

Small-Group Times

for Active Learners

Syllabus

HighScope's Small-Group Times for Active Learners Online Course



HighScope Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (REDI) Professional Learning Statement

Advancing racial equity has been at the core of HighScope's vision since its beginnings with the landmark Perry Preschool Study. Building on our history and ongoing work in the field of early childhood education, HighScope has made racial equity, diversity, and inclusion central to all professional development programs. In all aspects of our work, we advocate for equity through awareness and personal reflection as we encourage educators to celebrate, respect, and incorporate diversity in their programs. We intentionally seek to eradicate racism and other inequities that oppress the potential of children, families, and adults from marginalized and underrepresented groups. Through consultation, training, mentoring, and coaching, HighScope's professional learning courses are designed to respond to participants' individual strengths and focus on practical application and implementation in real-world settings.

Participants are expected to reflect on how they can mitigate biases and inequitable practices, as well as

engage with other participants and HighScope trainer(s) on what they are learning and how the content of the course can be used to support the work they do with children and families in their respective early childhood programs and communities. HighScope has established a protocol to ensure that (1) all training content supports participants' knowledge base and practical application and implementation efforts; (2) all training is implemented at the highest level and as intended; and (3) all training and resource materials incorporate REDI practices and address issues of privilege and cultural sensitivity, as well as the importance of humility in our relationships with families and young children.

As we grow more aware of REDI concepts in our lives and practices, we must understand that equity and inclusion require a continual process of growth. It is important to remember that everyone has their own learning curve, and so as we strive for a more equitable and inclusive world for our children, there will be a need for both hope and grace.

International Accreditors for Continuing Education and Training

HighScope is proud to be an IACET Accredited Provider. IACET accreditation reflects the high bar of quality HighScope sets in providing professional learning and allows us to offer Continuing Education Units (CEUs) to learners.

Overall Learning Objectives:

- Identify and implement the five ingredients of active learning during small group time
- State the importance of small group time for children and teachers
- Use the small group time planning form to plan small group time activity

Requirements to complete course and receive IACET CEUs*

- Complete all assignments within the course timeframe.
- Pass each Check My Understandings with an 80% or higher.
- Have a total overall score for the course of an 80% or higher.

*1 CEU = 10 Clock hours

Welcome to HighScope Small-Group Times for Active Learners Online Course

This course is 3 weeks long (4 weeks if you include the registration week). Each week runs from Monday to the following Monday. You will get the most out of the course if you do the activities in the order listed.

You must complete all the assignments on time to receive credit for the workshop. We recommend you log on early in the week to get your assignments so you can plan your work. For your discussion post assignments, **all initial posts are due on Thursday** and your **replies are due by the following Monday**.

This workshop uses a variety of online activities:

- **Learning Unit** — Content for the week. You may wish to print the learning unit so you can easily refer back to the content.
- **Reading Assignments** — Assignments for the week. You might find it helpful to also print these out.
- **Check My Understanding** — Interactive format in which you will decide the best answer to a variety of scenarios.
- **Try It Out** — Assignments in which you will try out strategies or ideas in the classroom. You may be asked to share what happened on a discussion post and get feedback from your classmates, or you may be asked to upload the assignment to the course Dropbox.

Welcome to HighScope Small-Group Times for Active Learners Online Course (continued)

- **Dropbox Reflections** — Personal reflections on the content and your own practice shared privately with your instructor. Be sure to check back to see your instructor's comments.

Remember, all course work for the week is **due by midnight the following Monday (EST)**.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to message your instructor.



Registration Week

Assignment

Update your HighScope Learning Hub profile.

Discussion

Introduce yourself to the group.

Your first assignment is to introduce yourself to the others in this class.

You might say something about where you work, the children you work with, and what you hope to get out of this class. Please also feel free to share a little bit about yourself personally!

Read your classmates' introductions. Reply to each other to "connect." This is how we get to know each other!

Issues and Concerns about Small-Group Time

Message your instructor.

Think about issues and concerns that commonly arise during your small-group times. Your assignment is to message your instructor one or two of these issues or concerns.

To do so, go to your course homepage by clicking on "My Course." Then, in the right-hand pane under "Facilitator," click "Send Message."

Facilitator

Elizabeth Spisich



[Profile](#)

[Send Message](#)

Week 1: Small-Group Times for Active Learners

Objectives

Participants will be able to

- Identify the three climates of learning.
- Identify the role of the five ingredients of active learning during SGT.
- State the importance of SGT for children and teachers.

Learning Unit Topics

- Classroom climates of learning
- Active learning during SGT
- Importance of SGT for children and teachers

Reading Assignments

From *Small-Group Times to Scaffold Early Learning*:

- Pages 1–3

Discussion

Looking for Active Learning Part 1: Adult Scaffolding

- Watch the video clip, “Letter Collectors.”
- Look for adult scaffolding and post one example on the Week 1 Part 1 discussion post. Explain how your example benefits the children at this small-group time. **This post is worth 10 points and is due on Thursday.**

Week 1: Small-Group Times for Active Learners (continued)

- Respond to at least one post from someone else. Remember, replies are most useful when you are contributing to, or building on an idea shared. You might share how you agree or disagree, bring up other examples, pose a question, etc. **Your reply is worth 5 points and is due on Monday.**

Reminder: You will have a total of 2 posts, 1 initial post due on Thursday and 1 reply due on Monday (total points possible = 15).

HighScope Learning Hub Tip: You can access the discussion posts at any time by clicking on “Discussion” on the left-hand sidebar of your course.

Discussion

Looking for Active Learning Part 2: Materials, Manipulation, Choice, Language and Thought from Children

- Watch the “Letter Collectors” clip. Look for the four remaining ingredients of active learning:
 - Materials
 - Manipulation
 - Choice
 - Child language and thought

Week 1: Small-Group Times for Active Learners (continued)

- Choose one of the four remaining active learning ingredients and post one example of what you saw in the Week 1 Part 2 discussion post. Explain the role it played in this small-group time. (Make sure to list the ingredient first in your post.) **This initial post is worth 10 points and is due on Thursday.**
- Respond to at least one other peer's post. Remember, replies are most useful when you are contributing to, or building on an idea shared. Replies like, "I agree," "good idea," or "me too" don't really add anything to the discussion and should be avoided. **Your reply is worth 5 points and is due on Monday.**

Reminder: You will have a total of 2 posts, 1 initial post due on Thursday and 1 reply due on the following Monday (total points possible = 15).

Check My Understanding

Identify the Classroom Climates

Choose the classroom climate that most closely matches with each small-group-time scenario. **This assignment is worth 10 points (2 per question).**

Try It Out

Use an SGT Activity in Your Classroom

- Choose one small-group time plan from *Small-Group Times to Scaffold Early Learning* and do it with the children in your classroom.
- Share what happened in a discussion post. First, write the activity number and title in the body of your post, then share the following:

Week 1: Small-Group Times for Active Learners (continued)

- Describe what happened. How did the children respond? What did they do with the materials? Did anything unexpected occur?
- State what you learned from the experience. Be sure to make connections to how you were a supportive partner with the children.

Your initial post is worth 10 points and is due on Thursday.

- Finally, make one substantive reply to someone else's post. **Your reply is worth 5 points and is due on Monday.**

Reminder: You will complete two posts: 1 initial post that describes in detail what happened during your small-group time (due on Thursday), and 1 reply (due on Monday; total points possible = 15).

Dropbox Reflection

Where am I on the continuum?

In the learning unit, you were introduced to a continuum of contrasting climates for children. Respond to these questions in a Word document, and upload it to the Week 1 Dropbox:

- Consider the descriptions of the three contrasting climates for children. In one or two sentences, describe where you think you fall on the continuum and why.
- What are your ideas for moving toward a more supportive role or continuing to provide a more supportive role at small-group time?

This assignment is worth 10 points.

Total points possible for Week 1 = 65.

Week 2: The Components of Small-Group Time

Objectives

Participants will be able to

- Plan for each component of SGT.
- Use the SGT planning form to create an original SGT.

Learning Unit Topics

- Format of SGT, including opening statements
- Scaffolding learning (differentiated learning) during SGT
- Using the SGT planning form

Reading Assignments

From *Small-Group Times to Scaffold Early Learning*:

- Pages 3–7

Discussion

Opening Statements

In this assignment, you will be constructing opening statements from sets of classroom materials that could each be used for a small-group time.

- Look at the numbered set of photographs of classroom materials and think about the children in your small group. Choose two sets of materials that you might use with your children for a small-

Week 2: The Components of Small-Group Time (continued)

group time. Decide how you would introduce each set of materials to your children, using one of the opening statement examples below for each set of materials.

For this activity, you will write

- One opening statement with a key developmental indicator (content focus), and
- Another using a short, simple, open-ended story that you make up to introduce the materials. (Please do not use a story book.)

Post each opening statement in a separate discussion post with the number of the SGT materials photograph listed at the top.

These 2 initial posts are worth 10 points each (20 points total) and are due on Thursday.

Next, reply to at least two other posts made by your classmates, sharing your feedback with them.

You might post how you think children would respond, how you think their opening statement is reflective of the source that they chose, or share an idea sparked from the initial post.

Your replies are worth 5 points each (10 points total) and are due on Monday.

Be sure to check back later in the week to read your instructor's comments.

Week 2: The Components of Small-Group Time *(continued)*

Check My Understanding

Scaffolding Children's Learning During SGT

Check your understanding by selecting the most appropriate response to each situation or question.

This assignment is worth 10 points.



Try It Out

Scaffolding My Children's Learning

In this assignment, you will be doing another small-group time activity in your classroom, this time focusing on scaffolding children's learning.

Follow these three steps:

Step 1: Choose a different small-group time plan from *Small-Group Times to Scaffold Early Learning* (a different plan from your Week 1 assignment). Decide how you will scaffold children's learning in the three broad levels of development (earlier, middle, later). Try it out in your classroom. (If you don't have your own classroom, use a classroom you are familiar with.)

Week 2: The Components of Small-Group Time (continued)

Step 2: Post what you did on the discussion post by doing the following:

- First, list the activity number and title in the body text.
- Then, share how you provided scaffolding for children in the three broad ranges of development (earlier, middle, later).
- Then, share what you learned from this experience.

Your initial post is worth 10 points and is due on Thursday.

Step 3: Make one substantive reply to someone else's small-group-time post. **Your reply is worth 5 points (total points possible = 15) and is due by the following Monday.**

Try It Out

Plan Your Own SGT

For this assignment, you will use the planning form to create your own, original small-group time. Simply download the **Small-Group-Time Planning Form**, save it to your computer, and fill it out. When you are done, save it again or your work will be lost. There is a sample form filled in for activity #16 Basket Toss. Please do not use this same activity; you are to create your own. Use this sample as a guide to what your plan should look like.

- Follow the SGT format (beginning-middle-end).
- Include your opening statement in the beginning section.

Week 2: The Components of Small-Group Time (continued)

- With the content in mind, write what you predict each group of children will do at the earlier stage of development, the middle stage of development, and the later stage of development. Then, write your scaffolding strategies for each of these developmental levels, all in the middle section.
- Be sure your plan includes all the ingredients of active learning!

The plan has been formatted as a “form.” Just type your plan in the appropriate spaces, resave it with your name in the title (i.e., Jane Doe SGT). To send it to your facilitator, you can upload it to the Week 2 Dropbox.

(*Note:* For this assignment, you are only required to write your SGT plan. While you are certainly welcome to do your plan with your children, it is not required for this assignment.)

This assignment is worth 15 points.

Total points possible for Week 2 = 70.

Week 3: Planning Appropriate Small-Group-Time Activities

Objectives

Participants will be able to

- Identify the sources of ideas for planning appropriate SGTs.
- Use the Program Quality Assessment (PQA) to assess SGTs.

Learning Unit Topics

- Sources of ideas for appropriate SGT activities
- Intentionality in planning SGTs
- SGT PQA items

Check My Understanding

All About SGT

This “Check My Understanding” will cover some of the important topics that we have looked at in the last three weeks. A variety of small-group times will be portrayed with a brief description and/or photos, and you will be asked to respond to a question for each. **This assignment is worth 10 points.**

Try It Out / Discussion

Plan and Do Your Own SGT

For this assignment, you will use the planning form to create your own, original small-group time and you will do your SGT with your children. Follow these three steps:

Week 3: Planning Appropriate Small-Group-Time Activities (continued)

Step 1: Plan and do your small-group time. This is in addition to your Week 2 planning assignment.

Step 2: Share what happened on your discussion post. **This assignment is worth 10 points and is due on Thursday.** Be sure to include the following in your posting:

- A brief summary of your SGT plan
- What happened
- Your reflection on the SGT

Step 3: Respond to at least one posting from others. **This assignment is worth 5 points and is due on Monday.**



Week 3: Planning Appropriate Small-Group-Time Activities (continued)

Try It Out

SGT PQA items

There are two parts to this assignment.

Part 1: Complete PQA items II-G and III-H on your classroom. Complete all three rows of Item II-G and the first row of item III-H.

Do the following for each row:

- Include anecdotes or supporting evidence
- Check one of the boxes under Levels 1, 3, or 5

(*Note:* You **do not** need to submit your completed SGT PQA items.)

Part 2: Once you complete both PQA items, use a discussion post to reflect on your scores. **This is worth 10 points.**

Please create one post and share the following:

- What you are doing well based on both PQA items
- What you would like to work on based on both PQA items

(*Note:* You **do not** have to include your scores in your post.)

Reflective Discussion

Revisiting Issues and Concerns

Review the issue or concern that you messaged your instructor during Registration Week. In the Discussion tab, post one idea you learned from this class to help with your initial issue or concern.

Week 3: Planning Appropriate Small-Group-Time Activities (continued)

Are there any additional issues or concerns you may have that you can now address with the strategies learned from this class? Feel free to share those as well.

This post is worth 10 points.

Total points possible for the course = 180.

Points needed to pass = 144 (80% of total points possible).

Evaluation

Course Survey

Please share feedback about your experiences on this course.

Print Your Certificate

Once you have completed all of your assignments, you will be able to print your certificate. Congratulations!

Click on the “Grades” tab along the top of the HighScope Learning Hub dashboard, then click on “My Certificates” in the left-hand sidebar.

Please print as many copies of your certificate as you need (i.e., one for your records, one for your employer).

For this course, your certificate will reflect that you have received 1 IACET CEU which is the equivalent to 10 clock hours.

References

- Epstein, A. S., & Hohmann, M. (2012). *The HighScope preschool curriculum*. HighScope Press.
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- HighScope Early Childhood Staff. (2016). *Small-group times to scaffold early learning*. HighScope Press.
- HighScope Educational Research Foundation. (2016). *Small-group times for active learners*. DVD. HighScope Press.
- Hyson, M. (2008). *Enthusiastic and engaged learners: Approaches to learning in the early childhood classroom*. Teachers College Press and National Association for the Education of Young Children.