VOLT101x (September-October 2017)

Introduction to Online and Blended Teaching

Welcome!

Children, young people, and adults across the globe are increasingly using digital devices to communicate and interact with the world around them. Because of this, practices such as reading, writing, and learning have undergone radical shifts and continue to change in unexpected directions. In this course, you will explore several key issues that educators need to understand about teaching and learning in response to the changes that have occurred in the digital age. We will look at how online learning is different from traditional methods of learning, examine how the digital practices of young people are continually changing, and explore some key considerations that need to be addressed while designing learning environments that are engaging and student-centered.

Instructors

Betty Chandy, Ed.D., is Lecturer at the Graduate School of Education, University of Pennsylvania, and Program Director of Online Learning with VOLT and Innovation @ Penn GSE.

Barbara "Bobbi" Kurshan, Ed.D., is the Executive Director and Senior Fellow in Education at the Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania.

Donna Murdoch, Ed.D., is an instructor in the VOLT program at the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education.

James Arrington, Ed.D. candidate, is a learning instructor with the Weingarten Learning Resources Center at the University of Pennsylvania, an instructor in the VOLT program, and the Teaching Assistant (TA) for this course.

The instructors in the instructional team primarily provide content in the form of lecture videos and instructions for your assignments. The Teaching Assistant (TA) will be available to facilitate discussions on the discussion forum and provide additional guidance on the assignments as needed. If you have any questions regarding the assignments, please review the forums to determine if the question has already been asked and/or answered. If it has not, we invite you to post your question in the discussion forum, and the TA will respond within 24 hours.

Objectives

In this course, you will learn:

- how reading, writing, communicating, and learning are changing in a digital era
- essential practices for teaching in online and blended learning environments
- fundamental definitions of digital literacy and digital literacies
- advantages, considerations, and challenges when implementing online and blended learning
- how to thoughtfully utilize digital technologies to support deeper learning

Prerequisites

Although this course will be most beneficial to individuals directly involved in education, including teachers, learners, and parents, it is also designed for anyone who is interested in online and blended learning.

There are no content knowledge prerequisites for taking this course. However, we recommend learners who are new to EdX complete the edX Demo101 course to become familiar with the platform: **https://www.edx.org/course/demox-edx-demox-1-0**

Please familiarize yourself with the privacy and policy statement of edX before taking edX courses: **https://www.edx.org/edx-terms-service**

Course Structure

This is an instructor-paced course with six modules. A time commitment of 3-4 hours per weekly module is expected. The first module will be released on September 12, 2017, at 9:00am EST (14:00 UTC). *All coursework (including Discussions, Review Questions, Participation Checklists, and Peer Review Assignments) must be completed by the close of the course on October 31, 2017 at 9:00 am EST (14:00 UTC)*. More information on UTC conversion can be found at this link: **http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/converter.html**

Learners who would like to upgrade to a **Verified Certificate** *must do so by October 15, 2017.* Audit Learners will gain full access to the course and a final grade, but only learners on the Verified track are eligible for a certificate upon completion of the course.

Each module will contain the following components:

- **Lecture Videos**
    - 5 short lectures (approximately 25-30 minutes of video content) per week
    - Cover all content necessary for answering review questions and participating in peer review assignments and discussions
- **Review Questions (45% of your grade)**
    - 1-2 sets of review questions per week with 1 question per lecture (5 questions total)
    - All review questions can be attempted as many times as needed
- **Assignment Instructions Videos**
    - Each week will include a new assignment and a video reviewing the instructions for the assignment. These videos are approximately 1-3 minutes long each.
- **Assignment**
    - Each week will include 1 assignment (for more details, see **Assignments Descriptions** below)

Assignments Descriptions:

- **Activities and Discussion Prompts (Ungraded)**
  - Weeks 1, 2, 4, and 5 will require you to respond to a prompt by completing an activity and occasionally submitting your response to the discussion forums
    - Week 1 will require you to reflect on the content and share your thoughts
    - Week 2 will require limited online research and sharing what you have found on the discussion forum. *You are not required to access content behind any pay wall. Content should be freely accessible to the public.*
    - Week 4 will require using free online tools creatively and sharing the work you produce on the discussion forum. *You are not required to access content behind any pay wall. Content should be freely accessible to the public.*
    - Week 5 will require using any available video recording technology and the **option** of sharing what you record on the discussion forum. *You are not required to access content behind any pay wall. Content should be freely accessible to the public.*
  - ***Participation in discussion forums is crucial*** as it is our means of interaction and collaboration throughout the course. It is also the best way for the instructional team to understand your thinking, interests, and challenges as you work through the materials
  - Please exercise good judgment and appropriate forum etiquette
    - Be respectful of your fellow learners
    - Focus your discussion on topics relevant to the course content
- **Participation Checklists (Weeks 3 and 6, 5% of your grade)**
  - Complete the checklists to mark that you have completed the ungraded assignments
  - 2 attempts per checklist are permitted
  - Students are expected to follow the EdX Honor Code (https://www.edx.org/edx-terms-service) and answer honestly
- **Mid-Course Peer Reviewed Assignment (Week 3, 25% of your grade)**
  - A 150-200 word reflection that must address a set of 5 questions and may require some additional online research
  - In addition to your writing, *you must review 3 of your classmates' responses to determine if they have met the length requirements and addressed the 5 questions*
- **Final Peer Reviewed Assignment (Week 6, 25% of your grade)**
  - A 500-600 word reflection that must address a set of 7 questions
  - In addition to your writing, *you must review 3 of your classmates' responses to determine if they have met the length requirements and addressed the 7 questions*

Grading

Grading will be based on:

- **Review Questions** (45% of your grade) – All review questions can be attempted as many times as needed; the priority is engaging with the content from the lecture videos
- **Participation Checklists** (5% of your grade) - Participation checklists can be attempted up to two times
- **Mid-Course Peer Reviewed Assignment** (25% of your grade)
- **Final Peer Reviewed Assignment** (25% of your grade)

A composite grade of 65% is considered a passing grade. Learners who complete the course requirements on the verified certificate track will receive a web certificate. Learners on the audit track will see their achievement reflected in their course profile. All coursework (including Discussions, Review Questions, Participation Checklists, and Peer Review Assignments) must be completed by the close of the course on October 31, 2017 at 9:00 am EST (14:00 UTC). Learners are expected to follow the EdX honor code (https://www.edx.org/edx-terms-service) when completing assignments. All submissions must be original content constructed by the student.

Week One: Digital Technology, Teaching, and Learning

- Introduction to your instructors and an overview of the course
- Introduction to how technology can help in the classroom, how the roles of teachers are changing in response to trends in and policies regarding technology, and how an understanding of learning theories helps with designing learning spaces

Week Two: Online Learning

- Introduction to the history and development of online learning spaces as well as
- Introduction to the key elements and advantages of online learning, synchronous and asynchronous learning, and important considerations and best practices for educators when they teach in online and hybrid environments.

Week Three: Digital Literacies 1 - Definitions

- Introduction to how individuals make and communicate meaning with digital tools in online communities
- Overview of the defining characteristics of participatory communities, connected learning, and the relationship between digital literacies and identity
- **Participation Checklist**
- **Mid-Course Peer Reviewed Assignment**

Week Four: Digital Literacies 2 - Practices

- Introduction to the practices of participatory communities, such as remixing, as well as how writing and reading differ when using digital tools in online contexts
- Review of how these differences can be leveraged to change learning and teaching

Week Five: Blended Learning

- Introduction to blended learning contexts, focusing on how, when, and why to integrate digital technologies, tools, and networks in ways that support classroom learning and teaching.

Week Six: Types of participation and their effects

- Introduction to the principles and practices of online design, how these concepts of design relate to the principles of scaffolding and assessment, the educational potential of games and gaming for learning, and other issues to consider regarding online learning such as education standards and professional development.
- Concluding thoughts
- **Participation Checklist**
- **Final Peer Reviewed Assignment**