New York Center for Teacher Development, Inc.

In affiliation with University of Massachusetts Global

Course Syllabus

Course:	**EDZU 9695**	**Designing Creative Learning Activities to Differentiate Instruction & Assessment**
Credit Hours:	3.0 credits / 45 hours	
Instructor:	Dawn Nachtigall	

Course Description

Want to design lessons that get them begging for more? Interested in trying to incorporate more cooperative learning activities into your lessons? What if you could assess student learning in a way that's fun for both you and them? Designing and using games in the classroom can not only help keep students interested but also can be a creative instructional and evaluation tool. In this class, we will investigate the value of games and other student-centered activities as avenues of differentiated instruction and assessment. Within an exploration of cooperative learning structures, we will design new and innovative lessons to bring back to your classroom.

Course Goals

To Know

1. The 4 basic principles of a cooperative learning activity.
2. What a cooperative learning "structure" is.
3. How to use cooperative learning to introduce new content, review learned material and evaluate of student learning.
4. What a base group is and how it can be a valuable teambuilding tool in the classroom.
5. The advantages of using a small group cooperative game rather than a whole class review game.

To Understand

1. The academic and social benefits of using cooperative learning structures & games in the classroom.
2. How the basic principles of differentiation can be addressed through using cooperative learning in the classroom.
3. The difference between heterogeneous & homogeneous grouping in cooperative activities and when it is appropriate to use them.

and To Be Able To

1. Use Blind Sequencing, Roundtable, Numbered Heads, Fact or Fiction and several other cooperative learning structures in their classrooms.
2. Evaluate whether or not an activity is structured to encourage cooperation in the classroom.

3. To create small group cooperative games of their own that will work in all subjects and grade levels without too much effort and expense.

Course Outline

Part 1- Introduction

- Participants will be introduced to the basic principles of cooperative learning by participating in some ice-breaking cooperative learning activities

Part 2- Background Research

- We will investigate what the research says regarding using cooperative learning structures in our lessons. Information will be pulled from researchers such as Kagan, Johnson & Johnson, and others. Both the academic and the social benefits will be discussed.
- We will explore what a cooperative learning structure is.
- Participants will investigate the pros and cons to using cooperative learning in each of the following situations:
  - Presentation of new content
  - Review of previously learned material
  - Evaluation of student learning
- We will explore the basic principles behind differentiation in the classroom and how cooperative learning activities allow teachers to differentiate instruction AND assessment.
- Participants will discuss the validity and usefulness of using games in the classroom.
- We will also investigate the benefits of using teambuilding activities in the classroom. A discussion of the appropriateness of teambuilding activities at the secondary level will be included.

Part 3- Using Cooperative Learning & Other Student-centered Activities

Instructors will present varied ways of *how* to use cooperative learning activities aligned with the principles of differentiated instruction for the:

- Presentation of new content
- Review of previously learned material
- Evaluation of student learning

Part 4- Using Educational Games

Instructors will present varied educational games that can be used to differentiate learning in the classroom. An investigation of how to incorporate technology-based games into the classroom will be included. Instructors will make some Microsoft PowerPoint templates available for participants to view.

Part 5- An Exploration of Teambuilding Activities

Instructors will present varied teambuilding activities to the class. Participants will take part in some teambuilding activities as well.

Part 6 – Designing Activities

Participants will design activities for use in their own classes. They can choose to create one or more of the following:

- A cooperative learning activity for use in a particular lesson
- A cooperative learning structure that can be used in any lesson
- An educational game that can be used in their own classroom
- A technology-based student-centered activity for use in their own classroom
- A teambuilding activity that could be used with their own classes

Part 7 – Sharing of Designed Activities

- Participants will share the basics of their designed activities with the class. The class will provide constructive comments on each of the designs presented.

Methods of Instruction

Teachers enrolled in this course will investigate and evaluate cooperative learning methods. Participants will critically analyze current research articles on cooperative learning. Throughout class forums, participants will discuss the merits of using cooperative learning activities in their classes and share best practices for doing so. PowerPoint presentations will provide participants with background research about what cooperative learning structures are and how that model can apply to designing cooperative educational games. We will discuss how cooperative learning can be used as a teambuilding activity as well as to teach new content, review learned material and assess student knowledge. In the end, participants will create cooperative learning activities as well as cooperative games for use in their own classes.

Students will connect with each other throughout the course within forums and various other types of online feedback options built into each class.

Methods of Assessment

Teachers enrolled in this course will be evaluated on their completion of various activities. These include participation in online forums, analyses of articles, examination of case studies and creation of lesson plans. In order to receive credit, all students must participate in online forums and complete all assignments.

Additionally, to earn a "B", participants must complete 1 of the 2 assignments described below. In order to earn an "A", participants must complete both assignments.

- Choice #1: Create a cooperative learning activity or small group cooperative game. Include a thorough description of the activity or game, an explanation if this activity or game would be best for introducing new content, reviewing learned material or evaluating student learning and an explanation of how this game or activity addresses the basic principles of cooperative learning.

Choice #2: Submit a 500-1000 word paper specifically explaining how you could use the material learned in this course in your current teaching situation. You can choose one item we learned about and discuss it or you can discuss the class as a whole.

Instructors are online each day of the course and correspond with students through the course itself, feedback on assignments, e-mail, and by phone.

Time Validation Attached

Assignment	Time (in hours)
Students will complete an introductory forum. They are required to read and comment on each other's posts.	1.00
Students will refresh their background knowledge on cooperative learning (CL) and its methods by reading a detailed article. They will then answer several questions including the advantages of using CL in the classroom and if they currently use CL techniques with their classes.	1.50
Students will watch a video of three experts discussing the major difference between CL and 'group' work. While watching the video, students will answer several questions including what the experts see as the cons of group work as well as how to deal with parents concerned about grades on CL assignments.	1.50
In a forum setting, students will discuss whether they use more CL or group work with their classes. They will also comment on other participants' posts regarding their techniques in the classroom.	1.00
By reading an article, students will investigate the five key elements necessary to create a CL activity. Then they will watch 2 videos showing CL in action. They will then evaluate if the 2 videos incorporated all 5 elements.	2.50
Students will investigate the 3 main ways to group students for CL activities: informal group, formal group and base groups. They will define what each type is and when it would be appropriate to use. They will then describe an activity that would be appropriate for each type of grouping.	1.50
In a forum setting, students will discuss the merits of heterogeneous and homogeneous grouping. They will also comment on other participants' posts regarding their uses of grouping in the classroom.	1.00
Students will read a detailed article describing how to differentiate a cooperative learning activity. Students will choose one activity described in the article and modify it for use in their own classroom.	2.50
Students will investigate well-known CL structures designed to encourage *team building* in their classes. Students will read articles and watch videos on 3 specific *team building* structures. They will then pick one structure that would be appropriate to use with their classes. They will modify the activity and submit a lesson plan showing how they would use it.	3.00
Students will investigate well-known CL structures designed to help students *master content and skills*. Students will read articles and watch videos on 3 specific *content* structures. They will then pick one structure that would be appropriate to use with their classes. They will modify the activity and submit a lesson plan showing how they would use it.	3.00
Students will investigate well-known CL structures designed to help students *process, understand and use content*. Students will read articles and watch videos on 3 specific *concept development* structures. They will then pick one structure that would be appropriate to use with their classes. They will modify the activity and submit a lesson plan showing how they would use it.	3.00

In a forum setting, students will discuss "Inside/Outside Circle", a CL structure designed as a multifunctional structure that addresses team building and mastery of content. Students will evaluate and discuss its potential use in their classes.	1.00
Students will read an article discussing how classroom teachers can evaluate work that students complete in cooperative groups. Students will use the article to pick appropriate assessment tools for each of the activities they designed in the previous three activities. They will modify each of the three activties and present their modifications.	3.00
In a forum setting, students will discuss the use of games in their classes. They will discuss the validity of games as an instructional tool as well as how to deal with adminsitrators and parents questioning the validity of their use.	1.00
Students will be introduced to the concept of Small Group Cooperative Games (SGCGs). Through the use of articles and photos students will see an example of a SGCG called "Twisted Checkers." Students will then create a Venn diagram or t-chart comparing and contrasting SGCGs and whole-class games.	1.50
Students will be presented with four instructor designed SGCGs. Through the use of articles and photos students will see examples of all four games. They will then pick one game that would be appropriate to use with their classes. They will modify the game and submit a lesson plan showing how they would use it.	4.00
In a forum setting, students will discuss their concerns for implementing SGCGs in their classes. Both students and the instructor will provide solutions for other participant's concerns.	1.00
Students will brainstorm a list of popular games that could possibly be modified into a SGCG.	0.50
Students will design a SGCG of their own. They will create the entire game including directions and questions.	4.00
Students will use an online tool that provides templates and blank masters used to evaluate group work. Students will read through all the suggestions provided. Then they will pick one that would work to evaluate the SGCG they created in the last activity. They will submit any modifications necessary.	2.00
In summary of the theories learned throughout the course, students will participate in online survey that evaluates whether or not they intend to use CL or SGCGs in their classroom.	0.50
Students will synthesize the material learned in this course by completing the two following activities: create a SGCG or CL activity and write a report summarizing the material they learned in this course and how they will use it in their current teaching situation.	5.00
Total Time	**45.00**