SYLLABUS

ADVANCEMENT COURSES™
A Wiley Brand

Maximizing Teacher Success Through Small Group Collaboration

15 Clock Hours
Why should teachers take our courses?

A Focus on Student Success
Fostering student success in both academics and social-emotional growth is the main focus of all of our courses. Our courses are filled with strategies, techniques, and activities that are directly tied to improving student achievement in the classroom.

Classroom Applicable
We believe that professional development should be directly related to the classroom, so our courses are designed to include valuable resources for the classroom, innovative strategies and perspectives, and activities aimed at developing content teachers can use in the classroom immediately.

Authentic Assessments
As every subject and grade range has its own needs, we have designed our courses to include authentic assessments that mirror the type of work teachers do in the classroom. With case studies, active reading exercises, and time for developing student-facing activities, our courses provide consistent opportunities to express learning in an authentic manner.

Reflective Practice
A key component of all of our courses is time dedicated to reflective practice. Each course includes a journaling component, which prompts the teacher to connect the reading to their practice, experiences, student population, and school community.

Connection to Special Populations
While many professional development courses may tack on a section on special populations at the end, we believe that knowledge of special populations is integral to all subjects and grade ranges. The majority of our courses include direct strategies for working with exceptional students (special needs, English Language learners, at-risk students, and gifted and talented students).

Professional Learning Community
A dedicated online community space allows teachers to interact with course instructors and their peers, sharing resources, exploring new ideas, and connecting with other educators from across the country.
Maximizing Teacher Success Through Small-Group Collaboration

Course Description

Research shows that peer collaboration is one of the most meaningful forms of teacher learning. After all, no one understands what it is like to be in the classroom day in and day out like your fellow teachers. Collaborating in tailored learning communities not only helps you deepen your relationships with other teachers but also encourages meaningful growth and development. So, what do these groups look like? And, how do you make the most of them?

In this course, you will explore the value of professional learning communities (PLCs) for teacher improvement and student learning. You will investigate how to cultivate and manage these communities and also examine strategies for improving communication and dealing with confrontation if it arises. Finally, you will explore how to effectively leverage the online space for flipped professional development (PD) in small groups in order to maximize your teacher development.

Using the techniques from this course, you will be able to form and manage productive, growth-oriented groups for better collaboration among your peers.

Note: If you have taken the Advancement Courses online course Fostering Teacher Collaboration within Small Groups, we advise you not to take this course because its contents are similar. You may, instead, take one of our other courses in leadership.

Connections to Practice

This course provides the following classroom connections:

- Strategies for organizing and managing professional learning communities (PLCs)
- Approaches to emphasizing equitable learning outcomes through PLC collaboration
- Structures for different PLC formats and activities
- Resources for leveraging the PLC model for professional development

Course Outcomes

In this course, participants will:

- Examine the value of structured teacher collaboration in schools.
- Evaluate the benefits and key traits of professional learning communities (PLCs).
- Outline strategies for effective collaboration.
- Leverage the four critical questions that a PLC needs to consider in order to establish and maintain equitable instructional expectations for all learners.
- Develop structures for PLC success.
- Assess the value of pairing a flipped model of professional development with a PLC.
Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching Alignment

Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities
4d Participating in the Professional Community
4e Growing and Developing Professionally

Course Engagement and Resources

The activities and engagement options for the course have been designed to align with guidelines and considerations of Universal Design for Learning. This course aims to:

- Provide the learner with multiple means of representation.
- Provide the learner with multiple means of action and expression.
- Provide the learner with multiple means of engagement.

Your course facilitator will be available to you to answer questions and provide written feedback on your final project. Additionally, within the Moodle LMS, you will have access to a collection of community resources through which you will be able to further explore course concepts through collaboration with facilitators and peers.

Materials

Online reading, viewing, and listening resources will be provided in each module.

Method of Evaluating Student’s Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment Category</th>
<th>Total Point Value</th>
<th>Percentage of total possible points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation Assignment: Self-reflection and goal setting, concept practice questions, and discussion forums</td>
<td>5 points</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Project</td>
<td>10 points</td>
<td>70%</td>
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*Please note that you must receive a percentage of 80% or higher for successful completion of this course. Completion of all activities is required to receive credit.
Assessments

Self-Reflection and Goal Setting
This course will include a self-reflection and goal setting assignment in the first module, in which each learner will articulate what he or she hopes to learn and achieve by taking the course. Learners will be guided to reflect briefly upon their intentions for the course and to set one to two specific (SMART) goals for their learning.

Concept Practice
These automatically scored questions will appear in each module and will cover concepts discussed in the module. Immediate feedback will be provided for each question.

Discussions
Discussions will appear in each module and include questions about concepts that appear in the module.

Learners will be expected to post one original response to the prompt and respond to two peers.

Discussions will be evaluated on a pass–fail basis, per the following guidelines for completion:

- Participant satisfactorily shares thoughtful reflections and responds to colleagues in a respectful and engaging way.
- Participant provides an adequate level of detail in entries.
- Examples are satisfactorily helpful and informative and foster discussions or demonstrate substantial reflection.
- Participant’s responses are clear and well written and employ proper APA citation.

Final Project
The final project for each course will appear in the final module and include a prompt that aligns with each category (including the “evaluate” and “create” categories) of Bloom’s taxonomy, building on the concepts from each module.

Final projects will be designed for the learner to create an implementation plan that demonstrates application and understanding of concepts and skills learned through each module of the course.
The final project will be evaluated using the following rubric:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Areas</th>
<th>Does Not Meet Expectations (1 point)</th>
<th>Partially Meets Expectations (3 points)</th>
<th>Meets Expectations (4 points)</th>
<th>Exceeds Expectations (5 points)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of Course Content</td>
<td>Project relates incomplete or incorrect information about course concepts. The learner provides an unclear reflection upon how he or she will evaluate personal progress toward established course goals.</td>
<td>Project relates superficial information about course concepts. The learner provides a superficial reflection upon how he or she will evaluate personal progress toward established course goals.</td>
<td>Project relates clear information about course concepts. The learner provides a satisfactory reflection upon how he or she will evaluate personal progress toward established course goals.</td>
<td>Project relates detailed and thorough information about course concepts. The learner provides a detailed reflection upon how he or she will evaluate personal progress toward established course goals.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alignment of Student Outcomes</td>
<td>Project’s alignment to course learning outcomes is unclear or absent.</td>
<td>Project aligns with 1–2 course learning outcomes.</td>
<td>Project aligns with 2–3 course learning outcomes.</td>
<td>Project aligns with 3–5 course learning outcomes.</td>
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Course Outline

Module 1

If you work in any educational setting, it is likely that you have meetings with other educators. In fact, you probably spend a great deal of time "meeting." Are these meetings effective, though? Do they equate to meaningful improvements in student learning? In this module, we will explore research that highlights how crucial meaningful collaboration among educators is in a program. Then, we will specifically examine how leveraging a professional learning community (PLC) format can refocus teacher collaboration on student learning. Finally, we will discuss how to effectively run collaborative groups and examine several different structures for collaboration. All of these ideas will lay the foundation for leveraging PLCs within schools to examine and prepare for student learning.

Learning Outcomes

By the conclusion of this module, you will be able to do the following:

- Examine the value of structured teacher collaboration in schools.
- Evaluate the benefits and key traits of professional learning communities (PLCs).
- Outline strategies for effective collaboration.
Agenda

Review the reading, viewing, and listening resources provided in Module 1, and complete the:

- **Self-Reflection and Goal Setting Activity**: in this discussion forum, you will articulate what you hope to learn/achieve because of the course. Please reflect briefly upon their intentions for the course and to set 1-2 specific (SMART) goals for your learning.
- **Introductory Forum**: in this discussion forum, you will have an opportunity to introduce yourself and meet other learners in the course.
- **Module 1 Content Lesson**: The content lesson serves to introduce and explain the topics and concepts for the module, and their applications in the classroom setting.
- **Module 1 Discussion Forum**: in this discussion forum, you will provide an original response to a question posed about topics in the Module 1 Content Lesson and respond to the original postings of your peers.

Module 2

You know that teacher collaboration through established professional learning communities (PLCs) has immense value for student learning when done well, but what does doing it well mean? In this lesson, we will dive deeper into effectively applying the four critical questions that a PLC must consider, particularly in regard to supporting equitable instruction through ideas like high expectations for all and careful consideration and timing of instructional scaffolding. Then, we will closely examine potential activity models that you could use to fuel growth alongside these critical questions, from instructional planning to action research. Finally, we will put in the final piece of the puzzle (teacher learning) together by connecting professional development (PD) to PLCs. We will investigate how a flipped model of PD effectively integrates research-based characteristics of successful PD and also explore different resources for making this connection happen. After studying the content in this module, you should feel equipped to leverage PLCs to maximize teacher (and ultimately learner) success.

**Learning Outcomes**

By the conclusion of this module, you will be able to do the following:

- Leverage the four critical questions that a professional learning community (PLC) needs to consider in order to establish and maintain equitable instructional expectations for all learners.
- Develop structures for PLC success.
- Assess the value of pairing a flipped model of professional development with a PLC.

Agenda

Review the reading, viewing, and listening resources provided in Module 2, and complete the:

- **Module 2 Content Lesson**: The content lesson serves to introduce and explain the topics and concepts for the module, and their applications in the classroom setting.
• **Module 2 Discussion Forum**: in this discussion forum, you will provide an original response to a question posed about topics in the Module 2 Content Lesson and respond to the original postings of your peers.

• **Final Project**: For your final project, you will construct a plan for how you will implement the course concepts with an audience of your choosing. The plan you create and the audience that you choose should be designed to suit your professional role.

• **Course Evaluation Survey**

**Technology Requirements**

Please review the [System Requirements for Moodle](#).

**Netiquette Policy**

Anyone enrolled in online courses has the right to learn in an environment where all individuals are treated equitably and with respect. Behaviors in the course that interfere with the learning experience are not permitted. Disruptive or disrespectful behaviors may result in dismissal from the course.

To maintain a positive, professional, and supportive online environment for this class, learners should adhere to the following standard guidelines. Everyone is expected to:

- Show respect for the facilitator and for other learners in the class, including use of polite, professional tone, respecting and valuing the privacy of other learners, and expressing differences of opinion in a polite and rational way.
- Maintain an environment of constructive criticism when commenting on the work of other learners by offering feedback that is supportive and helpful in nature.
- Contribute relevant topics and ideas when involved in group discussions or other collaborative activities.
- Use appropriate grammar and structure in online communication and refrain from use of all capital letters, as this equates to and can be interpreted as shouting in the online environment.

**Compliance With the Americans With Disabilities Act**

In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans With Disabilities Act, participants who have any condition, either permanent or temporary, that might affect their ability to complete this course are encouraged to reach out to support@advancementcourses.com at the beginning of the course. We will make reasonable academic and accessibility accommodations to the course.

**Academic Integrity**

Honesty is an essential aspect of academic integrity. Individual students are responsible for doing their own work and submitting original assignments per the course directions. Plagiarism and cheating of any kind will not be tolerated.
Plagiarize: “To steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one’s own without crediting the source; presenting as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source” (Webster's new collegiate dictionary, 1973, p. 870). This includes using information from the Internet without citing the website. Avoid plagiarism by appropriately acknowledging the source of the author’s words and ideas.

Cheating: Submitting or presenting an assignment as your own when it was written or created by someone else is not permissible in this class.

References


Student achievement is at the core of everything we do.

Since 1988, Advancement Courses has been a leader in professional development, providing expertly-crafted, classroom-applicable courses to thousands of teachers across the country.

Our extensive online curriculum includes over 280 graduate-level, self-paced courses in 20 different subject areas covering both foundational topics and emerging trends in K-12 education.

Get help with...

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<td>Special Needs &amp; ESL/ELL</td>
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<td>Core &amp; Specialized Content Areas</td>
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<td>STEM &amp; Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher Training &amp; Retention</td>
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