LEARNING-FOCUSED Online Course Syllabus

Targeted Strategies Course:
Effective Assignments

Elevating Student Work Through Standards-Driven Assignment Design

Overview

Students can do no better than the assignments they are given. Effective assignments ensure that every learner has the opportunity to think critically, write purposefully, and demonstrate mastery of the Learning Goals. When assignments are thoughtfully planned, aligned to standards, and intellectually challenging, they communicate high expectations and promote deeper engagement and learning.

Learn how to develop rigorous and relevant assignments that reflect the cognitive demands of your standards—not just on paper, but in daily practice. By integrating Higher Order Thinking, writing, and differentiation strategies, educators can design assignments that push all students toward academic success.

Outcomes

By the end of this course, you will be able to…

- Explain why well-designed assignments drive instructional expectations and student achievement.
- Identify characteristics of rigorous and effective assignments aligned to standards and Learning Goals.
- Design assignments that require Higher Order Thinking and purposeful writing.
- Align assignments with lesson Learning Goals and cognitive demands.
- Differentiate assignments to meet diverse learner needs while maintaining high expectations.
- Select appropriate assignment formats, writing types, and scoring tools (e.g., rubrics) to assess student work.

Targeted Strategies Course:
Effective Assignments

Requirements

To complete the course you will need to complete all activities within the course. At the end of the course you will receive a completion certificate for 4 hours of professional development.

Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites. Everything is available within the course.

	Section	Objective	Topics
1	Designing with Purpose, Not Busy Work	Explain how intentionally designed assignments promote high expectations and student achievement.	• The Purpose of Assignments • The Assignment Gap • Characteristics of a Quality Assignment • Process for Planning a Quality Assignment
2	Starting with Standards and Learning Goals	Identify standards and Learning Goals to anchor assignment planning.	• Step 1: Identify the Content or Standards that the Assignment Addresses • Step 2: Identify or Select Learning Goals that will be Assessed in the Assignment
3	Integrating Thinking and Writing for Depth	Design assignments that develop Higher Order Thinking and purposeful writing.	• Step 3: Determine the Critical Thinking Strategy • The Levels of Learning • Assignments with Higher Order Thinking Strategies • Assignments with Higher Order Thinking Processes • Assignments that Require the Application of a Comprehension Strategy • Step 4: Identify the Type of Writing and Writing Goal • Writing Format Examples for Each Writing Type • Writing Goal
4	Differentiating Assignments and Assessing with Clarity	Develop differentiated assignment products and clear assessment tools to support diverse learners.	• Step 5: Determine the Product and Differentiate the Assignment • Relevance • Steps for Creating an Assignment Product • Write an Assignment Prompt • Strategies for Differentiating Assignments • Tiered Assignments and Examples • Differentiating Assignments with the Menu Strategy and Examples • Step 6: Write, Select, or Adapt a Rubric for the Assignment