

Meaningful Activities to Generate Interesting Classrooms™

Course Description

Meaningful Activities to Generate Interesting Classrooms™ is a PLS 3rd Learning course that instructs experienced and beginner educators in designing compelling learning activities that engage students more meaningfully in their own learning by helping them develop practical life skills, as well as critical thinking skills. Throughout the course, participants will learn to apply five sets of specific criteria (the SCORE model) that are characteristic of highly effective, brain-compatible activities. Participants will use these criteria continuously to analyze the activities in which they participate, as well as those they plan, ensuring that each includes relevant life skills, meets curriculum requirements, addresses organizational issues, plans ahead for desired results, and assesses effectiveness. With a focus on unlocking the creative potential of both teachers and their students, participants will learn how to infuse lessons from the entire learning process—introductory, informational, practice, review, and culminating—with the kind of highly active learning that transforms both student and subject matter, engaging each with the other in a way that yields both joy in learning and depth of understanding.

Digital vs. Printed Course Materials

Please note:

- There is a **required** \$10 material fee that provides access to digital course materials.* (The digital materials are identical to the printed materials.)
- You have the **option** to purchase a printed manual (and other printed corresponding materials) for an additional \$30.

**After you register and your class is confirmed, you will receive a confirmation letter outlining how to access digital materials. If you choose digital materials (no printed materials), there may be a small file of pages you will need to print and bring to class. You will also need to access these digital materials during the course, so be prepared to bring your own device (B.Y.O.D.) to each class. If you pre-ordered a printed manual, it will be provided to you on the first day of class.*

Required Text

Selected research articles, research summaries, and topical articles drawn from educational literature and the course manual.

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, implementing, and sharing methods, strategies, and activities related to, but not included in, the course curriculum.
3. Develop an action plan for implementation based on a synthesis of the methods, strategies, and activities learned.
4. Apply course concepts by reflecting on teaching and making correlations to the classroom and teacher practice.
5. Design activities that require creative thinking and develop learning and life skills.
6. Design meaningful activities that support content and develop learning and life skills.
7. Design game-based learning opportunities that support content and develop learning and life skills.
8. Design effective movement and hands-on activities that support content and develop learning and life skills.
9. Plan, evaluate, and improve activities, using an established set of criteria.
10. Debrief activities by making connections to content learned, as well as the learning and life skills used.

Institutional Outcomes

(To be listed here)

Course Topical Outline

	List of Concepts
Section 1: Course Overview	Course overview; building a community of learners by sharing one's qualities and vision; reflecting on content learned and making connections to the classroom
Section 2: Creative Planning	Discussing the section overview, objectives, and research excerpts; activities that get the brain activated and encourage possibility thinking; identifying the Skills of Life (learning and life skills) students need to develop; exploring Questions for Life and the cue words that denote the thinking skills required; utilizing criteria (skills, curriculum, organization, results, and evaluation/assessment) to plan, evaluate, and improve activities (SCORE); examining what students perceive as worthwhile challenges; experiencing poster activities that support curriculum; brainstorming resources and Web sites for developing activities; examining ways in which to assess activities using rubrics; using rubrics to evaluate a creative product; adapting activities to one's content area and grade level; reflecting on content learned and making connections to the classroom and teacher practice; reviewing educational literature; designing and evaluating activities for the classroom using an established set of criteria
Section 3: Unlocking Teacher and Student Creativity	Discussing the section overview, objectives, and research excerpts; defining creativity; recognizing the characteristics of creative learners, recognizing creativity in advertisements; developing student creativity through "double learning" (engaging students in creating and leading activities), experiencing activities that require creativity, searching for alternatives, making comparisons, challenging assumptions, brainstorming, innovating, taking risks, being open to new ideas, stimulating the whole brain, engaging in creative problem-solving, and using metaphors and similes to make connections; adapting activities to one's content area and grade level; reflecting on content learned and making connections to the classroom and teach practice; designing activities that require creative thinking and develop learning and life skills
Section 4: Planning the Day to Include Activities	Discussing the section overview, objectives, and research excerpts; examining when to use activities; experiencing introductory activities to activate the brain for learning; setting targets to foster mind expansion; using logic problems and problem-based learning activities to encourage discovery; experiencing informational activities that utilize simulations and

	List of Concepts
Section 4: Planning the Day to Include Activities	cooperative learning; experiencing practice activities that involve games, races, and game-based learning; understanding the importance of interacting appropriately, game strategy, and metacognition; utilizing debriefing to make connections to content, evaluate interpersonal and life skills used, and identify the thinking processes; planning, evaluating, improving, and experiencing game-based learning activities based on a set of established criteria; experiencing review activities that require analyzing and synthesizing clues and examining corresponding photographs; experiencing culminating activities that utilize project-based learning and live-event learning; brainstorming activities that can be used in project-based learning opportunities; planning activities to fit the class period; discussing the advantages, disadvantages, and alternative using problem-solving; designing game-based learning experiences; reflecting on content learned and making connections to the classroom and teacher practice; sharing and exchanging ideas and expertise
Section 5: Movement and Hands-On Activities	Discussing the section overview, objectives, and research excerpts; discussing places to find inexpensive materials for activities; experiencing movement and hands-on activities that involve questioning and simulations; planning and delivering activities for others; developing an action plan for implementation of course concepts; participating a closing activity that requires creativity and review content; reflecting on content learned and making connections to the classroom and teacher practice

Course Portfolio Assessments

Correlations to Course Outcomes and Institutional Outcomes

Throughout the course, participants complete Action Research and five assessments to demonstrate learning. The Action Research is 50% of the final grade and the Assessments are 50% of the final grade. Grades are assigned in accordance with the criteria-specific rubrics for the Action Research and each assessment.

Course Portfolio: Action Research and Assessments	Pts.	Correlations to Course Outcomes	Correlations to Institutional Outcomes
Action Research 1: Resource Reviews	30	Outcome 1	
Action Research 2: Expanding Expertise	40	Outcome 2	
Action Research 3: Action Plan for Implementation	30	Outcome 3	
Action Research	100		
Assessment 1: Reflection Connection	20	Outcome 4	
Assessment 2: Unlocking Creativity and Developing Skills	20	Outcome 5	
Assessment 3: Designing Meaningful Activities	20	Outcomes 6 and 9	
Assessment 4: Game-Based Learning	20	Outcomes 7, 9 and 10	
Assessment 5: Movement and Hand-On Activities	20	Outcomes 8, 9 and 10	
Assessments Total	100		
Supplemental Assessment 1: Activities Assessment	TBD	Outcome 9	
Supplemental Assessment 2: Introductory Activities	TBD	Outcome 6	
Course Portfolio Assessments Total	200		

Instructional Materials

Instructors and learners will use instructor-generated materials, learner-generated materials, print resources, and Web-based resources to facilitate 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, active construction of knowledge during hands-on practice and problem solving, collaborative group work, personal reflection, in-class presentations and demonstrations, ad hoc and structured small-group or whole class discussion, analysis of assigned reading, and application of course content and skills to each participant's individual grade level, subject area, and classroom.

Evaluation

The evaluation of learner work will be based on the defined criteria for learner assessments, which will be processed with learners 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 defined criteria for learner assessments.

Formative assessment of learning outcomes is conducted throughout the course, using a variety of means that include the following: completion of assessments; constructive contributions to class discussions (whole-class as well as small-group); sharing of valuable, pertinent, and/or applicable ideas and experiences; involvement in the inductive process; interactive journal entries with written instructor feedback; critical or reflective responses to assigned readings; oral discussions in a whole-class or small-group setting; 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 includes the completion of a culminating assignment that requires the participant to synthesize class content, apply it to his or her specific teaching situation, and complete a reflective action plan for implementing the major components of content and skill acquired during the course.

Grading Policy

(To be listed here)

Absence and Tardy Policy

(To be listed)

PLS 3rd Learning's Academic Integrity Policy

PLS 3rd Learning 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 3rd Learning 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.

Identity Authentication

The college/university, PLS 3rd Learning, 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 3rd Learning Acceptable Use Policy. These actions include keeping passcodes private, updating passcodes when required by PLS 3rd Learning, 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.

Alignments to *The Framework for Teaching Evaluation Instrument*

Each PLS 3rd Learning course is aligned to the components in ***The Framework for Teaching Evaluation Instrument*** by The Danielson Group. The alignments for this course are:

DOMAIN 1: PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- 1a. Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy
- 1b. Demonstrating Knowledge of Students
- 1c. Setting Instructional Outcomes
- 1d. Demonstrating Knowledge of Resources
- 1e. Designing Coherent Instruction
- 1f. Designing Student Assessments

DOMAIN 2: CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

- 2a. Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport
- 2b. Establishing a Culture for Learning

DOMAIN 3: INSTRUCTION

- 3a. Communicating with Students
- 3b. Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques
- 3c. Engaging Students in Learning
- 3d. Using Assessment in Instruction

DOMAIN 4: PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4a. Reflecting on Teaching
- 4d. Participating in the Professional Community
- 4e. Growing and Developing Professionally

Course Outcome Correlations With Model Core Teaching Standards (InTASC)

Course Outcomes

Standard 1: Learner Development

The teacher understands how learners grow and develop, recognizing that patterns of learning and development vary individually within and across the cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical areas, and designs and implements developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences.

**1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7,
8, 9, 10**

Standard 2: Learning Differences

The teacher uses understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards.

**1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7,
8, 9, 10**

Standard 3: Learning Environments

The teacher works with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self motivation.

**1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7,
8, 9, 10**

Standard 4: Content Knowledge

The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and creates learning experiences that make these aspects of the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners to assure mastery of the content.

**1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7,
8, 9, 10**

Standard 5: Application of Content

The teacher understands how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem solving related to authentic local and global issues.

**1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7,
8, 9, 10**

Standard 6: Assessment

The teacher understands and uses multiple methods of assessment to engage learners in their own growth, to monitor learner progress, and to guide the teacher's and learner's decision making.

**1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7,
8, 9, 10**

Standard 7: Planning for Instruction

The teacher plans instruction that supports every student in meeting rigorous learning goals by drawing upon knowledge of content areas, curriculum, cross-disciplinary skills, and pedagogy, as well as knowledge of learners and the community context.

**1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7,
8, 9, 10**

Standard 8: Instructional Strategies

The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage learners to develop deep understanding of content areas and their connections, and to build skills to apply knowledge in meaningful ways.

**1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7,
8, 9, 10**

Standard 9: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice

The teacher engages in ongoing professional learning and uses evidence to continually evaluate his/her practice, particularly the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (learners, families, other professionals, and the community), and adapts practice to meet the needs of each learner.

1, 2, 3, 4, 9

Standard 10: Leadership and Collaboration

The teacher seeks appropriate leadership roles and opportunities to take responsibility for student learning, to collaborate with learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals, and community members to ensure learner growth, and to advance the profession.

1, 2, 3, 4

The Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) standards were developed by the Council of the Chief State School Officers and member states. Copies may be downloaded from the Council's website at <http://www.ccsso.org/intasc>

Council of Chief State School Officers. (2011, April). Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) Model Core Teaching Standards: A Resource for State Dialogue. Washington, DC: Author.

http://www.ccsso.org/Documents/2011/InTASC_Model_Core_Teaching_Standards_2011.pdf

Course Outcome Correlations With National Board for Professional Teaching (NBPTS) Five Core Propositions

Proposition 1: Teachers are Committed to Students and Their Learning.

Course Outcomes

NBCTs are dedicated to making knowledge accessible to all students. They believe all students can learn.

**1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,
7, 8, 9, 10**

They treat students equitably. They recognize the individual differences that distinguish their students from one another and they take account for these differences in their practice.

**1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,
7, 8, 9, 10**

NBCTs understand how students develop and learn.

**1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,
7, 8, 9, 10**

They respect the cultural and family differences students bring to their classroom.

1, 2, 3, 4, 10

They are concerned with their students' self-concept, their motivation and the effects of learning on peer relationships.

**1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,
7, 8, 9, 10**

NBCTs are also concerned with the development of character and civic responsibility.

**1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,
7, 8, 9, 10**

Proposition 2: Teachers Know the Subjects They Teach and How to Teach Those Subjects to Students.

NBCTs have mastery over the subject(s) they teach. They have a deep understanding of the history, structure and real-world applications of the subject.

**1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,
7, 8, 9, 10**

They have skill and experience in teaching it, and they are very familiar with the skills gaps and preconceptions students may bring to the subject.

**1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,
7, 8, 9, 10**

They are able to use diverse instructional strategies to teach for understanding.

**1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,
7, 8, 9, 10**

Proposition 3: Teachers are Responsible for Managing and Monitoring Student Learning.

NBCTs deliver effective instruction. They move fluently through a range of instructional techniques, keeping students motivated, engaged and focused.

**1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,
7, 8, 9, 10**

They know how to engage students to ensure a disciplined learning environment, and how to organize instruction to meet instructional goals.

**1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,
7, 8, 9, 10**

NBCTs know how to assess the progress of individual students as well as the class as a whole.

**1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,
7, 8, 9, 10**

They use multiple methods for measuring student growth and understanding, and they can clearly explain student performance to parents.

**1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,
7, 8, 9, 10**

Proposition 4: Teachers Think Systematically about Their Practice and Learn from Experience.

NBCTs model what it means to be an educated person – they read, they question, they create and they are willing to try new things.

**1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,
7, 8, 9, 10**

They are familiar with learning theories and instructional strategies and stay abreast of current issues in American education.

**1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,
7, 8, 9, 10**

They critically examine their practice on a regular basis to deepen knowledge, expand their repertoire of skills, and incorporate new findings into their practice.

**1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,
7, 8, 9, 10**

Proposition 5: Teachers are Members of Learning Communities.

NBCTs collaborate with others to improve student learning.

**1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,
7, 8, 9, 10**

They are leaders and actively know how to seek and build partnerships with community groups and businesses.

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

They work with other professionals on instructional policy, curriculum development and staff development.

**1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,
7, 8, 9, 10**

They can evaluate school progress and the allocation of resources in order to meet state and local education objectives.

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They know how to work collaboratively with parents to engage them productively in the work of the school.

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

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