

Small Group Instruction as a solution to Differentiate in Elementary classrooms

Course Syllabus

Part 1: Course Information

Instructor Information

- **Instructor:** Pilar Gonzalez Munoz
- **Office Hours:** 7 am to 4 pm (MTS time)
- **E-mail:** pilargmunoz@gmail.com

Course Description

- Small group instruction has been proved to be an **effective method to differentiate** in a classroom, addressing individual needs and focus on the teaching of skills needed to decrease that gap.
- During this course, the educators will gain the **knowledge and skills required to apply the small group instruction efficiently** in their classrooms. They will identify the benefits, the structure and the expectations of small groups at their school. In addition, they will recognize the main strategies and create their own. Finally, they will be able to create lesson plans and collaborate with all the stakeholders to succeed in this methodology of instruction.

Prerequisite/Corequisites

- The target audience of the mini-course will be **educators that are working in an Elementary school:** teachers, paraprofessionals, interventionists, instructional coaches and Administration (Principals and Assistant Principals).
- The only prerequisite will be to be already working in a classroom with Elementary students from Kinder to 5th grade. The strategies learned in this mini-course can be applied in K-5 classrooms with modifications based on the content standards.
- Having a **background or experience in Education is desirable but not necessary.** The academic language used in the course is user friendly and several examples will be provided to support all learners. The paraprofessionals with no background in Education will be mentored by the homeroom teacher and Instructional Coach.

Course Materials

- Required readings such as articles will be made available through Canvas.

- Videos and interactive activities will be embedded in Canvas.

Technology Requirements

- Internet connection (DSL, LAN, or cable connection desirable).
- Each educator will access the course through the Chromebook or laptop provided by the school. The course is also available through Canvas in other devices such as tablets and phones.
- Access to Canvas:

- **Canvas:** [Log in here](#) first and use the following join code: **YG4EYK**
- Create an email and password.
- Click on the “Small Group instruction” course.

Online Course Structure

This is a combination of a Step-by-Step and a Problem-Solving course. The main goal of the mini-course is to provide information and strategies to implement small group instruction in the classroom.

- The modules will guide in a **step-by-step process** how to create a small group schedule, from grouping the students based on skills to applying different strategies to collaborate.
- The mini-course is designed to offer a solution to a real scenario, so a **Problem-Solving** approach will allow the learners to solve different situations in their own classrooms.

This mini-course will have a **Hybrid/Blended approach**, combining both online and in-person elements for a balanced learning experience.

The mini-course will be **asynchronous**, allowing the self-pacing for the educators. However, real-time interaction is recommended to introduce each module for the whole school. Instructional coaches will introduce each module and then let the educators work at their own pace, setting deadlines to present the tasks and finalize the Knowledge checks.

Important Note: This syllabus, along with course assignments and due dates, are subject to change. It is the student’s responsibility to check our course Canvas site for corrections or updates to the syllabus. Any changes will be clearly noted in course announcements.

Part 2: Course Learning Outcomes & Module Learning Objectives

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

At the end of the course, the learner will be able to:

- CLO1: Summarize the benefits of the small group instruction compared with the whole group instruction.
- CLO2: Divide the students in 4-5 small groups based on baseline assessments.
- CLO3: Collaborate to discuss data results and aligned instruction.
- CLO4: Design and facilitate lesson plans for small group instruction with a Content Language Objective.
- CLO5: Implement strategies to differentiate instruction based on the students' needs.
- CLO6: Assess students' progress by collecting data regularly.

Module Learning Objectives

The Course Learning Outcomes are structured in 3 Modules in the course:

- **Module 1: Characteristics of small group instruction.** After the completion of this module, the educators will be able to:
 - Identify the purpose of small instruction answering correctly more than 80% in a Knowledge Check (It aligns with CLO1).
 - Compare the benefits of small and whole group instruction participating in a post discussion online and answering to 2 peers' posts (It aligns with CLO1).
 - Describe the structure of a small group lesson creating a draft of a future lesson as an assignment (It aligns with CLO4).
- **Module 2: Expectations for small groups at your school.** After the completion of this module, the educators will be able to:
 - Identify when the small group instruction is in their schedule (It aligns with CLO2).
 - Use the baseline assessments data to create 4-5 groups of students in your classroom (It aligns with CLO2 and CLO6).
 - Identify professionals to collaborate and schedule meetings (It aligns with CLO3).
 - Design a system to collect data and track progress and share it to peer-review online (It aligns with CLO6).
 - Develop an explicit learning objective for each daily lesson during the first week and submit the assignment to review by your coach (It aligns with CLO4).
 - Select and prepare materials for the first weeks and share in an online post discussion (It aligns with CLO4).
- **Module 3: Strategies for small group instruction.** After the completion of this module, the educators will be able to:
 - Apply the Cooperative learning strategy sharing an example in the online discussion and adding at least 2 comments to peers' responses (It aligns with CLO5).
 - Apply the Peer evaluation strategy sharing an example in the online discussion and adding at least 2 comments to peers' responses (It aligns with CLO5).
 - Apply the Independent practice strategy sharing an example in the online discussion and adding at least 2 comments to peers' responses (It aligns with CLO5).
 - Apply the Explicit strategies technique creating their own strategy cards (It aligns

with CLO5).

- **Final Project:** The educators will be able to design the first 5 lessons including a content language objective, materials used, clear structure, at least one strategy per day and two different strategies per week and a system to collect the academic progress. The Instructional coach will observe, coach and evaluate the instruction of one lesson during the first week.

Due to the hybrid modality of the mini-course, the learning activities will provide support in different ways:

- **Presentation in-person** to introduce each module once a week. Instructional coaches or Administration will present the new content to clarify questions and present different examples valuable and personalized for the current school.
- **Presentations online and asynchronous** in Canvas. After the presentation in-person, the educators will have access to that module and follow the content at their own pace. After completion, interactive quizzes will measure the learning of the users.
- **Collaborative Projects:** The teachers will collaborate with Interventionists and Paraprofessionals to complete some of the real-world activities (review assessments and data, group students by skills, etc.). In these projects, peer-feedback will be encouraged as part of the methodology.
- **Role-Playing:** All educators will need to select their favorite strategies and practice before using them during the small group instruction. Educators will simulate challenging scenarios they might encounter in small group settings, followed by a debriefing session to discuss strategies and alternative approaches.
- **Assignments:** Each module will include one or more assignments to practice the content learned. Assignments can be reviewed and scored by Instructional Coaches or/and peers.
- **Discussions and Debates:** In Canvas, some activities will be assessed through discussions and debates. The educators will be encouraged to post their opinions and interact with other teachers, commenting at least two of their opinions.

Part 3: Topic Outline/Schedule

The **asynchronous portion** will be completed during the planning time of the teachers. They can use the daily 40 minutes to complete each weekly assignment. The asynchronous portion is intended to last no more than 60 minutes:

- Review the documentation: Less than 20 minutes.
- Complete the assignment: Less than 30 minutes.
- Complete the Knowledge Check: Less than 10 minutes.

The **in-person** portion will be conducted by Instructional Coaches and/or Administration. They will briefly review the module correspondent to that week, materials and assignment. They will

also give time to respond to questions and discuss the implementation in small groups. This portion is intended to last 30 minutes.

The minicourse is suggested to last 7 weeks during the first semester of the school year. Instructional coaches will base their observations and feedback on those objectives. The educators will have access to the content for the whole school year.

Topic	Description	Week	Outcomes
Introduction to the mini-course and Canvas	In-person presentation where the leadership team at the school will introduce the mini-course.	1 (August 21-25)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canvas account and profile created. • Familiarity with the requirements and technology requirements.
Module 1: Characteristics of small group instruction	Introduction to the small group instruction to identify the benefits and get familiar with the structure.	2 (Aug 28 - Sept 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom divided into small groups. • Meetings scheduled with specialists. • Creation of a monitoring system to track academic progress.
Module 2: Expectations for small groups at your school	Identify the expectations of the school regarding the small group instruction block for the educators.	3 (Sept 4-8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of a monitoring system to track academic progress.
		4 (Sept 11-15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection of materials used to create the lessons. • Identify content learning objectives for the first week.
Module 3: Strategies for small group instruction	Review the different strategies recommended for small groups and apply them in the classroom	5 (Sept 18-22)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share an example of the Cooperative learning strategy. • Share an example of the Peer-Evaluation strategy.
		6 (Sept 25-29)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share an example of the Independent practice strategy. • Create strategy cards and share an example of the Explicit Strategies technique.
Final Project	The educators will incorporate the	7 (Oct 2-6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design 5 lessons for a small group of students, including a

	content learned in the creation of a weekly plan. The Instructional coach will observe, coach and evaluate the instruction of one of those lessons.		content language objective, materials used, clear structure, at least one strategy per day and two different strategies per week and a system to collect the academic progress.
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Important Note: Refer to the school course calendar for specific meeting dates and times. Activity and assignment details will be explained in detail within each week's corresponding learning module. If you have any questions, please contact your instructor.

Part 4: Grading Policy

Graded Course Activities

Visit the **Assignments** page in Canvas for details about each assignment listed below. Click on **Quizzes** to access quizzes and exams. Each discussion, assignment and knowledge check will have each rubric with an explanation of how to obtain the points.

Grades Weight	Description
10%	Online discussions
30%	Assignments
20%	Knowledge Checks
40%	Final Project
100%	Total Points Possible

Late Work Policy

Each assignment, online discussion post and Knowledge Check will be due at the end of each week (Sundays at 23:59 pm). Under special circumstances, you can ask your Instructional Coach for an extra week to complete,

Be sure to pay close attention to deadlines—there will be no make-up assignments or quizzes, or late work accepted without a serious and compelling reason and Instructional Coach approval.

Viewing Grades in Canvas

Points you receive for graded activities will be posted to the Canvas Grade Book. Select **Grades** from the Course Administration menu at the top of the screen to view your points.

Your instructor will update the online grades each time a grading session has been completed—typically 3 days following the completion of an activity. You will see a visual indication of new grades posted on your Canvas home page under the link to this course.

Letter Grade Assignment

Final grades assigned for this course will be based on the percentage of total points earned and are assigned as follows:

Letter Grade	Percentage	Performance
A	90-100%	Excellent Work
B	80-89%	Good Work
C	70-79%	Average Work
D	60-69%	Poor Work
F	0-59%	Failing Work

Part 5: Course Policies

Participation

Students are expected to participate in all online activities as listed on the course calendar.

Build Rapport

If you find that you have any trouble keeping up with assignments or other aspects of the course, make sure you let your instructor or instructional coach know as early as possible. As you will find, building rapport and effective relationships are key to becoming an effective professional. Make sure that you are proactive in informing your instructor or instructional coach when difficulties arise during the course so that we can help you find a solution.

Complete Assignments

All assignments for this course will be submitted electronically through Canvas unless otherwise instructed. Assignments must be submitted by the given deadline or special

permission must be requested from the instructor or instructional coach *before the due date*. Extensions will not be given beyond the next assignment except under extreme circumstances.

All discussion assignments must be completed by the assignment due date and time. Late or missing discussion assignments will lower your grade.

Inform Your Instructor of Any Accommodations Needed

If you have a disability and would like to request accommodations, please contact the instructor during the first week of the semester so that your accommodations may be provided in a timely manner.

Academic Honesty Policy & Procedures

Plagiarism

It is important for students to acknowledge sources that are used for completing assignments. Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty.

Plagiarism may be any one of the following:

1. Verbatim copying without proper documentation of the source(s).
2. Paraphrasing without proper documentation of the source(s).
3. Unacknowledged appropriation of information or ideas from someone else.

Cheating

It is important for students to act in an honest and trustworthy manner. Work performed on examinations or other forms of evaluation must represent an individual's own work, knowledge and experience of the subject matter.

Consequences of Academic Dishonesty

The disciplinary action for cheating or plagiarism is up to the discretion of the instructor. The instructor may select one or more of the following options:

1. Issue an oral or written notification and warn the student that further acts of this sort will result in additional disciplinary action.
2. Issue an "NP" or a failing grade ("F") or "0" for the assignment in question.