

PLS Classes Information

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PLS Classes Mission

Our mission is to leverage the best ideas, strategies, and technologies to advance teaching and learning.

Instructional Methodology

The instructional methodology of this course focuses on developing, enhancing, and improving the instructional expertise and pedagogical knowledge base of practicing educators. Strategies include: instructor presentation of new content through short lecture bursts supported by PowerPoint presentations and applicable Web-based resources; active construction of knowledge and application of course concepts through hands-on practice; collaborative group work; in-class presentations and demonstrations; ad hoc and structured small-group or whole class discussion and debriefing; insight analysis of assigned readings; reflective practice; and application of course concepts and skills to each participant's specific content area, grade level, classroom, and student population.

Research-Based Andragogy. A professional researcher, who provides course-related research regarding the best practices in the field of education, is involved in the process of designing each PLS Classes (PLS) course. The research is a combination of seminal research and the most relevant and applicable research currently found in literature, as it relates to both the course content and the manner in which the course is designed and delivered. The research that supports each course is provided in the *Research* section of the course manual that each participant receives. The research that supports each section of the course is extracted from the *Research* section and discussed during the overview to each section. The *Research* section for each course is updated on a rotating basis to ensure that the research stays current and relevant. Each participant completes a multicomponent Action Research Project, which includes a research review of educational literature relating to the corresponding synthesis project.

Critical Thinking. Critical thinking is a hallmark of PLS courses, and the courses are designed to spiral learning and utilize a variety of thinking processes such as perception, induction, analysis,

compare/contrast, insight, appraisal, summary, evaluation, idea, prediction, and synthesis. Participants evaluate the “why” that supports best practices; express points of agreement and disagreement; apply knowledge through activities that require complex thinking processes; and utilize discussion and debriefing to make thinking visible, as they reflect on content learned and make correlations to the classroom and teacher practice.

Synthesis. Since PLS courses are designed to spiral learning, participants continually synthesize previous concepts with current concepts learned. Throughout the course participants practice synthesis, by designing lessons and activities for the classroom and conducting individual and team presentations that integrate concepts and strategies learned.

Instructional Materials

Instructors and learners will use research-based designed materials, which include an Instructor Guide, Participant Course Manual, a Course Folder of materials, and PowerPoint presentations, as well as learner-generated materials, educational literature and resources, and Web-based resources to facilitate learning.

Evaluation

The evaluation of activities and assessments will be based on defined criteria which is communicated to the participants prior to their instructional activities and engagement with the student learning targets (outcomes). Grading is based solely on the evaluation of student learning targets and the specific criteria delineated in each assessment rubric.

Formative assessment of learning outcomes is conducted throughout the course, using a variety of means that include the following: section assessments; active engagement in activities that apply concepts learned; sharing of valuable, pertinent, and/or applicable ideas and experiences; involvement in the inductive process; interactive journal entries with subsequent instructor feedback; critical or reflective responses to assigned readings; constructive contributions to class discussions in a whole-class or small-group setting; and

active participation and general attentiveness to the instructor and others. It is expected that each student will contribute to the academic quality of the course.

Summative assessment involves the completion of a synthesis Action Research Project that requires each participant to complete several Action Research Assessments, which require a review of educational literature, research of current practices, an exchange of ideas and information, and the design of a lesson for implementation in the classroom, incorporating course concepts.

Academic Integrity Policy

PLS expects absolute academic honesty and integrity from every course participant. The specific Academic Integrity and Honor Code Policies of our partner colleges and universities are embraced and enforced by PLS instructors. The following are considered to be serious violations:

- Plagiarism: the use of another's ideas, data, or words without proper acknowledgement.
- Fabrication: the use of invented information or the falsification of research or other findings with the intent to deceive.
- Collusion: improper collaboration with another in preparing assignments or projects.
- Cheating: an act of deception by which a student misrepresents that he or she has mastered information on an academic exercise that he or she has not mastered.
- Academic Misconduct: tampering with grades or taking part in obtaining or distributing any part of student work that is not his or her own.

Violation or suspected violation will be investigated and pursued according to specific college/university procedures.

Late Policy

There will be a 10% per day deduction of points for late posts and submitted assignments, for a maximum of 7 days, after which a zero will be posted. Late replies will earn no points. In rare

cases, partially or poorly completed assignments may be resubmitted for partial credit at the discretion of the instructor.

If a participant is experiencing a medical or family emergency, the instructor should be contacted ASAP, so that they can formulate a plan to help the participant successfully complete the course.

Completion Policy

To receive credit for this course, you must complete all assignments prior to the conclusion of the course. Completion of each assignment ensures that you have satisfactorily met all course outcomes, a requirement for credit in this course.

Identity Authentication

The college/university, PLS, and students share a joint responsibility to ensure that each student's contribution in an online course activity comes from that student alone. For the student, this responsibility has two parts:

1. Students are responsible for positively ensuring that every contribution to an online course created with the students' computer account is made by the student alone. Contributions covered under this policy include: written assignments; quiz and exam submissions; discussion forum postings; live participation in text-based chat sessions, phone conferences, and videoconferences. If a student allows another person to write or make any kind of submission to an online activity in the student's name, then this constitutes cheating and will be treated as a violation of academic honesty.
2. Students are responsible for ensuring the integrity of their computer account security by following the actions required of them by the PLS Acceptable Use Policy. These actions include keeping passcodes private, updating passcodes when required by PLS, and reporting breaches of the security policy to the IT Helpdesk.

Participant Professionalism Policy

As a courtesy to other participants and to your instructor, please refrain from text messaging, checking e-mail, or answering your cell phone during class time. Breaks are provided throughout the course so you can attend to personal matters. Using your personal electronic devices during class time is distracting and disrupts instruction and participant communication and collaboration. If you have an emergency or justifiable reason to leave your cell phone turned on during class time, please make arrangements with the instructor prior to the beginning of class.

Rubrics

PLS uses rubrics for grading each type of assignment. Some activities use standard rubrics, and others use customized rubrics. Standard rubrics are based on the activity type while custom rubrics are based more on the activity content.

Activities that use customized rubrics will contain a link to the rubric directly within the activity.

ONLINE CLASSES: Course Calendar

Generally, learning activities requiring replies are due by Saturday midnight Eastern time each week; all other assignments and replies are due by Monday midnight Eastern time.

Because participants from many different time zones may be taking this course, items should be posted/submitted by midnight (U.S. Eastern Time) on the day they are due. Your facilitator will post specific due dates for this course in the **Calendar**.