activity: conversation station on the “creativity crisis” in education; characteristics of creative learners; barriers to creativity; Activity: give me an example; Activity: analyzing advertisements for creativity; characteristics and attributes of creative ads; how to stimulate curiosity in students; Activity: challenging assumptions; Activity: searching for alternatives; the power of debriefing; writing debriefing questions; complete an assessment that requires the design of an activity that fosters</p> |

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| | <p>creativity or creative thinking and develops the Skills of Life and Questions for Life thinking skills.</p> |
| <p>Section 3.2: Unlocking Creativity</p> | <p>Activity: creative problem solving; Activity: catalogs in the classroom; Activity: innovation design process, innovate student desks; logical and intuitive thinking skills; Activity: similes and metaphorical thinking; Activity: compelling whys for activity-based learning; relevant activities for the classroom; reflect on content learned and make correlations to the classroom and teacher practice; activity sharing session 1.</p> |
| <p>Section 4: Positioning Activities</p> <p>4.1: Introductory</p> | <p>Section overview, objectives, and research excerpts; positioning activities for specific purposes: introductory, informational, practice, review.</p> <p>Section overview; engage the brain through introductory activities; content-oriented signs and artifacts; Opening Act Activities: punctuation and <i>Doodles</i> to stimulate thinking and creativity, brain teasers, logic problems, and mysteries to stimulate thinking; Activity: logic problem; Activity: one-minute mystery; Activity: content-oriented mystery; relevant activities for the classroom; reflect on content learned and make correlations to the classroom and teacher practice; activity sharing session 2; expand expertise and enhance teacher practice in a networking exchange of methods, strategies, and activities; complete a synthesis assessment that requires the design of activities that are purposefully positioned throughout a unit.</p> |

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| <p>4.2: Informational</p> | <p>Section overview; resources for developing meaningful activities: ready-to-go activities, using easy-to-find materials and supplies, and using students as a resource (double learning); informational activities: multiple means of representation and multi-modality instruction; Activity: discovery learning; find the finish; Activity: simulations; diplomacy simulation; Activity: mining simulation; Activity: cooperative learning; 13 colonies informational display; relevant activities for the classroom; reflect on content learned and make correlations to the classroom and teacher practice.</p> |
| <p>4.3: Practice</p> | <p>Section overview; multiple means of engagement (choice), action (hands-on and movement), and expression (creativity); Activity: vocabulary word play; Activity: scoot, double meanings; Peer-teaching activities: create a sequence, vocabulary triple match-ups, what's in the bag clues, design a geo-creature for a habitat, create a constellation and myth, and write a survivor; relevant activities for the classroom; reflect on content learned and make correlations to the classroom and teacher practice; complete an assessment that requires the design of an activity that provides multiple means of engagement, action, and expression; activity sharing session 3.</p> |
| <p>4.4: Review</p> | <p>Section overview; spiral review to enhance retention and recall; Activity: QFL ask me a question; Activity: famous places and landmarks card pass; Activity: clue me in analysis and synthesis; Activity: content-oriented treasure hunt; relevant activities for the classroom; reflect on content learned and make correlations to the classroom and teacher practice.</p> |

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| <p>4.5: Culminating</p> | <p>Section overview; culminating activities; interdisciplinary learning, STEAM activities; authentic learning models; and levels of student engagement; Activity: investigate and design community architecture; Activity: live-event learning, Activity: litter and recycling; Activity: simulations, Civil War production of materials; relevant activities for the classroom; reflect on content learned and make correlations to the classroom and teacher practice; complete a synthesis assessment that requires the design of activities that are purposefully positioned throughout a unit.</p> |
| <p>Section 5: Game-Based Learning</p> | <p>Section overview, objectives, and research excerpts; evolution of game-based learning; how to design and evaluate game-based learning; competition in the classroom, game strategy, and metacognition; Game-Based Learning Activities: place value game, base-hit baseball quiz, and flyswatter facts race; plan and conduct a game-based learning experience for colleagues; relevant activities for the classroom; reflect on content learned and make correlations to the classroom and teacher practice; complete an assessment that requires the design of a game-based learning activity; course conclusion: create a commercial that synthesizes course concepts.</p> |

Course Portfolio Assessments

Correlations to Course Outcomes and Institutional Outcomes

Throughout the course, participants complete a Course Portfolio which includes a multicomponent Action Research Project comprised of several Action Research Assessments, as well as multiple Application Assessments aligned to Course Outcomes. The Action Research Assessments comprise 50% of the final grade and the Application Assessments comprise the other 50% of the final grade in accordance with the Course Portfolio Assessments table shown here. Grades are assigned in accordance with the criteria for each corresponding rubric.

| Course Portfolio | Pts. | Correlations to Course Outcomes |
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| Assessment 1: Resource Reviews | 30 | Outcome 1 |
| Assessment 2: Expanding Expertise | 35 | Outcome 2 |
| Assessment 3: Reflection Connections | 20 | Outcome 3 |
| Assessment 4: Designing Meaningful Activities | 20 | Outcome 4 |
| Assessment 5: Unlocking Creativity and Developing Skills | 20 | Outcome 5 |
| Assessment 6: Multiple Means of Engagement, Action, and Expression | 20 | Outcome 6 |
| Assessment 7: Game-Based Learning | 20 | Outcome 7 |
| Assessment 8: Positioning Activities | 35 | Outcome 8 |
| Action Research Assessments Total | 100 | |
| Application Assessments Total | 100 | |
| Course Portfolio Total | 200 | |
| Virtual Classroom and Reflection/ Discussion Forum {REMOTE LEARNING ONLY} | TBD | Outcome 3 |
| Supplemental Assessment 1: Skills of Life and Questions for Life | [20] | Outcome 5 |
| Supplemental Assessment 2: Activity-Based Assessments | [15] | Outcome 4 |
| Final Course Portfolio Total | | |

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Additional Information

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