



The Teacher's Oyster Course Syllabus

Course Title: Engaging Students through Block Teaching

Credits: 3 Graduate Credits

Class Type: *Hybrid*: self paced online with virtual or in person support

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Engaging Students through Block Teaching is a dynamic course designed to equip educators with practical methods for fostering active learning within extended class periods. Using the foundational principles from "Teaching on the Block: Strategies for Engaging Active Learners" by Canady and Rettig, participants will learn to maximize instructional time, foster collaboration, and implement innovative techniques to promote deeper learning and critical thinking. The course emphasizes effective lesson planning, classroom management, and assessment strategies tailored to the block schedule format.

LEARNING GOALS

- **Optimize Block Schedule Instruction**
Develop effective strategies to structure and manage longer class periods, ensuring sustained student engagement and learning.
- **Incorporate Active Learning Techniques**
Apply methods such as cooperative learning, Socratic seminars, and simulations to create interactive and engaging classroom experiences.
- **Integrate Technology and Cross-Curricular Approaches**
Utilize technology and interdisciplinary themes to enhance learning and make connections across content areas.
- **Design and Assess for Deeper Learning**
Develop and evaluate lessons that encourage critical thinking, creativity, and student ownership of learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES

The course incorporates a variety of instructional methods and materials, including:

- **Group Discussions and Reflection Sessions:** Structured discussions to share insights and connect theory to practice.
- **Case Studies and Real-World Examples:** Analyze case studies illustrating block schedule strategies.
- **Chapter Reviews and Summaries:** As part of their reflective assignments, participants will complete chapter reviews summarizing key concepts from *Teaching in the Block : Strategies for Engaging Active Learners.* This activity will reinforce learning and encourage educators to consider practical applications of the ideas discussed in the readings.

- **Creative Lesson Design Sessions:** Educators will work in small groups to brainstorm and create innovative lesson plans that embody the principles of teaching in the block. This collaborative approach will promote sharing of ideas and resources, fostering a supportive learning community.
- **Teaching Tools:** Resources such as lesson plan templates, research project guides, and rubrics will be provided to assist in the creation of engaging, student-centered lessons.
- **Sample Lessons:** Educators will receive comprehensive sample lessons that illustrate how to effectively structure block teaching, create engaging learning experiences.
- **Peer Presentations:** Participants will present their designed lessons to the class, incorporating feedback from peers and instructors. This activity will help educators practice articulating their ideas and receive constructive criticism to improve their instructional methods.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Robert Lynn Canady, and Michael D Rettig. *Teaching in the Block : Strategies for Engaging Active Learners*. Princeton, Nj, Eye On Education, 1996.

EVALUATION METHODS

1. Discussion Posts (8 total, 20% of final grade)

- Participants will engage in eight online discussion posts throughout the course, responding to prompts related to the principles of block scheduling, cross-curricular strategies, and relevant case studies.
- Expectations: Each post should be 150-300 words and demonstrate thoughtful analysis, personal reflections on teaching practices, and engagement with at least one peer's post. Posts should clearly connect to course content and highlight the application of block schedule principles.

2. Chapter Reviews/One-Page Reflections (4 total, 20% of final grade)

- Participants will submit four one-page reflections that summarize key concepts from the text *Teaching on the Block: Strategies for Engaging Active Learners*. These reflections will encourage educators to connect theory to practice, assess important insights from each chapter, and explore how they can implement the course's ideas in their classrooms effectively.

3. Lesson Plans (2 total, 30% of final grade)

- Participants will design two complete lesson plans that incorporate block schedule strategies and cross-curricular themes discussed throughout the course. These lesson plans will demonstrate creativity and integration of multiple subjects, reflecting the principles outlined in the readings.

4. Final Assignment: Block Schedule Unit Plan (30% of final grade)

For the final assignment, participants will create a comprehensive unit plan centered on block scheduling. The unit should span 2-4 weeks and incorporate:

- An overarching theme or essential question related to block schedule learning
- A series of 5-7 lessons (including the two developed earlier in the course)
- Utilization of a variety of primary and secondary sources
- Opportunities for student-led inquiry, project-based learning, and innovative assessments
- Community resources (e.g., field trips, guest speakers, local organizations)
- A final project or assessment that synthesizes student learning and demonstrates understanding of block schedule principles.

ADA POLICY

If you qualify as a person with a disability as defined in Chapter 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, or the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA), you are strongly encouraged to register through the accrediting affiliated college or university. It is your responsibility as a student to present your accommodation letter to your instructor at the beginning of each semester.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT

All students are required to adhere to the **Academic Integrity Policy** of the accrediting institution. Any form of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism or cheating, will result in disciplinary action according to institutional guidelines.

COURSE CREDIT TIMELINE

This graduate-level course is a 3-credit course, which means participants are expected to complete a minimum of 135 hours of combined instruction, reading, and course-related work by the end of the 8 weeks. This amounts to approximately 17 hours per week of dedicated study time, including reading assignments, discussion posts, reflections, lesson planning, and the final project.

While the course is self-paced, participants are strongly encouraged to follow the outlined tentative due dates to ensure they complete all assignments in a timely manner. The flexibility allows participants to manage their schedules, but all coursework must be completed and submitted within the calendar year.

COURSE OUTLINE

<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>TIME SPENT</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review Syllabus• Topics Covered<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ What is the Block Schedule? <p>Assignment: Online Discussion Post</p>	Posted Lecture Notes, Articles, Slide Presentation, and Websites, Discussion Board, Written Response	2 Hours
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Topics Covered<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Chapter 1: Foundations of Block Scheduling<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Block scheduling basics: its purpose, benefits, and strategies for improving teaching and learning. <p>Assignment: Reflection/Chapter Review Assignment: Online Discussion Post</p>	Posted Lecture Notes, Articles, Slide Presentation, and Websites, Discussion Board, Written Response	19 Hours
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Topics Covered<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Chapter 2+3: Socratic Seminars and Collaborative Classrooms<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Explore the history, benefits, and implementation of Socratic seminars.■ Discuss creating collaborative classrooms and their impact on engagement and learning. <p>Assignment: Reflection/Chapter Review Assignment: Lesson Plan Assignment: Online Discussion Post</p>	Posted Lecture Notes, Articles, Slide Presentation, and Websites, Discussion Board, Written Response	19 Hours

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Topics Covered <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 4+5: Structured Models and Simulations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze structured teaching models and their fit for various teaching styles. Explore classroom simulations as a scaffold for complex concepts. <p>Assignment: Reflection/Chapter Review Assignment: Online Discussion Post</p>	<p>Posted Lecture Notes, Articles, Slide Presentation, and Websites, Discussion Board, Written Response</p>	<p>19 Hours</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Topics Covered <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 6+7: Learning Centers and Integrated Technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss learning centers' applications for block teaching. Explore technology integration strategies and their benefits for active learning. <p>Assignment: Reflection/Chapter Review Assignment: Online Discussion Post</p>	<p>Posted Lecture Notes, Articles, Slide Presentation, and Websites, Discussion Board, Written Response</p>	<p>19 Hours</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Topics Covered <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 8+9: Literacy Instruction and Direct Teaching <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading and writing strategies to enhance content understanding. Examine direct teaching, lecturing, and planning within the block schedule. <p>Assignment: Reflection/Chapter Review Assignment: Lesson plan Assignment: Online Discussion Post</p>	<p>Posted Lecture Notes, Articles, Slide Presentation, and Websites, Discussion Board, Written Response</p>	<p>19 Hours</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Topics Covered <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment and Feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop innovative assessments and meaningful feedback methods aligned with block 	<p>Posted Lecture Notes, Articles, Slide Presentation, and Websites, Discussion Board, Written Response</p>	<p>19 Hours</p>

<p>scheduling. Assignment: Reflection/Chapter Review Assignment: Online Discussion Post</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Final assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Synthesize course concepts into a final project. ○ Peer and instructor feedback sessions for refinement. Assignment: Final Assignment Assignment: Online Discussion Post	Posted Lecture Notes, Articles, Slide Presentation, and Websites, Discussion Board, Written Response	19 Hours
<u>TOTAL: 135 Hours</u>		