

PBS TeacherLine Course Syllabus

Title

Improving Learning Through Collaboration (formerly INST150)

Target Audience

This course is intended for pre-service and in-service teachers of grades K-12.

Prerequisites

To successfully participate and complete the assignments in this course, the learner must:

- Have past experience using the classroom computer.
- Have past experience working with the Internet.
- Be familiar with taking an online course or have completed the PBS “Practice Learning Online with TeacherLine” course.
- Be familiar with elementary, middle school, or high school educational content.

Course Description

The use of small-group learning has greatly increased over the past 30 years. Informal collaborative projects have grown into structured, cooperative group work. Cooperative learning became especially popular in the early 1980s and has matured and evolved since. With a growing body of research and ample evidence of its effectiveness, now is the perfect time to take advantage of the benefits that cooperative and collaborative learning can bring to the classroom.

Instructor/Facilitator

See instructor/facilitator sheet.

Credits

To be determined by college or university.

Goals

The overall goal of this course is for learners to master the key principles of cooperative and collaborative learning. Learners will see these principles applied in classrooms and lesson plans and will learn specific tips and strategies on how to implement those ideas. As they progress through this course, learners should keep the following goals in focus.

At the end of this course, learners will:

- Understand the key principles of cooperative and collaborative learning;
- Understand the particular benefits of different cooperative and collaborative group formations;
- Recognize the role of technology in cooperative/collaborative assignments;
- Understand how standards can be met using these specific strategies;
- Apply cooperative and collaborative teaching techniques to improve student learning.

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Outline of Content and Assignments

After previewing the documents in the Course Information area, learners will proceed to Course Content to complete the following six sessions, working through each session in order. Throughout the sessions, learners are asked to articulate their ideas in various forms: they are encouraged to reflect on their ideas and experiences in their online journal; the discussions in the discussion forum are designed to allow learners to glean information from other learners' experiences. As a final project, learners create a lesson plan incorporating cooperative and collaborative techniques, and then implement the lesson plan in their classrooms. Finally, they will reflect on the lesson plan implementation.

This course is designed to address ISTE's *Educational Technology Standards and Performance Indicators for All Teachers*. These standards define the fundamental concepts, knowledge, skills, and attitudes for applying technology in educational settings.

This course specifically addresses the following ISTE NETS*T:

I. Technology Operations and Concepts.

Teachers demonstrate a sound understanding of technology operations and concepts. Teachers:

- A. Demonstrate introductory knowledge, skills, and understanding of concepts related to technology (as described in the ISTE National Education Technology Standards for Students).

II. Planning and Designing Learning Environments and Experiences.

Teachers plan and design effective learning environments and experiences supported by technology. Teachers:

- A. Design developmentally appropriate learning opportunities that apply technology-enhanced instructional strategies to support the diverse needs of learners.
- B. Apply current research on teaching and learning with technology when planning learning environments and experiences.
- E. Plan strategies to manage student learning in a technology-enhanced environment.

III. Teaching, Learning, and the Curriculum.

Teachers implement curriculum plans that include methods and strategies for applying technology to maximize student learning. Teachers:

- B. Use technology to support learner-centered strategies that address the diverse needs of students.
- C. Identify and locate technology resources and evaluate them for accuracy and suitability.
- D. Plan for the management of technology resources within the context of learning activities.

VI. SOCIAL, ETHICAL, LEGAL, AND HUMAN ISSUES.

Teachers understand the social, ethical, legal, and human issues surrounding the use of technology in PK-12 schools and apply those principles in practice. Teachers:

- E. Facilitate equitable access to technology resources for all students.



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Visit cnets.iste.org for a full list of the ISTE's *Educational Technology Standards and Performance Indicators for All Teachers* and more information about these standards.

Session 1: Cooperative and Collaborative Learning Overview

Learners will begin this session by introducing themselves to fellow learners in the discussion forum and by setting some goals. Learners will also jump right into the subject matter by creating questions to guide their learning. Finally, they will learn the specific elements of cooperative and collaborative learning and identify which of these are already in place in their classrooms.

By the end of this session, learners will be able to:

- Define their professional goals and expectations for this course in their online journal.
- Explain previous knowledge and experiences with cooperative and collaborative learning.
- Discuss how teachers can prepare for a shift toward using cooperative and collaborative learning techniques.
- Analyze characteristics of collaborative learning already in place in their classrooms and illustrate how they might apply a collaborative learning model.

Read

- Lesson plans from PBS:
 - Analyzing Your School's Energy Consumption
 - Smoking Prevention Campaign lesson plan
 - Discarded Chimpanzees: What Can We Do?
- "What is the Collaborative Classroom?"

View video

- "City Planner"

Write in online journal

- Reflect on expectations for this course.
- Reflect on prior knowledge.
- Reflect on the following questions: "Which of the characteristics of collaborative learning that you read about in the article already exist in your classroom? How might student and teacher roles change as you move toward making your classroom more collaborative? How will you address the challenges that are likely to arise?"

Participate in an online discussion

- Introduce themselves to other learners.
- Discuss what teachers can do to prepare themselves for a shift toward using cooperative and collaborative groups.

Additional Resources (not required)

- "Cooperative Learning: Seventeen Pros and Seventeen Cons plus Ten Tips for Success" from Kagan Online Magazine
- "Learning Modalities: Pathways to Effective Learning" from PBS Teachers

Session 2: Tools and Techniques for the Classroom

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In this session, learners will develop a collaborative activity. But first they will need to examine the challenges and solutions that may arise when using cooperative and collaborative learning groups and the elements that make an activity suitable for collaborative work.

By the end of the session, learners will be able to:

- Analyze and discuss the challenges and possible solutions for problems that may arise when using cooperative and collaborative learning group configurations.
- Analyze the elements that make an activity particularly suitable for collaborative work.
- Develop a collaborative activity that incorporates cooperative and collaborative learning approaches to learning.

Read

- “Group configurations”
- “Collaborative Learning and Multiple Intelligences: What are the Connections?”

View video

- “Testing Games”

Complete activity

- Explore “Configurations Matching Quiz” interactive
- Explore “Match the Approach” interactive

Complete assignment

- Collaborative Project Assignment – learners will work collaboratively to develop a classroom activity that incorporates cooperative and collaborative learning as well as other approaches to teaching. They will need to complete this assignment by the middle of Session 3.

Write in online journal

- Think of an activity that would incorporate cooperative and collaborative learning and elements of other approaches to teaching. Reflect on what makes this activity more suitable for group work than for individual work.

Participate in an online discussion

- Discuss the possible problems that might arise in each of the group formations and how they can be resolved.

Additional Resources (not required)

- “Adapting the Curriculum to Meet the Needs of Diverse Learners” from PBS Teachers
- “How to Develop a Lesson Plan that Includes ELLs” from Colorín Colorado
- Attention: Responses from Misunderstood Minds
- “Differentiating Cooperative Learning” from *Educational Leadership*
- “Watering Up the Curriculum for Adolescents with Learning Disabilities, Part II: Goals of the Affective Dimension” from LD Online

Session 3: Cooperative and Collaborative Learning in Action

In this session, learners will analyze the cooperative and collaborative learning strategies being used in three schools and determine which of these they would like to see in their school. They will also analyze the process of collaborating with colleagues and consider how a collaborative professional learning community might be developed in their own school.

By the end of this session, learners will be able to:



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- Analyze how cooperative and collaborative learning strategies are incorporated in three schools' goals.
- Evaluate which collaborative and cooperative strategies they would like to see in their school.
- Analyze the process of collaborating with colleagues in the collaborative group assignment.
- Explain how they might develop a collaborative professional learning community in their own school.
- Develop a cooperative/collaborative lesson plan for a unit of study in your curriculum.

Read

- "What is a Professional Learning Community?"
- "Social Studies lesson"

View videos

- "Flerlage"
- "Watching Kids"
- "Creating Games"
- "Collaboration"
- "Tim's Group"

Complete activity

- Review Web sites: "Blacksburg New School" and "Springfield Public Schools."
- Review Web site: "Wide Angle."

Complete assignment

- Collaborative Project Assignment (this was begun in Session 2.)
- Final Project Part I: Cooperative and Collaborative Lesson Plan – learners will begin writing their cooperative and collaborative lesson plan.

Write in online journal

- After visiting the Web sites of collaborative learning schools, reflect on the following: "How are cooperative and collaborative learning strategies incorporated in each school's goals? Which aspects of the schools' educational strategies would you like to see in your own school?"

Participate in an online discussion

- After reading Roland Barth's statement on non-collaborative learning, discuss the following: "What is your reaction to Barth's statement? Think about how your group worked together on the collaborative group project and consider what worked and what didn't work. Given what you've learned, how might you develop a collaborative, professional learning community?"

Additional Resources (not required)

- Media Infusion from PBS Teachers
- Learning.now Weblog from PBS Teachers

Session 4: Technology as a Tool for Collaboration

In this session, learners will examine the benefits of technology-enhanced collaboration and determine the best methods to incorporate technology into their final project.

By the end of this session, learners will be able to:



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- Describe how technology can improve their teaching and students' learning.
- Explain how to overcome the challenges of using telecollaboration and/or technology when implementing cooperative and collaborative learning.

Read

- "Strengthening Collaborative Work"
- "First Steps in Telecollaboration"
- "Wherefore Art Thou, Telecollaboration?"

View videos

- "Pollution"
- "Cleveland"

Complete assignment

- Final Project Part I: Cooperative and Collaborative Lesson Plan – learners will complete and post a draft of their cooperative and collaborative lesson plan to the discussion board, which they began to create in Session 3.
- Peer review two lesson plans by the end of Session 5.

Write in online journal

- Describe how technology can improve teaching and students' learning.

Participate in online discussion

- In "Wherefore Art Thou, Telecollaboration" Judi Harris explains the difference between cooperation and collaboration as one reason why telecollaborative projects are so challenging. Discuss how to overcome the challenges of using telecollaboration and/or technology when implementing cooperative and collaborative learning.

Additional Resources (not required)

- Children and Media from PBS Parents
- "Curriculum-Based Telecollaboration: Using Activity Structures to Design Student Projects" from *Learning and Leading with Technology*

Session 5: Tips and Strategies for Designing Your Own Lessons

In this session, learners will analyze and learn the techniques to help prevent group conflicts. These tips and strategies will help learners fine-tune their final project and implement their lesson plan in the classroom.

By the end of the session, learners will be able to:

- Formulate strategies for resolving conflicts in collaborative learning groups.
- Analyze the effects of implementing collaborative learning techniques in the classroom.

Read

- Building a Classroom Community and Bully-Free Zone lesson plan
- "Conflict resolution checklist"
- "Putting Cooperative Learning to the Test"

Complete activity and assignment

- Explore the Beat the Bully game



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- Classroom Implementation – learners will make any revisions to their lesson plan, based on the feedback received from their peers and what they have learned in this session. Then, they will implement the lesson plan in their classrooms.

Write in online journal

- Reflect on concerns about implementing cooperative learning techniques in the classroom.

Participate in an online discussion

- Learners consider the types of conflict that might arise in a cooperative and collaborative learning situation. Then, they will discuss some of the specific ways they might implement one of the strategies discussed in this section.

Additional Resources

- “Behavioral Concerns” from PBS Teachers
- Conflict Resolution: Activity Ideas from PBS Teachers

Session 6: Trying It Out With Your Students

This final session will provide learners with the opportunity to pull together all the concepts they have learned during the course through the completion of their final project.

By the end of this session, learners will be able to:

- Evaluate the effectiveness of their collaborative lesson plan.
- Analyze the effectiveness of their students’ group work and suggest ways to ensure focused and structured group work in the future
- Evaluate ways to incorporate collaborative learning so as to meet the needs of all of their students.
- Assess their learning in this course by comparing their prior knowledge and acquired knowledge in a journal activity.
- Analyze the learning experience in this course by reflecting about their professional goals and expectations in the online journal.

Complete assignment

- Final Project Part I: Cooperative and Collaborative Lesson Plan – make any necessary final revisions
- Final Project Part II: Written Reflection – learners will write a 1-2 page paper discussing the process of implementing their cooperative and collaborative learning lesson plan in their classrooms.

Write in online journal

- Acquired knowledge
- Professional goals and expectations

Participate in an online discussion

- Cooperative and collaborative learning takes a lot of time, energy and planning. Discuss whether it is worth the effort or not.

Additional Resource

- PBS Teachers Web site

Schedule



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This course is scheduled to take approximately 30 hours to complete readings, activities, video, assignments, reflections, and a final project.

Requirements

Learners are expected to:

- Complete all assignments.
- Participate regularly in Discussion Boards.
- Submit the final assignment in a timely fashion (determined by the facilitator).

Materials

Technical Requirements

- Word processor
- Internet service provider
- E-mail
- TeacherLine required plug-ins

Academic Dishonesty Policy

To be inserted by institution

Evaluation

This course is evaluated on a letter grade basis, and may be available for graduate credit. See graduate credit details pertaining to specific graduate credit institutions.

