



Creating a Collaborative and Engaged Classroom Site-Based Participant Syllabus

Course Description

Participants in this course will examine collaborative and engaged learning, a significant shift away from the typical teacher-centered classroom. Research suggests that effective communication and collaboration are essential to becoming a successful learner in the 21st century. These threads of collaboration and communication consistently run through the Common Core Standards adopted by most states. Foundational work in this course will include the research base and operational definitions for collaborative learning, engaged learning, and cooperative learning. Participants will synthesize these paradigms and create applications for implementation into their own classrooms.

Course Prerequisites

This course is recommended for K-12 teachers and administrators looking to gain background information concerning engaged learning and collaboration research and application of these tenets in the 21st century classroom.

System Requirements

- Computer with word processing software
- Internet access connection

Text Books/Supplemental Reading

No textbook is required for this course. Critical reading of assigned articles and text is included in the participant manual.

Global Goals of the Course

1. To examine seminal and current research in the area of best practice instruction (NBPTS 3,4; InTASC 3,5,8,10)
2. To develop an understanding of the need for collaborative, engaged and cooperative learning in today's classroom (NBPTS 1,3,4; InTASC 3,5,8,10)
3. To analyze current instructional practices in order to infuse more collaborative and engaged practices to better support student learning (NBPTS 1,3,4; InTASC 3,5,7,8,10)
4. To explore possible applications for student-centered instruction in the classroom (NBPTS 1,2,3,4; InTASC 1,2,3,7,8,10)
5. To synthesize best practice research and classroom applications (NBPTS 2,3,4; InTASC 4,5,8)

Instructional Objectives

By the conclusion of this course, each participant should be able to do the following:

Module 1: Introduction to 21st Century Teaching and Learning Essentials

- 1.1 Reflect on one's personal learning experiences
- 1.2 Explore individual belief systems in relation to collaborative and engaged learning
- 1.3 Examine the need for student-centered learning in relationship to 21st century skills

Module 2: Creating an Engaging Learning Environment

- 2.1 Define beliefs for the infusion of collaboration within the classroom
- 2.2 Synthesize beliefs into tenets
- 2.3 Communicate research-based beliefs to intended audience

Module 3: Promoting Engagement and Relevancy Through Project-Based Learning

- 3.1 Investigate current whole-group participation strategies
- 3.2 Select exemplary participation strategies for implementation
- 3.3 Design an engaged learning strategy toolkit

Module 4: Pursuing Higher Level Thinking Through Active Student Engagement

- 4.1 Consider grade level factors for cooperative learning frameworks
- 4.2 Appraise feasibility of subject matter and cooperative learning strategies
- 4.3 Develop a comprehensive lesson plan for a cooperative learning project

Module 5: Evaluating Questioning Strategies

- 5.1 Reflect on current whole-group instructional practices
- 5.2 Identify targeted areas where systemic change can be implemented for more student-centered instruction
- 5.3 Apply current research concerning collaborative, engaged, and cooperative classrooms
- 5.4 Devise/plan constructive modifications to instruction

Module 6: Connecting to Students' Learning Styles

- 6.1 Reflect on students' learning styles
- 6.2 Consider steps for creating learning tasks for each learning style
- 6.3 Determine audiences for learning style preferences

Module 7: Engaging Learners through Research and Applications

- 7.1 Review research regarding engaging learners
- 7.2 Identify importance of essential questions in a collaborative learning environment
- 7.3 Consider best practice for engaging learners

Module 8: Making Learning Connections through Differentiated Instruction

- 8.1 Compare paradigms of traditional vs. differentiated learning environment
- 8.2 Explore key components of a differentiated learning environment
- 8.3 Identify D.I. strategies promoting differentiated instruction

Module 9: Designing Collaborative Learning Opportunities

- 9.1 Explore key principals for successful collaboration
- 9.2 Review roles in a collaborative classroom
- 9.3 Identify essential components of collaborative learning as defined by Danielson's Teaching Framework

Module 10: Managing a Collaborative Learning Environment

- 10.1 Identify critical aspects of managing a collaborative learning environment
- 10.2 Promote student ownership and responsibility
- 10.3 Design classroom layout promoting a collaborative learning environment

Teaching Methodology and Delivery Model

Content and instructor focus are on improvement of course participant expertise through the development of knowledge and skills related to transition planning and associated concepts.

1. Methodologies include instructor presentations, specific skill practice, discussions, audio-visual presentations, self-evaluation, project development, course readings, research/inquiry exercises, and the synthesis of new knowledge and skills with previously acquired skills/expertise in relation to transition knowledge and content.
2. The course is taught with instructor-participant and participant-participant feedback. Course content, activities, and assignments are organized into segments totaling 45 seat hours. Final projects are due within the two-week period immediately following class meetings.
3. Research-based content, presentations, and assignments are supported by textbooks and additional readings/handouts designed specifically for education professionals, educator resources in print and on the Internet, notes from instructor presentations, class activity work pages, and references.
4. Daily activities include a variety of research-based instructional approaches appropriate for adult learners. Class participants actively construct their own learning and make it personally relevant by acquiring and applying course knowledge/skills during hands-on practice and problem-solving activities, personal reflection, in-class presentations, whole-class discussions and activities, assigned

readings, research/inquiry, projects, and collaborative work in various group formats. All are designed to make it possible for teachers and other transition-related personnel across the entire spectrum to learn the same basic content and skills with an emphasis on application to their own specific content area or grade level.

Learning Assessment

Formative assessment of learning objectives for this course is conducted informally throughout the week via discussion, critiques, peer- and self-evaluations, journal entries, verbal and written instructor feedback, small-group sharing, and activities requiring the participants to make sense of new knowledge and/or skills within their realm of teaching. Additionally, three formative assessments are embedded within the course. Summative assessment for the course occurs in the form of a final project which requires each participant to synthesize class content and apply it within the teacher's specific teaching environment. Copies of the course performance assessment rubrics are included in Appendices A - C.

Topics Agenda

Topic One: Introduction and Purpose for Collaboration, Engagement, and Cooperative Learning

Review of the syllabus and course expectations as well as community building exercises for optimal colleague collaboration will be completed. Examination of individual current practices as well as goals for classroom transformation, seminal research, and 21st century learning skills will be explored and synthesized into the categories of collaboration, engagement and cooperative Learning.

Topic Two: Creating an Engaging Learning Environment

Current and seminal research concerning the importance of the collaborative classroom will be discussed and reviewed. The 21st century learning goals and core standards alignment will be explored. Participants will create a personal definition of a collaborative classroom at their own grade level band after engaging in numerous opportunities to read and discuss different examples. Participants will synthesize new learning in order to apply best practices within their classrooms. Project #1 requires participants to communicate their knowledge and beliefs concerning the importance of collaboration in the classroom to a chosen audience (staff, administration, parents, students).

Topic Three: Promoting Engagement and Relevancy Through Project-Based Learning

Current and seminal research concerning the importance of engaged learning will be discussed and reviewed. Brain research concerning how students learn best will be explored within the context of the 21st century classroom. Participants will create a vision of an engaged classroom at their own grade level band after engaging in numerous opportunities to read and discuss different examples. Current practices, taking into account needs for whole-group participation, will be explored and

assessed. Participants will synthesize new learning in order to apply best practices within their classrooms. Project #2 requires participants to begin a collection of grade appropriate whole class and small group participation strategies that can be applied in their classrooms. These strategies will be based on knowledge of brain research and multiple intelligences.

Topic Four: Pursuing Higher Level Thinking Through Active Student Engagement

Current and seminal research concerning the techniques involved in cooperative learning will be discussed and reviewed. The 21st century learning goals and core standards alignment will be explored. Participants will create a vision of how to best utilize cooperative learning techniques at their own grade level band after engaging in numerous opportunities to read and discuss different examples. Specific examples and clear roles will be explored in order to ensure fidelity to the cooperative learning strategy. Participants will synthesize new learning in order to apply best practices within their classrooms. Project #3 requires participants to plan a comprehensive project for their grade level utilizing cooperative learning strategies.

Topic Five: Evaluating Questioning Strategies

Participants will explore the shifting paradigm from teacher-centered classrooms to student-centered classrooms. Journal readings and reflections/discussions will drive the culmination of these topics into the development of new knowledge and dispositions concerning collaboration, engagement, and cooperative learning in the classroom. Participants will synthesize material and learning experiences in Topics 1-4 in order to develop a comprehensive plan for instructional change within their classrooms. This plan will include reflection of current practices, instructional areas to target, and a plan for future application of a more collaborative, engaged, and cooperative classroom which aligns with the 21st century goals. The final project asks participants to reflect on learning from days 1-4 and devise constructive modifications to current instruction.

Topic Six: Connecting to Students' Learning Styles

Participants will explore a variety of learning styles as defined by research and best practice. Learning activities include independent activities, discussions, and survey techniques designed to promote a comprehensive understanding of learning preferences.

Topic Seven: Engaging Learners Through Research and Applications

Required readings, whole-group discussions, activities and independent reflections will result in an exploration of learning theories based on the findings of Spencer Kagan, Johnson & Johnson, and other theorists. Activities include: partner-share, independent reflection, reading activities and energizers focused on promoting best practices as they relate to engaging learners through research and classroom applications.

Topic Eight: Making Learning Connections Through Differentiated Instruction

Participants will explore the components of Differentiated Instruction in a collaborative and engaging learning environment. Learning experiences include comparisons of learning paradigms and traditional classrooms vs. 21st Century learning practices. Current teaching and learning trends such as Close Reading will provide participants with tools needed to promote standards-based teaching and learning.

Topic Nine: Designing Collaborative Learning Opportunities

Designing collaborative learning opportunities requires thoughtful preparation based on the key principles for successful collaboration in an effective teaching and learning environment. Roles of all stakeholders need to be well defined in comparison to a traditional learning environment. Participants will explore how to promote leadership skills for all learners in conjunction with Danielson's Framework.

Topic Ten: Managing a Collaborative Learning Environment

Classroom management techniques in a collaborative learning environment require clear communication and understanding by all learners. Participants will explore how to design a highly functioning system designed to maximize teaching and learning opportunities while emphasizing high expectations for all learners. Strategies and techniques using verbal and non-verbal directives will be provided to participants. Discussions and activities will promote the identification of best practices as they pertain to classroom management in a collaborative learning environment.

Instructional Methodology and Delivery

Teaching methodologies of this course are designed to support intensive, graduate-level course work in an interactive setting. Instructional plans support the content of this course, which focuses on the improvement of professional teaching expertise in any or all of the following categories: assessment, collaboration, communication, diverse learners, educational reform, instructional strategies, planning instruction, productivity, reflection of practice, student learning, subject matter, and/or technology.

- Methodologies include instructor presentations, specific skill practice, discussions, audio-visual presentations, self-evaluation, project development, course readings, research/inquiry exercises, and the synthesis of new knowledge and skills with previously acquired skills/expertise in relation to transition knowledge and content.
- The course is taught with instructor-participant and participant-participant feedback. Course content, activities, and assessments are organized into 10 modules totaling 45 seat hours. Assessments are due two-weeks following the end of the course.
- Research-based content, presentations, educator resources in print and on the Internet, notes from instructor presentations, class activity work pages, references, and assessments are supported by content designed specifically for educators.

- Daily activities include a variety of research-based instructional approaches appropriate for adult learners. Class participants actively construct their own learning and make it personally relevant by acquiring and applying course knowledge/skills during hands-on practice and problem-solving activities, personal reflection, in-class presentations, whole-class and small group discussions and activities, assigned readings, research/inquiry, projects, and collaborative work in various group formats. All are designed to make it possible for educators and other school-related personnel to learn the same basic content and skills with an emphasis on application to their own specific content area or grade level.

Final Projects

In keeping with best instructional and assessment practices, this course requires participants to demonstrate synthesis and application of course knowledge in an applied final project linked to the instructional objectives of this course. Assessment of the project should not be limited to the quantity of work submitted but should carefully consider the quality and intellectual value of the work.

Final projects are due within two weeks of the end of class. Projects submitted during the third week “grace period” will have their grade reduced one full letter grade. No papers will be accepted past the grace period, and participants will, consequently, forfeit credit for the course. Papers are expected to be properly formatted and submitted to the instructor either in person or via mail or an email attachment.

Participants taking professional development unit (not-for-credit) courses must attend all scheduled class sessions and complete all formative assignments. However, they will be exempt from completing the final summative project unless otherwise noted. Proof of seat hours will be presented to the participants after completing course reflection via the student portal and all hours are met.

Grading

Throughout the course, participants will engage in both formal and informal formative and summative assessments. Points are assigned based on a four-point criterion rubric specifically delineated for each assessment that can be further defined as follows:

Distinguished: The assessment is highly imaginative; demonstrates critical thought; is unique; shows substantial application to one’s own teaching or professional position; *goes above and beyond requirements*; is creative; demonstrates both breadth and depth of knowledge of transition-related subject matter; shows individual’s personality; is professional in presentation and appearance; and demonstrates considerable effort. The assessment is exceptionally completed and demonstrates clear understanding of the tasks, gives explanations, and shows how the assessment applies to a teaching/learning situation. The assessment meets the specific criteria delineated in “Distinguished” on the course rubric.

Proficient: The assessment is well-organized and complete; is effectively and clearly presented; demonstrates clear understandings; applies what has been learned to the author's own classroom situation; clearly shows connections; is detailed; and is thoughtful and supported with ideas. A thoroughly completed assessment demonstrates that the participant shows awareness of the tasks, gives explanations, and shows how the assessment applies to a teaching/learning situation. The assessment meets the specific criteria delineated in "Proficient" on the course rubric.

Basic: This is the lowest passing grade. The assessment meets minimum requirements; includes general information but lacks descriptive detail; shows limited application to teaching/learning; and lacks originality. This denotes work that does not meet **all** aspects of standards for academic performance in a graduate-level course. The assessment meets the specific criteria delineated in "Basic" on the course rubric.

Unsatisfactory: The assessment is missing evidence or information; is sloppy and poorly organized; demonstrates only surface understandings; shows no evidence of application to the author's own teaching situation; is poorly written; and does not meet minimum standards for academic performance in a graduate-level course. The assessment meets the specific criteria delineated in "Unsatisfactory" on the course rubric.

The assessments for this course are weighted as follows:

Participation and Reflection	20%
Formative Assessments	30%
Summative Assessments	50%

Letter grades are based on 100 points possible and assigned based on the university grading scale.

Academic Honesty and Integrity

All participants are expected to maintain academic honesty and integrity by doing their own work to the best of their ability. Academic dishonesty (cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, etc.) will result in the participant receiving a zero for that assignment or paper.

Americans with Disabilities Act Compliance

In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and The Americans with Disabilities Act, participants who have any condition, either permanent or temporary, which might affect their ability to perform in this class are encouraged to inform the instructor at the beginning of the first session. Reasonable academic accommodations, aids, and adjustments may be made as needed to provide for equitable participation.

Attendance

Participants are required to attend all classes as well as participate in class discussions, small group activities, and projects. Absence from any part of the class will require that you withdraw from the class. You will need to contact The Connecting Link at (888) 550-5465 in the event this occurs.

Emergency Statement

In the event of an emergency declared by the college or by The Connecting Link, we reserve the right to alter course plans and the attendance policy. In the event of an emergency, TCL will contact the instructor/participants with alternative educational plans for the course.

Late Work and Make-Up Policy

Participants are expected to keep pace with in-class assignments and evening at-home assignments. If a situation arises in which an assignment cannot be completed, the participant is expected to make arrangements with the instructor for the timely submission of such work. All work is due not later than two weeks after the class ends. Failure to complete all work in this time frame will result in an **incomplete** or a grade of **F** for the work, depending on the reason for the delay.

University Compliance

Course content and instruction are bound by policies associated with the university granting academic credit for the course. Such policies include, but are not limited to: academic integrity and honor codes, institutional objectives, and grade grievance procedures. These policies are located within the official academic catalogs which can be accessed through the university's official website.

Alignment to the Danielson Framework for Effective Teaching

The *Danielson Framework for Effective Teaching* is designed to provide educators with a structure for analyzing and assessing teacher practice and in constructing techniques to strengthen that practice.

Compliance with National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS)

The NBPTS represents the highest level of professional achievement in the continuum of teacher professional development.

Compliance with Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) Standards for Teachers

InTASC is guided by the basic premise that an effective teacher must be able to integrate content knowledge with the specific strengths and needs of students to ensure that all students learn and perform at high levels.