

Distance Education Course/Project Proposal

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This eLearning training module supposes that an Arkansas college has a Department of Community Outreach and Professional Development which offers training and instructional courses to professionals, including teachers, around the area. Through surveys, this department has identified the need to expand their professional development to include offerings in a fully online setting in order to reach potential learners who are currently unable to participate due to physical distance from the college and/or schedule conflicts with course times. Registration will be open state-wide, and the resulting higher enrollment is expected to benefit the college financially.

A series of courses included in this new eLearning program is entitled “Common Core Creativity” which includes training modules geared toward middle and high school teachers looking for engaging ways to meet the recently implemented Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The eLearning training module proposed here is designed for History/Social Studies teachers, grades 6-12. Under the CCSS, there is a shared responsibility for literacy instruction across subjects. History/Social Studies teachers are now responsible for meeting literacy standards “using their content area expertise to help students meet the particular challenges of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language in their respective fields” (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010, p.3).

Based on surveys from area schools, many History/Social Studies teachers feel a need for training on how to meet these literacy standards while teaching their content, as well as ideas on how to do so in ways that engage their students. Also in the survey, English and Language Arts (ELA) teachers expressed concern that, due to the increased focus on informational texts within the ELA CCSS, time for literature instruction (poetry, stories, drama) is decreased; and they communicated desire for other subjects to help support this learning.

This proposed eLearning module offers a solution for these needs of the History/Social Studies and ELA teachers by introducing History/Social Studies teachers to poetry as an engaging way to meet literacy standards while providing students with additional interaction with poetry. This should improve teacher confidence and student performance in literacy. Furthermore, offering the training module fully online will help reach more teachers by removing barriers previously set due to distance from the college and scheduling conflicts.

Instructional Goal and Objectives

There is one overarching instructional goal for this eLearning training module which contains two sub-goals, each with two corresponding objectives.

Instructional Goal

A teacher successfully completing this eLearning training module will be able to help meet Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for Literacy in History/Social Studies (grades 6-12) through the integration of poetry into their classes by the methods of reading and writing.

Sub Goal 1

Teachers will learn how to effectively integrate the reading of poetry into History/Social Studies classroom instruction to meet the CCSS.

Objective 1.1. After module completion, teachers will be able to create a History/Social Studies lesson plan using the reading and written analysis of poetry, correlated to the CCSS.

Objective 1.2. After module completion, teachers will be able to model the reading and written analysis of poetry in terms of History/Social Studies.

Sub Goal 2

Teachers will learn how to effectively integrate the writing of poetry into History/Social Studies classroom instruction to meet the CCSS.

Objective 2.1. After module completion, teachers will be able to create a History/Social Studies lesson plan using the writing and performance of poetry, correlated to the CCSS.

Objective 2.2. After module completion, teachers will be able to model the writing and performance of poetry as a form of analysis in terms of History/Social Studies.

Intended Audience

The intended audience for this eLearning training module is 6th -12th grade History/Social Studies teachers in Arkansas looking for engaging ways to meet the CCSS for Literacy in History/Social Studies. Each session this training module is offered will permit enrollment of between 15-20 teachers, all of whom are expected to have a Bachelor's degree or above. Because of this, the training module will be designed to promote interactivity and present material in a way that presumes extensive prior knowledge of History/Social Studies, and a basic understanding of poetry.

The intended audience's teaching experience ranges from around 1 to 40 years. To use this variance as an advantage, the training module will be designed to connect teachers to share their ideas and knowledge with each other. Despite the range in teaching experience, all teachers have been introduced to the CCSS only within the last couple of years (grades 6-8 in 2012/13, grades 9-12 in 2013/14) (Arkansas Department of Education, n.d.). Therefore, all teachers are considered to have similarly low experience in meeting the new literacy standards; and the training module will be designed to introduce a way to meet the standards, and increase teacher confidence in using their creativity in lesson planning.

The intended audience varies in technology skill level. Since this training will be fully online, instructions for module navigation and an explanation of technology requirements for successful completion will be provided. A general help discussion forum will be created to allow for the sharing of questions and answers about technological difficulties.

Learning Context

This eLearning training module will be designed as professional development training for teachers throughout the state, and will be offered during both the summer and fall. Thus, it will be designed to be completed fully online to accommodate for the teachers' varying locations and schedules. Teachers may choose to work from any physical setting with an Internet connection that is convenient for them (e.g., home, computer lab, or library). The training module will contain deadlines for assignments, but all learning is asynchronous.

Summary

History/Social Studies teachers for middle and high school classes who take this eLearning training module will learn how to integrate the reading and writing of poetry as a form of analysis into their lessons in a way that both engages students and helps meet the CCSS for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6-12. Interaction, creativity, and knowledge transfer will be encouraged to help provide a meaningful learning experience. This module will be offered fully online in multiple sessions in the summer and fall through the college's Department of Community Outreach and Professional Development.

References

Common Core State Standards Initiative. (2010). *Common core state standards for English language arts & literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects*.

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