***Learning Environment Factors for Teacher Preparation: Keys to Designing Hybrid Literacy and Writing Experiences***

***1. Specific Context of the Teaching/Learning Situation***

This course is designed for 20 in-service elementary teachers who will implement the Explorers of the Magical Forest of Reading and Writing program, currently being developed in the EDLD 5318 course. It is a blended professional development experience that combines weekly live sessions (60 minutes via Microsoft Teams) with asynchronous reflection and planning tasks. The course is delivered through Schoology and supported by tools like Padlet, Canva, and Genially to model hybrid instruction and foster collaboration. Designed with equity and access in mind, the course addresses potential challenges, including limited connectivity, shared devices, and varying levels of digital fluency. Its main goal is to support teachers in implementing realistic, inclusive, and meaningful reading and writing strategies in their classroom contexts.

***2. General Context of the Learning Situation***

This course is part of an educational innovation plan designed to enhance the implementation of hybrid learning as a strategy for improving reading and writing outcomes in second grade. At the institutional and district levels, teachers are expected to transform their practices into more flexible, inclusive, and student-centered environments by intentionally using technology to create meaningful learning experiences. From a professional standpoint, the teacher’s role is evolving; it is no longer just about delivering content but about designing authentic learning experiences that blend face-to-face and virtual components. This course supports that shift by offering practical tools, pedagogical foundations, and collaborative guidance to help educators implement hybrid learning with confidence, creativity, and purpose. From a social perspective, schools are expected to prepare students who are autonomous, critical thinkers, and socially engaged. Achieving this vision requires educators who can innovate with empathy, adapt to changing realities, and build bridges between pedagogy, technology, and human development. This course serves as a concrete response to that need by cultivating a living, sustainable, and transformative learning culture (Bates, 2015).

***3. Nature of the Subject***

This course blends theoretical and practical foundations to equip teachers with the tools to implement hybrid learning in second grade, using technology strategically to enhance students’ reading and writing skills. It draws from theories such as meaningful learning (Ausubel, 1963), backward design (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005), significant learning experiences (Fink, 2003), Universal Design for Learning (Nelson et al., 2021), and hybrid learning with educational technology (Bates, 2014). It also incorporates constructivist perspectives, including cognitive development in stages (Piaget, 1973) and social mediation and the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978).

This is an applied subject in which teachers design hybrid strategies that integrate in-person and digital instruction. The course is divergent, encouraging creative, context-sensitive, and student-centered pedagogical decisions (Thomas & Seely Brown, 2011). It also addresses current challenges such as personalized learning, equity in hybrid classrooms, and the ethical use of educational technology.

***4. Characteristics of the Learners***

Participants in this course are elementary school teachers, mostly women, with varying levels of professional experience. Many balance their teaching duties with family obligations, which brings challenges related to time management, emotional demands, and work-life balance. They come from diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, which enriches the learning community but also requires the course to remain flexible, inclusive, and accessible.

In terms of prior knowledge, most have classroom teaching experience and basic familiarity with educational platforms and digital tools. However, many still feel uncertain about how to design engaging hybrid learning experiences, how to integrate technology meaningfully, and how to support diverse learners, especially in reading and writing instruction.

Their learning goals include acquiring practical strategies, pedagogical inspiration, and professional support to implement hybrid learning confidently. They also hope to feel seen, supported, and empowered as educators committed to transformative and meaningful change.

***5. Characteristics of the Teacher***

The course facilitator must view learning as a transformative process, where technology is used intentionally to foster inclusion, motivation, and holistic development (Bates, 2015). They are expected to lead with a positive and empathetic attitude, creating a space of trust, reflection, and meaningful growth.

They should have updated knowledge of educational theories, including meaningful learning (Ausubel, 1963), significant learning experiences (Fink, 2003), backward design (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005), Universal Design for Learning (Nelson, Kennedy & Fisher, 2021), hybrid learning (Bates, 2015), and constructivism (Piaget, 1973; Vygotsky, 1978), as well as experience teaching literacy in hybrid environments.

Most importantly, the teacher must be student-centered deeply attuned to learners’ needs, contexts, and aspirations. Their greatest strength lies in their ability to accompany, listen, design authentic learning experiences, and inspire other educators to innovate with purpose, empathy, and a commitment to ethical learning for all learners.

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