

Online Course Features

The SEDL Virtual Academy for Afterschool Professional Development Courses

Course Introduction

Each course begins with an eye-catching, carefully planned multimedia segment that engages learners. Concepts are introduced and questions are asked that motivate learners to investigate the subject further. This introduction ties to learners' real-life experiences and prompts a meaningful connection to the professional development content.

Course Documents

One of the essential learning goals for the program is to educate, without overwhelming, the learners. Course documents are designed and developed for easy and effective presentation of information. Through the use of bulleted lists, the learners get a snapshot view of the subject matter that is both useful and manageable. "Food for Thought" sections encourage learners to reflect on the application of the material. The course documents are a key developmental piece that makes the course engaging and informative.

Afterschool Program "Look-fors"

Another instructional approach used in the courses is the demonstration of key behaviors via course "look-fors." These look-fors are modeled after the skills that are displayed in each course video. As learners progress through the course, these skills assist in identifying key strategies and behaviors useful in their afterschool programs. Look-fors are utilized to define and demonstrate these key strategies and behaviors, and are presented to the learners in both text and video format.

To establish reinforcement, learners have multiple contacts with the look-fors. The first video segment is shown in its entirety, giving a broad view of the activity and subject matter. Then, the lesson is separated into short video clips. These short clips focus on specific look-fors and promote the critical thinking necessary to evaluate and replicate the demonstrated strategy and behavior.

By providing a big picture view of the activity in conjunction with a more focused and individualized view, the learner is given an opportunity to create a personal and meaningful frame of reference and knowledge base.

Multimedia-rich Content

Multimedia provides an appealing format for content presentation that sparks the learners' interest. The multimedia segments found throughout the courses are designed to seamlessly join narration with visually-compelling onscreen elements. Through the utilization of meaningful and directed animations, the learners view the multimedia as a driver in the learning, not a distraction. Certain themes are carried through the courses and build upon prior multimedia segments. This progressive format provides a consistent and familiar look and feel for the learner as he/she delves into new material.

Culminating Activity

The culminating activity embeds learning in practical application. At the conclusion of the course, the culminating activity provides an opportunity for learners to create a lesson plan. Lesson plan examples, modeled by an expert in the field, are provided for learners' reference. As each section is completed, the learner gradually builds resources to use during the culminating activity. This scaffolded approach to building the foundational skills necessary to create a lesson plan is critical. Learning in shorter "chunks" is a time effective and sensitive way to respect the background and experiences each learner brings with him/her to the afterschool program.

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