PRELIMINARY

HT123  Informal Learning for Children
Winter 2012  Joseph Blatt

1. What are the most valuable things you have gained from this course? Possibilities may range from acquisition of concrete skills or knowledge to changes in perspective or ways of thinking.

I learned about the value of informal teaching as well as the avenues for which opportunities exist. I gained insight into working with a group and the media production process.

Writing a proposal, teamwork under pressure and different stages in developing a product for informal learning.

I have learned so much about informal learning techniques and forms through the guest speakers and through Professor Blatt’s lectures.

I have gained a wealth of knowledge about informal learning and how one can use it effectively. From designing a product to the various forms and means media resources can be used to enhance learning. I have also be able to learn about some of the most successful programs of informal learning, and have been inspired to start something similar when I return to my country.

I learned the techniques of pitching an idea to a group of experts and the importance of team work and putting something together in a short amount of time. I thought the insight and expertise learned from industry experts that Professor Blatt brought to class everyday was truly invaluable and incredible.

The speakers were incredible. It was amazing to see how this stuff really works in the real world. I think the most valuable thing I gained was exposure to all the different roles that can be played within informal learning, and exposure to the process of creating high quality learning materials that don’t necessarily need a moderator like a teacher to improve student learning.

possible ways for informal learning to happen; systematic approaches learned from guest speakers; group work dynamics and peer learning

1. The importance of the formative evaluation process in informal learning programs and how to best carry it out. I particularly appreciated that we were able to interview students to test our project ideas and to put what we had learnt about formative evaluation into action.
2. The course challenged me to think about how heavier / more serious / complex ideas and concepts can be taught to very young learners. The expert participants from Sesame Workshop were able to explain how this could be done.

The valuable insights from Sesame Street experts. The amazing support and guidance from TF.

Report includes responses submitted as of 2/11/2013
Solid examples of how informal learning spaces can be used for teaching and learning. There were so many wonderful course expert participants who spoke about their professional experience in promoting informal learning. Dr Blatt was wonderful in providing the all important context behind every sharing session so the learning was multiplied. But the most valuable thing that I learnt was structuring, and unstructuring, informal learning to make it fun and meaningful.

Thus far at HGSE, my experience with projects has been classroom-specific. Joe has really opened up the idea of a project exercise into a process that is applicable to outside practice. The intensive atmosphere over the two weeks of this course definitely gave me a new perspective on how to approach an idea, make a decision and move forward, with research and formative evaluations as the guides.

I learned the various forms of informal learning and the outline of a proposal. I also had real-world experience working with a group of team members from various backgrounds. Finally, I had real-world experience creating and presenting a pitch for a product designed by my team.

The experience of going through the process of writing a proposal.

I gained knowledge of the vast realm of opportunities and settings for informal learning. Great input from experts, particularly on formative evaluation. I had a wonderful group experience too.

Now, I know how to pitch an idea! That the access to the people we got meet was incredible! That was by far my favorite aspect of this course, but also of my time at HGSE!

A good feeling for the breadth of informal learning opportunities available to children, an understanding of the proposal process, and of Sesame Workshop.

This course gave me a great inside look into how various forms of informal learning experiences are developed and executed.

Experience working in a group on project development, insight from inspiring guest speakers, a chance to think creatively but with the urgency of a tight deadline.

Learning from Sesame Workshop, Networking possibilities and broad view of the informal education spectrum.

Prof Blatt organized a fantastic course-it was engaging and dynamic. I would take it again!

Group work skills, a lot about educational media, WGBH in particular

I learned how informal learning products are made, both by hearing from speakers and working with a team on our own product.

A better understanding of the full process of developing and proposing an idea -- ways to thinking about coming up with a concrete project idea that works towards specific educational goals and objectives.
I learned a lot about why certain informal learning ventures (such as sesame street) are successful and meaningful.

I was challenged to think about the ways to change behavior most effectively, and working in a group with wide range of experiences made the learning rich and fun, though challenging.

I learned a lot about informal learning practice in the real world from hearing from media industry professionals, which is very important and valuable for me who intend to go into the media industry. I really appreciate the great opportunities and people professor Joe Blatt brought in. Another valuable skill I gained from this course is cooperation and work in groups to develop something concrete from brainstorms in a very short period of time. I also learned the process of developing media for children and young people, as well as proposal writing and pitching, which are very valuable for my development.

More awareness about informal learning, the importance of formative evaluation and the impact that advertising is having on our young people. It was very helpful to both be able to apply what we were learning to a "real-life" project and to see how Sesame Street is applying these same principles.

This course was incredible. In terms of concrete skills, I think that learning the proposal and pitch process was very beneficial to my future work. Also, hearing the experiences of people working at high-caliber informal learning organizations, such as Sesame Workshop and WGBH, was absolutely one of the more valuable experiences of the course.

I really enjoyed this course! I think I really learned what informal learning is and how to develop programming for this specific educational environment.

This course offered a very interesting and broad look at many informal education opportunities for children. It challenged me to think big, but also understand the practical steps in thinking through a concept, product design, evaluation, target audience etc. This was not an area that I am currently engaged in, so it was really interesting to listen to Joe, the speakers, and the ideas of my classmates.

A wonderful group learning experience. I have always been sceptical of group work - this course changed that perception! It was a joy to work with my group. It was also so valuable to take a course in which the professor (Joe Blatt) was so dedicated to the art of teaching and improving his teaching.. he was so wonderful and it was such a pleasure to be in his class.

How complex and resource intensive research driven development really is. Also, the essential role of actual human relationships in creating great products.
And how to write a grant proposal.

Glimpses into the processes by which major informal learning enterprises (like Sesame Workshop) generate, evaluate, and deliver their content; experience creating (and pitching) an actual informal learning endeavor; insight into the paths that lead people into interesting positions in organizations whose focus is informal learning.

Ways to develop informal learning products to children. How to organize and develop ideas to write a grant-seeking proposal on the course project.

Insight into the concerns and priorities of educational content creators was provided in great depth.
This course provided valuable insight from professionals working in a variety of informal educational settings and concrete skills required to write a successful proposal.

Creating a project within a diverse group and having a phenomenal final project I was proud of at the end.

The whole process of making a proposal by learning from all of the guest speakers. The different approaches and aspects of informal learning, the wide variety of opportunities that we can do within that realm. Real-world situations that the guests bring and ask us to participate in (as class exercises).

An invaluable introduction to the concepts and methods of informal learning and its potential reach and scope.

The quality of instruction and speakers has broadened my view for my own future plans and helped me to gain valuable vocabulary in a different part of the education field.

how to write a grant-proposal, how to work with groups, how to execute a good idea

Teamworking and time management; how to deliver a pitch and write a grant proposal; a great deal of knowledge about how media and technology can significantly help kids learn. All in all, I’ve learnt a lot!

Understanding of formative and summative research in educational media production.
Insights into the complex world of educational television.
Multiple domains of informal learning.

Insight into work of Sesame Workshop, learned more about partnering, formative assessment in a business/non-profit context, developed a new idea with my team, thought more about informal learning

It was very cool to hear the backgrounds of the different presenters and become aware of educational vocations outside of academia.

I got a good understanding of the spread of informal learning initiatives and a surprisingly detailed overview of how their operations work which has been very helpful in how I think about careers in this space.

Interesting insights from people who work in children’s television/digital media.

I love the ability to design a full-scale media project from beginning to end.

This course provided a project experience unlike anything I have experienced in an academic or work setting. We were well-paired, then told to develop an amazing project, imagining we had no limitations on us whatsoever. The result was a remarkable educational and team work experience. As far as knowledge acquisition, another amazing aspect of this course was having heard from THE EXPERT in every area of informal learning: educational television and mobile programming, museum curation, after-school and video games.

Report includes responses submitted as of 2/11/2013
Industry insight from Sesame Workshop

- Enjoyed working on the pitch with HGSE students. First time I have done this. Found the feedback to be very worthwhile.
- The guest speakers were outstanding.
- I would prefer to start class earlier and end sooner, if possible.
- The emphasis was really big on digital media and I would have been interested in more simple ways of conducting informal learning, too.
- The museum trip was super and bringing a member of the Glee team was very special.
- I think more guidance on design of pitch presentation. Our group had an idea of what to provide, but really ran into a wall when our TF told us we need to do some serious revisions for style. We made it happen, but maybe better clarity as to how important this was for our presentation would be appreciated.

This course has been an incredible experience. The opportunity to hear from the various industry professionals was so enlightening. Learning the process of developing and writing a proposal in the context of informal learning was also very valuable.

1) Exposure to a WHOLE new side of education
2) Ability to get up and close with industry experts
3) Ability to quickly form relationships with HGSE students I don’t normally interact with

A deeper understanding of Sesame Workshop’s model for success, the importance of doing formative research as part of designing an informal learning experience, the range of informal learning projects out there.

Key elements of a pitch and proposal for a major media project in education. Perspective on what it takes to create a video game on the scale of Grand Theft Auto. Perspective on how a show like Sesame Street incorporates educational research into the creative process.

This course exposed me to ways of learning and methods of communication that I had never explicitly or deeply studied. I gained awareness of the breadth of informal learning platforms and opportunities that exist, their various merits and drawbacks. I also learned about how much goes into creating, assessing, funding and maintaining such endeavors.

Two separate but equally important experience. First, to get to know the wonderful work of Sesame Workshop. Its beliefs, its history and the organizational system it had created to support what they currently do. My understanding towards Sesame Street changed dramatically. (and my future goal post HGSE as well) Second is the lessons and the sense of accomplishment gained throughout the group project. It was great that I had a group of 5 members who were all as equally committed to the project as everyone else in the group. This made our discussion pretty intense every time, especially in the early stage of idea development. But because of such intensity and tremendous thought being put into the project, we were all very satisfied with our final outcome. Advice from the experts and Joe on our presentation were very helpful too.

Guest speakers were informative, the ability to write and deliver a successful pitch, feedback from experts was important.
Insight into how nonprofits run and empathy for the folks who manage people and programs within them.

Introduction to experts in the educational media field

I greatly enjoyed the process of designing and rapidly refining project ideas in such a rich environment. The readings, lectures, and interactions with the teaching fellows influenced and scaffolded our group projects. The final project was carefully designed to prepare us for the process of delivering a pitch and submitting a written proposal.

The project experience was fruitful. It did seem daunting at the outset but we managed pull together a great piece of work. It is indeed surprising the amount of work you can get done in two weeks when pushed hard by your peers.

I was blown away by the meticulously planned course design, which truly blends theory and practice in a way that most courses only dream of. The readings were validated (and sometimes, invalidated) by the remarkable guest speakers, all of whom were happy to be a part of the course. I had no previous formative evaluation experience, so the visit to the classroom to test our prototype was particularly enlightening for me. Overall, it’s a simultaneously exhausting and energizing three weeks that bonds together almost everyone in the class.

This was my first exposure to several topics - creating informal media (games), targeting children, the non-profit sector in general, multidisciplinary teams, and writing grant proposals.

Group work, intensive work, "real" projects - Learning more about a content area I knew little about.

I think the most valuable thing I learned from the course was the patience to hear and think about new perspectives. I am enrolled in a program that has many required classes. This means that rarely do I get to meet and discuss topics outside of my program area or with people in different programs. This course really helped me to gain new insights into ways of thinking about education, learning and children thanks to the material and my peers.

I loved the diverse perspective on informal learning that we discussed. It was also helpful to hear firsthand accounts from people in the business who are developing/creating them. I think everything we learned is applicable to many settings.

This class allowed me to understand what makes an informal learning space truly great: great people. Through meeting research, production and marketing team members at many organizations (especially Sesame Workshop) I’ve learned that it is the tremendous amount of energy and collaboration that go into each production that make the end result a massive success. The same holds true for the other organizations we have got to meet, including the group work that we did on our own for the class. This is a truly invaluable experience that can only be translated in very few ways.

Invaluable information on how to write a successful proposal and give a major pitch.
I came into this course with high expectations after talking to previous students, and this course still managed to exceed them. I was so grateful to be able to learn from and interact with such creative, compelling experts from a diversity of fields. All the guest speakers were extremely engaging, and I really liked how Professor Blatt took a few minutes at the end of each session to synthesize what we had heard, connect it to our own project, and pose a few questions. I also loved how the course was extremely well-organized. Although it was fast-paced, I never felt overwhelmed, because the major assignments were broken into small pieces. The group I worked with was fantastic, and David was always there to make sure we were staying focused and moving forward, while encouraging us to think big and take risks.

Hearing from various experts about the field and thinking about the field in different ways, both academic and non-academic

I learned a lot about Sesame Street and how it has become so successful. I learned also ways that I can apply these successes to things I will work on in the future. I also learned about new technological tools and ways of creating a proposal.

expert insights into producing media of different kinds/types from games to tv shows to informal clubs

The experience of working intensely with a team on a creative design project from start to finish. A clearer understanding of the design process. How informal learning can be a truly effective mode of educating young people.

Connections with SW personnel, literature on children’s taste preferences, learning, and media.

The perspectives of the various guest speakers and a clearer understanding of the various roles in companies that produce media for informal learning.

Learning to work with people who have very different work styles.

I learned about the wide variety of media-related informal learning initiatives that exist. Learned a lot about the processes behind Sesame Street (which was awesome!) and also about what goes into preparing a media pitch and drafting a proposal.

The most valuable part of the course were the guest speakers. Hearing about the day to day work and seeing the course content in practice was very helpful. I also appreciated that all of the readings were available online. It was a great selection of readings on a broad array of topics.

The opportunity to think through and design a media project.

I gained so much during this course, particularly around what makes a good working group and how to navigate an entrepreneurial venture in children’s media. Developing and presenting the final project was definitely a highlight of my time at HGSE.

Fantastic exposure to the inner workings of Sesame Street, WGBH, and a handful of other organizations. Meaningful and extremely influential group work experience.
I really gained an appreciation for the role of partners in creating a program that I did not have before. I also really enjoyed the wide range and scope of informal learning, and the all star presenters.

I feel like I am leaving this class with hard skills. HT-123 allowed me to gain experience creating a proposal and pitching an informal learning tool to a panel of experts.

This course exposed us to many leaders in the field of informal learning for children. We had presentations for several different representatives from the Sesame Workshop, television producers, representatives from WGBH, the gaming industry, and from Intel's Computer Clubhouse. Exposure to these leaders was an invaluable part of the course. We were put in teams based on a strengths assessment, so our team was very well rounded and we had the chance to put together a proposal and pitch for a new product that we collaboratively conceived through the process of the course. Pitching our product to real people in the industry on the last day of the course was the priceless highlight of the course!

This course provided me with a much deeper understanding of what exactly takes place in the world of informal learning.

I learned about the host of informal venues, media, and programs used to engage children in learning (broadly defined). Working in a group of five allowed me to practice communication and interpersonal skills in order to capitalize on the strengths of the members. Taking a creative process from ideation to presentation was an invaluable learning experience. I gained a greater understanding of what informal learning ventures entail, how to develop one, how to evaluate one (through formative and summative research), and how to "sell" one to potential funders and target audience.

This course has changed my perspective on what it takes to come up with a great idea, and sell it. It helped me learn how to work with a team under extreme time pressure, and gave me confidence in my ability to brainstorm good ideas and make appropriate decisions under duress. It forced me to exercise both academic and non-academic muscles and skills I either haven’t worked with in a while, or perhaps never at all before. I came out of the class with a good start to a project that has real-world potential.
2. Please indicate the extent to which you would agree with the following statements. If there is a question for which you do not know the answer or that is not applicable to this course, indicate NA.

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<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5 - Very Much</th>
<th>NA</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>A - Course was intellectually challenging</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>4% (4)</td>
<td>18% (16)</td>
<td>50% (44)</td>
<td>27% (24)</td>
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<td>B - Course stimulated me to think in new ways</td>
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<td>2% (2)</td>
<td>4% (4)</td>
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<td>59% (52)</td>
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<td>C - Diversity issues related to course content were well addressed</td>
<td>1% (1)</td>
<td>2% (2)</td>
<td>12% (11)</td>
<td>30% (27)</td>
<td>42% (37)</td>
<td>11% (10)</td>
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<td>D - Course helped me understand how to apply my learning to real problems and contexts</td>
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<td>5% (5)</td>
<td>21% (19)</td>
<td>70% (62)</td>
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<th>5 - Very Much</th>
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<td>E - Course objectives were clearly stated</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>3% (3)</td>
<td>13% (12)</td>
<td>82% (73)</td>
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<td>F - Course content was clearly aligned with stated objectives</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>4% (4)</td>
<td>12% (11)</td>
<td>82% (73)</td>
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<td>G - Syllabus was clear, well organized and complete</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>4% (4)</td>
<td>7% (7)</td>
<td>87% (77)</td>
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3. Please consider specific course activities and materials (lectures, case studies, readings, written assignments, etc.). Please evaluate each item carefully and independently. If there is a question for which you do not know the answer or that is not applicable to this course, indicate NA.

<table>
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<th>A - Course activities were aligned with the syllabus</th>
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<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5 - All of the Time</th>
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<td>78% (68)</td>
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<td>B - Class lectures clarified the subject material</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
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<td>9% (8)</td>
<td>27% (24)</td>
<td>60% (53)</td>
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<td>C - Class discussions enhanced the understanding of the subject material</td>
<td>1% (1)</td>
<td>2% (2)</td>
<td>10% (9)</td>
<td>21% (19)</td>
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<td>D - Assigned readings were valuable and of high quality</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
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<td>14% (13)</td>
<td>29% (26)</td>
<td>52% (46)</td>
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<td>E - Class lectures and discussions were related to assigned reading</td>
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<td>3% (3)</td>
<td>6% (6)</td>
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<td>59% (51)</td>
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<td>F - Assignments supported and reinforced the goals of the course</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>1% (1)</td>
<td>3% (3)</td>
<td>19% (17)</td>
<td>75% (66)</td>
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<td>100% (87)</td>
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<td>G - Assignments promoted learning and growth</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>2% (2)</td>
<td>4% (4)</td>
<td>16% (14)</td>
<td>76% (64)</td>
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| H - Technology was used to:                        |                     |     |     |     |                    |     |       |
| * Illustrate and deepen understanding of subject matter | 0% (0) | 2% (2) | 3% (3) | 18% (16) | 74% (64) | 1% (1) | 100% (86) |
| * Enable discussions outside of class               | 2% (2) | 6% (6) | 10% (9) | 17% (15) | 50% (43) | 12% (11) | 100% (86) |
| * Facilitate communication between students and instructors | 2% (2) | 2% (2) | 9% (8) | 22% (19) | 61% (52) | 2% (2) | 100% (85) |
| I - Course provided effective opportunities to learn from other students | 0% (0) | 1% (1) | 4% (4) | 22% (19) | 71% (60) | 0% (0) | 100% (84) |
4. **What specific course activities or materials (lectures, case studies, readings, written assignments, group projects, class discussions, etc.) did you find MOST valuable? Why?**

I think that putting together a proposal, rapidly, was very useful for a general picture of what production takes. The beginning lectures were very useful, but, as I may have been more tired and stressed by the end, the lectures at the end weren’t as focused and specific.

Guess lecture are amazing. Activities in class do help me a lot in the product developing stage.

I found the guest lectures to be super helpful. It brought to life what the readings were teaching us.

**Readings**
- Professor Blatt’s lectures and sum ups
- many of the lectures
- class discussions

I enjoyed all the lectures, as Professor Blatt brought in key lessons, as well as experts in the media & television industries. The group project was an invaluable exercise, as the scope of the project was large (doing the pitch and paper) and we only had a short amount of time. The class has the most well thought out syllabus I’ve ever had the pleasure of enrolling in.

All of the speakers were an incredible resource. We were hearing from the experts themselves, not just being asked to take some academic’s "word for it" based on the literature. Hearing from the experts let us see what really goes into the process of developing informal learning opportunities and let us ask very specific questions that only the experts themselves would be able to answer.

**guest speakers:** learning first hand from people in the field;  
**group project:** learning about collaboration as much as innovation in a systematic way; the scaffolding process of breaking down the project really helped.  
**Field trips to the museum and for the formative research were also very valuable.**

1. The readings on the Computer Clubhouse and those related to Sesame Workshop were the most valuable and engaging. They gave a good sense of the scope and reach of these informal learning platforms, and were useful models to refer to while we worked on our project.  
2. Consultation sessions with our TF were also useful in helping us to progress on our project.  
3. Going to a school to conduct a formative evaluation on our project idea allowed us to put into practice what we had learnt from the lecture and the readings, and gave us valuable feedback for our project.  
4. The trip to the ICA on day 5 was an enjoyable experience. It was my first time exploring how an art museum as an informal learning venue for children (I am more familiar with helping children learn in venues such as the natural history museum, or the museum of science so this was definitely something new for me).

**Expert speech, lunch with expert, group project, TF support.**
The group project was wonderful. But it was so meaningful because of the supporting pillars: great readings, superb lectures, context by Dr Blatt.

The lectures from executives at Sesame and WGBH were invaluable. Thank you so much, Joe, for providing the opportunity to hear from these amazing people. The readings were amazing, as per any class with Joe--it’s nice to read research from people in the field and to learn from case studies. The group project was an amazing two-week experience--it presented an opportunity to grow in several ways: time management; targeted research; product design; thinking about evaluation; and working in a group.

I found that presentations from people who work in informal learning were very valuable, especially when they were combined with small-group activities and feedback on our work from the presenters.

I also really enjoyed the opportunity to have an arranged lunch with a presenter because it allowed me to gain one-on-one information on the challenges and pathway to his/her particular career.

In addition, the reading materials were extremely relevant. I particularly like the readings on how to work with a team, for I had often referred to it in my mind whenever I felt that there was something wrong with the way that we are working. As a person who absolutely hates working in teams, it provided essential guidance for me. I also liked real-world examples of successful proposals and "how-to" guides on how to write a successful one.

Finally, this class expanded my mind in terms of thinking about other points of view. One case in particular is when a presenter from a violent video game company came to our class. At first, I was completely offended that he was even here. Afterwards, I realized that he had a lot to say about what makes a video game successful, and the elements of what motivates people to buy and make such a video game.

The guest speakers! They came from so many backgrounds and really brought the concepts from the course readings to life.

I loved the field trip to the ICA and the chance to conduct formative research with middle schoolers!

Going into classrooms and performing the evaluations was awesome. Charlotte Cole and Christine from wgbh as well as lynns presentations were my favorite. Wish we heard more from Joe, though

The lectures from industry experts were AMAZING. Gained so much insight in what it takes to create quality children’s media, and the case studies and concrete examples were very helpful.

Guest lectures were extremely helpful and insightful. I appreciated how candid and generous the guest experts were.

my favorite guest speakers were Charlotte Cole and Christine Zanchi. I liked that there was time built into the day to work in our groups. It was great getting feedback from such a distinguished panel on our pitch. I liked that the proposal process worked in steps, with feedback along the way.

The lectures and guest speakers were wonderful because they exposed us to real world application of theory. The group project was also great in transferring theory to practice, but I wouldn’t say it was the MOST valuable because we only had two weeks to put it together.

Report includes responses submitted as of 2/11/2013
I found the lectures from Prof Blatt and experts from Sesame workshop to be most valuable. The readings and group projects were great supplements, but access to experts was uniquely rewarding.

I loved the guest speakers. They really made an 8 hour day go by quickly.

It was great hearing from speakers who made informal products. I really liked the starter readings. And working in a group designing a product was my favorite part.

By far, the lectures and the readings were of extraordinary quality. I learned so much from each text, each guest speaker, and Joe.

I found the lectures on ICA and WGBH to be very valuable supplements to the Sesame Street lectures. Sesame was of course the heart of the learning, but the technology was best demonstrated in WGBH demo and ICA/Computer Clubhouse were innovative ways to use learning through a non-tech method. Glee was such a treat.

I found the experts presentations the most valuable, from which I was able to gain a perspective outside of school and into the media industry.

Pitching our product to a team of experts was the most valuable activity that we did because it forced us to apply what we were learning on the fly.

I really enjoyed listening to and learning from the guest speakers, especially from Sesame Workshop. I also thought that the group project was a really engaging way to develop ideas and build upon the lectures.

I found the proposal writing process very useful and well organized. I really enjoyed working with my group and bouncing ideas off our TF.

The guest speakers. There were so many terrific speakers and that was really the majority of the in class time. I learned a lot from hearing what various organizations are doing in the informal education space. Joe did a wonderful job facilitating with the speakers and aligning readings that complement the topics each day.

As outlined previously, the group work. It was probably the best experience of group learning of my entire life.

Above all, the class design was phenomenal. The way it mimicked real proposal writing environment, but with supports and scaffolding, was fascination. The readings were well selected, and greatly aligned with the learning objectives. All speakers absolute experts, some more helpful than others.
The group project, while difficult at times, was definitely a valuable experience. The guest lecturers were excellent. The readings were relevant and interesting (I particularly liked the Csikszentmihalyi reading). Getting a chance to go out to lunch with a Sesame Workshop person was fun and informative, and the pitch session with industry execs was also valuable (and scary). The trip to the ICA was a great way to both get a look at the specific mechanics of a local informal learning environment and build some class camaraderie.

Lectures from industry experts. Field trip to ICA. Formative evaluations in Watertown schools.

Certainly the group projects were the most essential to the course and being in a strong group really made the class enjoyable. The field trips were to the museum and elementary school were also very constructive as were the guest lectures.

The speakers were all very interesting and the trip to the ICA was especially valuable. Joe always does a great job of selecting readings that correspond nicely to the lectures.

The field trips to see places that implemented informal learning.

The guest speakers were all amazing! And the final pitch was a very valuable learning moment.

The class project was exceptionally useful and enjoyable.

The speakers were the most valuable because it brought knowledgeable and practical views to the understanding of the materials we were reading.

group interactions

Guest speakers from the Sesame Workshop are wonderful! The proposal writing and the pitch also help me learn a lot.

Lectures were fantastic.

Group Project: I learn by doing, applying content, negotiating with a group of people I don’t know-liked assigned mixed groups
Reading: Provided a good foundation, interesting
Lecture: Excellent craft knowledge, very open in sharing

The presentations from the guest speakers were very entertaining and valuable in providing expert perspective in this field.

The presentations from the guest lecturers. As someone considering starting an informal learning non-profit in children’s education, I found hearing from practitioners very informative and inspiring and helped to clarify how some of the concepts we were reading about in lectures would be applied in the real world.
The lectures (especially the guest lectures) were generally interesting, if limited in scope. The group project was, for me, the best and worst part about the course. In some ways, it was exciting, challenging, engaging, and collaborative. In others, it was tedious, tense, overwhelming, and unpleasant.

I loved the group project. Great exercise!

The presentations from Rockstar and Glee were perhaps the most memorable, as was the discussion with Nadine and Rosemarie, because production is probably the most novel aspect of informal learning to me and many of my fellow classmates. Their insights were invaluable to the development of our products.

Group projects - spent two weeks meeting with my group everyday until the last day we seem like families. It was a great opportunity to discover the strengths of others, really learn from each other, and collaborate to create "collective intelligence".

Writing the paper and receiving feedback allowed us to move forward as opposed to wondering if we were "getting it right". I have been frustrated with other courses where a large project is turned in at the end of the course and you may have no idea as to whether or not you are doing the right thing.

Close relationship with TF was awesome and being able to meet with guest lecturers for lunch and Q/As was unheard of. Thank you again.

The video game class was interesting, but was a bit hard trying to relate it to the overall intent of the course. Might be more interesting to bring in someone from Fablevision who actually designs games that teach and entertain.

The guest speakers as well as the pitch development and presentation were most valuable.

The act of preparing for a pitch and giving the pitch, as it was something that I had never done before and yet I think it is a really useful skill.

Guest speakers who came in the morning - I thought those lectures were so stimulating and rich. Group projects - you learn from your peers, and are forced to make decisions to meet deadlines, much like a truncated version of real life. I also thought that the scaffolding of the assignments made it much more manageable. Formative research with the middle school - a good reminder of how we need to keep our target audience in mind and not be stuck in our own idealistic views of how things should be.

Visiting experts were highly engaging and knowledgeable

This course was the apex of my experience at the Ed. School thus far. I was amazed by by Joe Blatt’s careful curation of each and every detail. Every reading was well worth a close read and fit elegantly into each day’s theme. Group work was designed in such a way that our time and efforts were maximized with many helpful benchmarks and check-ins along the way from David. I was excited from the start to the finish of every class because the topics are all so relevant to my work with children.

The combination and good balance between input (from industry experts, from immersive experience outside campus and readings) and output (group projects and small in class discussion activities).
I wish Joe lectured a bit more. And group project, the pitch not the paper.

Probably the presentation/pitch itself. It was fun to do and made me think about my own professional presentations differently.

expert lectures; visit to ICA; group project

The most valuable activity for me was the frequent engagement with and feedback from our group’s teaching fellow. As an innovator, I always welcome feedback on my ideas, especially in a setting such as rich as HT-123.

I think the group project was the most valuable. It acts as an anchor to the course.

Incredible guest speakers; museum visit; formative evaluation in schools; lunch with expert; pitch... all very valuable and practical in their own ways.

Guest speakers provided enormous levels of authenticity. The scaffolded process for developing the project allowed us to make great advances in just two weeks. The final pitch forced us to strengthen our message and hone our discussion.

Project time, Rockstar Video Games speaker.

I really enjoyed the guest lectures. They brought in such unique experiences and topics. Also, the group project was extremely valuable. As I stated earlier, I think the most valuable experience from this course was a gaining of new perspectives-- this could not have occurred without these lectures or the group project.

The group work was challenging and difficult but it brought a lot of the concepts we were learning to life. Guests were used well. And Joe’s lectures were always well done - they were never boring.

I found the readings, guest lecture and group project to be the most valuable. The readings are an excellent primer to the content in the course and the guest lectures are truly phenomenal. The culminating group project is also an excellent opportunity to apply what you have learned.

The speakers and guest lecturers brought an amazing real world perspective to the work we were doing, and the opportunity to interact with them at least once in regards to our developing project ideas was of great importance in terms of gaining a practical perspective. The formal evaluation piece was also of high value as it allowed us to test our project ideas with our target audience.

All the guest lecturers were fantastic! I particularly enjoyed the session with Rosemarie and Nadine. As someone pursuing a career in research, I really enjoyed hearing about how research can be applied to exciting, creative projects, and how members of interdisciplinary teams can learn so well from each other and ultimately make a better product. Our team also loved having the opportunity to do formative research at a local elementary school. It was such a humbling and rewarding experience to actually put our ideas in front of the students and hear their reactions and thoughts.
I found the lectures most valuable. This was the time when I felt the most interested and the most inspired.

I loved that this course was done over a two week period. It was intense but it was great to have the time to reflect on this class without being involved in other non related activities. The speakers were amazing and gave diverse perspective of the field. I thought that the TA’s did a great job of matching us up with our groups. I appreciated that my teammates all had different skills and we were really able to learn form each other.

Group discussions

The group project was immensely valuable in both the creation and iteration process, but also in honing skills in team building, group learning, and shared leadership and roles.

It was also really great to have the opportunity to hear from professionals in the field who really brought a wealth of experiences and knowledge to the class lectures. The trip to the ICA was also another engaging experience that really brought some of the course concepts to life.

The guest lectures were fantastic, formative evaluation visit was incredible.

Guest speakers from Sesame Workshop and WGBH were the most valuable and provided the greatest diversity of perspectives. The group project was also a good learning experience in that it was a chance to apply the various steps in the process of creating an informal learning intervention in the real world.

written assignments because they helped stimulate discussion and facilitated consolidation of our thoughts and reaching agreement on matters.

The guest lectures were fantastic--learned so much from them and it was so phenomenally valuable to be hearing from the leading experts in the field. Thanks so much for bringing them over! Also, the opportunity to have lunch and informally chat with these fantastic people was incredible.

Being able to go meet with students during the formative evaluation was really helpful, as was meeting in our small group with an expert before this visit.

The group project was great. Some of the visitors were good, particularly those delivering unexpected information.

I thought the structure of the course was perfect for scaffolding an incredibly deep project in a short amount of time. I enjoyed working on the project most of all, especially since we were given time during the afternoon to act on the skills we learned in the morning.

Every single aspect of this course was extraordinarily valuable. All of Joe’s classes are impeccably organized and each minute of every session was purposeful and a learning experience. I cannot speak more highly of this course.

The group project with the consultation opportunities from both professionals and Uche was really helpful in learning to tweak and retweak an idea until it found its right focus.
The guest lecturers. Learning from key players at Sesame Workshop provided a true model for successful informal learning. The readings and assignments were very aligned with what we learned from the experts. The group project allowed us to practice what we had learned from both the lecture and the readings.

The most valuable aspect of the course was the group project which led to pitching our project to real producers of children’s media.

Personally, I found our guest lectures most valuable. I also very much enjoyed the group work components of the course.

The group project (especially preparing for the pitch) was a new experience for me and extremely valuable. I enjoyed the guest presenters, the readings, and even the written assignments. I also really enjoyed going to school to collective formative evaluation data!

The opportunity to speak with myriad experts throughout the course was simply invaluable. I have never been able to pitch ideas to real industry executives before, and the fact that they actually took my team and our ideas seriously was a big confidence boost.

5. What specific course activities or materials did you find LEAST valuable? Why?

The readings were valuable, but, take Joe’s advice and read them before the class.

N/A

I found everything to have contributed to my learning.

Some of the lectures were about products and programs I did not find interesting, so that is why maybe I could say they were not very valuable.

None.

Sometimes there was too much reading. I particularly thought the multiple readings on teamwork at the beginning of the semester were a bit of overkill.

I felt the readings could be cut back a bit.

I felt that the lecture on designing games and apps (session 3) did not quite flow with what we were learning in the course. There was also some dissonance when a question was posed about the research that goes behind making a game and the reply went along the lines that it wasn’t important to consult gamers when creating a game - totally out of line with all we had learnt about formative evaluation and research. Besides, the games that were presented were not even educational.
The lack of opportunity to see other groups’ pitches.

Nothing. Everything in this class was planned brilliantly.

There was nothing in this course that wasn’t valuable.

The least valuable was having a presenter from another field who does not know anything about how to start up an informal learning environment. It felt really out of place and not useful. While I understand that it was an opportunity to get us to really think as a class on how to guide to a novice, I did not think that it was the purpose of the presenter.

The readings...with such a limited time frame, it felt impossible to keep up.

The final write-up of the proposal seemed a little superfluous given that we put A LOT of time and effort into the pitch. The task to write up the proposal just seemed slightly detached from the rest of the course activities. I’d rather make the deliverables more formal throughout the two weeks and drop the proposal.

The pitch was most important but I felt that we could have been better prepared perhaps with a ten minute pitch as a demo...

The ICA visit was fun, but it would have been helpful if the morning presentation focused on how they design effective experiences for youth as well as some case studies and lessons learned through their work with teens.

None.

I didn’t get much value out of the Glee bit.

I was not able to tackle the pile of reading assignments and wished that I had done more over the break, but my mind needed the time off.

NA

The reading load was quite heavy, and I found that as the 2 weeks progressed I was less and less on top of the workload. While Joe suggested we do all of the reading before class, this wasn’t particularly realistic for me. It would be great if the load had been less so I could have really engaged with all the reading material.

Some of the Sesame Street readings overlapped a bit, but overall I enjoyed the readings.
Definitely, the group project. It was excruciatingly painful. Yes, it very much depends on the group you are assigned to, but if you pull the short straw, be prepared to suffer. Even though rushing for the deadlines forced us to make decisions, none of us were really into what we were doing. No single person could convince the others and it was an awful example of successful teamwork. Quite different from what I expected, the group was TOO homogeneous in terms of program and background (only having one person from a different program) and three of the members had pre-established that they wanted to be together. This, from the very beginning, clearly altered the group’s dynamics.

The lecture on using libraries to host cafes could have been combined with another lecture. Also, I think it is important to show how technology or informal learning could be used in a negative way, but I would have liked to have talked more in depth about the video game Rockstar lecturer for a better take-away.

The readings assigned are all of very high quality and would be very helpful to know, but because of the intensive structure of the course I feel I had very little time to dig into the readings.

Not enough Joe Blatt! He’s a great professor and I wish that he lectured more during the two week course.

I felt like more context/background was needed before the lecture on video games. I found some of the videos a little unsettling and wished there had been more of a connection with the class material.

The group project was a real challenge. It can be an amazing opportunity to learn from new people and motivate each other, or it can be filled with tension, many hours of discussion without progress and uneven commitment. It’s just hard to know what type of group you will end up with.

The group exercise overall is a strong idea and really builds with the course, but a difficult group dynamic can really make or break your experience in the class.

It was hard to get through all the reading in addition to the long day and group time after class. The readings were valuable, but I had such limited time because of the intensity of the course.

I had a major issue with the man from Rockstar video games presenting. I actually left feeling very depressed that a company that produces such violent and sexist games are so successful. I was also saddened that a lot of my classmates seemed to have a very uncritical response to him. (although some were appalled) I’m not sure what the purpose of someone like this speaking is? Particularly because their was no debrief on the content of his talk.

Glee watching could be handled a bit more efficiently. The feedback collected from the panel was not as well targeted and helpful as I had expected. (The museum of contemporary art was great though.)

Writing a group paper with 5 people is a tough task.

N/A
Surprisingly, the feedback from the experts after delivering the final pitch seemed forced as if they felt compelled to say something. The comments seemed more like personal opinions rather than constructive advice about meeting industry needs and demands. The pre-pitch to an industry expert where they were not under the same obligation to produce feedback seemed more honest and useful.

None

some of the "assigned" mentor sessions because they did not always align with what our group was trying to do

The readings were insightful, but I think the course lacked synthesis between the readings and the lecture for the day. Plus, it was really difficult to squeeze in some reading time during JTerm when all you can think about is your project.

Occasionally readings weren’t discussed or seemed a little tangential, but mostly they were relevant and useful.

the speakers on the ICA were the least valuable because I could have found a lot of the information on the website and was not as in depth or engaging as the other speakers

some of the speakers were too repetitive and link between class and their work was unclear

None

Too reading heavy.

A little too focused on Sesame Workshop...informal learning is a large and growing area with a lot of opportunities to hear from other people/Companies/themes

The group project was frustrating because a lot of time was wasted and we were not well organized. I think it would have been easier to work with smaller groups given such a short time frame.

My group was high performing and is by far the best group experience of my graduate school experience (great idea for faculty to select team based on a mix of competencies). While I enjoyed working on the project and it was an interesting experience, I found this piece of the course the least valuable because I was not passionate about any of the topics that we had to select from.

As I said above, the group project was stressful at times and I think we could have benefitted from having more structure and guidance in helping us divide the work equitably. I also felt that the lectures were great, but a bit repetitive. I wish we had been able to learn about more non-Sesame Workshop projects. I also felt that there were too many readings. The full-day class, hours of group work, and assignments took up so much time that I was fairly exhausted while doing the reading.

Probably the readings... I didn’t have time to do them!
One or a few of the presenters (especially at the end of the course) spoke while a video with audio was playing simultaneously and that was really challenging, not only to hear the content but to maintain focus with so many conflicting noises.

readings sometimes

The video game class. I think this could be even better if there were an optional section that goes over tech updates and advancements. As a non-HGSE student I was totally unfamiliar with a lot of the innovation that was being referenced. Additionally, a list of terms and definitions common to HGSE vernacular and classroom instruction would be helpful. Luckily, my group was great at filling in the blanks.

N/A

Often the PM lectures were not the most useful or impactful on my learning. As most were tired, and worn out my own ability to process and take in important information was limited.

The lectures in the afternoon (with the exception of Michael Hitchcock's) seemed redundant at times. Perhaps a more explicit link between course material and speakers that come from the entertainment side of things should be made clearer; I know that quite a few people were confused about the inclusion of Rock Star. I wonder if these afternoon lectures could be moved up in the day instead, and the rest of the day given for group work. While I can understand why group work was placed in the middle of the day, it was 1) sometimes frustrating to have to leave the discussion just when it got fruitful or exciting, and 2) I was exhausted by the end of group work and couldn’t focus on the afternoon lectures.

NA

I was somewhat disappointed by the sad reality of a corporation as big as Sesame St., which I see as going down the drain as they try to compete with the freneticism of competing shows/forces. I was grateful to see this reality but would have loved more lectures from Joe.

The guest speaker from gaming industry. Although it was interesting to learn about his perspective towards gaming industry, was not sure how that could have been related to the educational media development. (was helpful in terms of learning general media development)

There was a lot of overlap between the Sesame guest speakers and it would be helpful if they were briefed on what had been covered prior.

After doing this program for a while, the readings themselves weren’t really anything new to me. I also found them outdated (5 years older or more, when this stuff should really be from like, last week, in the social marketing world).

All class activities were of great value. This is a well-designed course, and it is clear that it has been carefully designed.
The museum visit was fun, but not of much value. I could not connect learning from the museum to our objectives.

Received very little meaningful feedback from the teaching fellow, which made it difficult to learn from our mistakes in the group project.

The course project is created within a 4-5 person group to which you are assigned by the teaching staff. I was part of a great team that combined a range of experiences that meshed well, but some groups seemed to not mesh as well.

Some of the speakers seemed not to know their audience and spoke to us as if we were young undergrads.

Some of the course readings were rarely referenced and did not play into what the speakers were addressing or what our final outcome (the proposal) needed to be.

I wasn’t always excited about breaking up into small groups during class time to work on a problem for a few minutes. There was never enough time to do that and the topic was always engaging and interesting so I didn’t think that part was always necessary.

n/a

The readings were good, but sometimes I wish Joe incorporated them into the discussion more.

I really can’t think of anything that wasn’t valuable! The only suggestion I have is that I think Ian Davis’ session would have been improved by some discussion about how children learn from video games and the skills that video games help develop (for example, problem-solving, logic, etc.) Even though I thought the session was interesting and highly engaging, and I learned about what goes into building a successful video game, I felt like the link to children’s learning could have been strengthened by more discussion of video games as a learning tool.

The group work: Our TA was not very involved and was often discouraging in her comments, at least the first week. One of our group members stopped participating. I liked the concept of the project, but our group dynamic was unnecessarily challenging.

It was a little frustrating that some of the activities were lottery based..like the lunches and the acting seminar. Next time if possible, it might be nice to give people an option of either the acting seminar or the lunch (then do a lottery) that way everyone would at least get to do one of them (instead of neither of them).

I did not enjoy the afternoon where we had the man from the science cafe come and talk to us. he was an excellent speaker but I did not understand how it related to our class.

in class activities
Some of the afternoon guest speakers were less valuable in the content of their presentations, such as the RockStar guest and the Science club speaker. Both were engaging, but did not necessarily add much to the learning experience for me.

Guest lectures on computer clubhouse and science cafe were interesting and I’m glad we covered the content, but I felt too much time was allocated

Some of the afternoon speakers did not add much to the course, specifically those from Science Cafes, Rockstar Games, and Glee. In theory, each of these perspectives should have been valuable and relevant, but I didn’t think the speakers themselves delivered that much useful knowledge.

in-class group activities because the time-frames were too short. I don’t think I learned very much in doing them.

Readings, unfortunately—I thoroughly intend to go over them after this year and reread them more carefully but there just wasn’t enough time to attend to them over these two weeks (and if you have a busy winter break, it makes it rough to get all the readings done beforehand as well).

We would get so busy with the project that I wouldn’t have time to do some of the readings. And b/c of the limited time we sometimes spent discussing the readings due to guests or other work, I didn’t feel that completing the readings was always necessary.

There was a lot of repetition in the guests and in the readings, to the point that my attention was considerably turned off in the second week. Readings were fine, but many of them assumed an audience that hadn’t worked before or was possibly younger. Class lectures OFTEN assumed a lower bar of understanding and experience than I thought I brought to the class. It would have been nice if readings, guests, and lectures were more differentiated to a diverse audience.

I enjoyed our Sesame Street focus, but would have liked to hear about the smaller shops in media doing similar work with fewer resources.

The guest lecture by the Computer Clubhouse and the Science Cafe were less valuable to me - the content was relevant, but the presentation of it was less impressive.

The presentation by the Rockstar exec was mildly irritating and he could have been more sensitive and thoughtful in his presentation about what the class could take away from his experiences.

None. It was an amazing course!

Nothing!

Some of the reading material needs to be reconsidered given the quick evolution of the subject matter.

I thought that, although our guest lecturers from Sesame Street held a variety of positions, we could have seen a wider range of expertise.
### Instructor: Joseph Blatt

6.1.1. Please take a moment to think specifically about the instructor(s) who taught this course. Please evaluate each item carefully and independently. If there is a question for which you do not know the answer or which you think is not applicable to this course, please indicate NA in the response area. NOTE: This section refers to the faculty member(s) teaching this course; there is a separate section that evaluates the performance of Teaching Fellows (TFs).

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<th>1 - None of the Time</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5 - All of the Time</th>
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<td>3% (3)</td>
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Report includes responses submitted as of 2/11/2013
6.1.2. In what ways was the instructor most effective? Why?

Dr. Blatt was very cordial and interesting. He worked very hard in the preparation for the course and that carried the course through.

Organizing such an intensive course is a lot of work. Joe has done is extremely well to ensure that everyone is having a good learning experience.

The professor had great delivery and made every topic very interesting and engaging.

I am very impressed by Professor Blatt’s teaching skills. In fact I think I need to learn to handle a class they way he does. He was always accessible, always helpful and VERY encouraging. I appreciated how he would take a few minutes at the end of a session and tie all the threads of the conversation together and provide a clear, and concise summary.

He was also highly encouraging of everyone’s input, which is quite difficult to do I think at times. He was constantly “present”. I am very happy with how he dealt with us all.

Professor Blatt is very clear and thoughtful in his approach and spent so much time reflecting on his lessons.

Very good at directing discussions and challenging us to ask important questions. Great speaker who helped clarify material and engaged the entire class.

the design and organization of the course are terrific, providing a variety of sources for learning. Joe has his magic ways to make you feel valued and you can achieve more.

Joe encouraged all of us to participate in the sessions he facilitated, and often looked for those who had not spoken / spoken very little in class to respond to his questions.

Joe has meticulously planned the course with wonderful experts from Sesame Workshop and other industries as well as the field trip which are all very conducive in learning different types of informal learning.

He structured the course very well. I loved his enthusiasm in every single class! I thought that he focused the guest lectures nicely and guided it nicely along when questions went off tangent.

Joe is incredibly structured and clear in his directions. He was able to align so many moving parts so that the class transitioned seamlessly from session to session.

The instructor is an effective presenter. He also designed the course well.

Joe is an incredible professor. His lectures are captivating, his insights are sharp, and his commitment to ensuring that students enjoy the class, and learn from it is strong.
The design of the course was brilliant. A learning experience well scaffolded!

He is engaging, personable, understanding, brilliant, flexible AND humble! He has the interests of his students in mind and I would love to take another class with Joe!

Ridiculously well organized, energetic presenter, and great facilitator. Makes sure to get comments from around the room, always mindful of keeping things on time and on topic.

Joe’s lectures are always well prepared and thorough.

Joe put together an extremely well-designed, well-thought out, exciting, engaging and dynamic course. I loved his closing remarks at the end of each class, really drawing out standout points from each guest speaker’s presentation. He was friendly, approachable, and positive. He really encouraged us to think creatively and stretch.

Professor Blatt is the hardest working man at HGSE. He puts so much careful thought into the big-picture of the course, the course narrative and structure, but still manages to hone in on the important details. I love his summaries of the days concepts, how he ties the crucial components of the 4 hrs of lecture into a concise two minute recap. He is truly amazing.

Prof Blatt is the best instructor at HGSE—I like him because he is respectful, wise and highly intentional in teaching style.

Joe organized such a great course. The line up of guests was wonderful, the lunches/meetings with the guests made them more accessible.

You could tell that Joe really enjoyed the course material, and put us students in a great position to learn and engage from really interesting speakers.

The class itself was quite an orchestration of people and planning and I found it very helpful to also be planners within our small groups.

Joe is clearly passionate about what he does and any student can feel this. Therefore, I felt he was most effective when he was leading class discussions and directly engaging the expert speakers.

Joe was encouraging, helpful, and also asked some provocative questions. I loved the lecture mixed in with time dedicated to working in groups. Justification for group set up was appreciated. It was most valuable to apply the skills learned in the group project. The entire course was one of the best I have taken.

Joe was very effective in leading big class lectures and keeping the whole class engaged. He was very dedicated in bringing in wonderful outside resources and industry experts to the classroom which I deeply appreciate. Joe is also very considerate and brings energy into the classroom. He also provides us with really helpful feedback and suggestions.
Mr. Blatt is passionate about the subject and the class, the readings, lectures and assignments were clear and well-aligned and the speakers were excellent. It was also very evident that he is always trying to build upon and improve what he has done in the past.

Joe is a fantastic professor. He crafted an engaging and interesting syllabus that was a beautiful balance of theory and practice. He was always available to speak with students about their projects and provided insightful feedback.

Joe is great! He is clearly passionate about the material, and there was never a dull moment in class.

Joe created a very warm and open environment which could be challenging in a class of that size and intensity. The course was extremely well designed in linking the guest speakers to the readings to the elements of our project work. I definitely appreciate the amount of time and thought that must have gone into arranging and structuring the course so seemlessly. Joe also did a great job of engaging group discussion in the afternoon session.

Professor Joe Blatt has been one of the best teachers I have had at HGSE. He really values teaching as an art form and he is such a lovely man as well. I appreciated the way he introduced each day with some of his own thoughts on the subject matter and then concluded the day with his ideas too. I liked how he made a big effort to call us by name and introduced himself - even though it was just a two week course. I think he created a very warm and community like feeling in the room. I felt very supported and respected in this class.

Joe he had the whole learning experience well under control, while the structure remained reasonably open. His communicating of expectations, concept, and even synthesizing guests’ contributions was... pristine.

Joe did an amazing job organizing the course, making sure things happened in a timely and organized way, and articulating ways in which any given guest lecturer’s contributions contributed to the goals of the class.

Professor Blatt’s class is very well structured. Great attention was paid to the details with very specific instructions and guidance provided for all the activities.

Blatt is supportive, amiable. and works really hard. He really cares a great deal about creating a top quality course, and expects great things from everyone.

Joe is a dynamic professor who is deeply passionate about his work and this is truly evident in all aspects of the course.

Joe is just one of the most engaging thoughtful professors I have had at HGSE

HE IS A MASTER TEACHER. He exemplifies good classroom practice. He is thoughtful. The way he designed the whole course (sequence, lessons, topics) was very enjoyable and effective.
Prof Blatt is a very effective and engaging teacher, with an excellent rapport with students. Details such as recalling students’ names, a genuine interest in their contribution and diversity as individuals was excellent.

His lectures were seamless and was able to articulate concepts in a way I could understand.

very welcoming and respectful

Joe is very supportive and helpful. His class syllabus as well as the class itself is very well structured. He invited all those amazing people from Sesame Street Workshop and other informal learning projects to share their experience. Joe is just awesome!!

Joe leads discussions with complete mastery. He makes the course material engaging and relevant.

Good sense of humor, stuck to syllabus, managed guest speakers and TF’s, solid lecturer, loves to teach and his content.

He organized a very engaging course and made the classroom environment feel very comfortable and engaging.

- He is passionate about the material and knows the practicalities of working in this space, which is very important
- He seems very up-to-date on new trends in this space (e.g. the role of digital)

He seems like a very intelligent and interesting person. He knows a lot about the subject he teaches. His calm, unflappable presence made the work seem less intimidating.

Joe is SO helpful, and always willing to work with groups.

The logistical preparedness required for this course was remarkable, and I feel so blessed to have taken the course! Prof. Blatt seemed to really enjoy his students, both as a group and one-on-one, despite an enormous group of us. He must also be unbelievably connected, and I am so glad to have been able to benefit from those connections- such incredible insights those speakers were able to provide us!

Giving timely feedbacks.

Bringing in guest lecturers and letting them do their thing. He was also very helpful in letting students interactive with guests. Is there a way other schools could meet with lecturers, too? I know this may be unbelievably difficult, but it seems GSAS and HSPH students could get a lot from the lecturers who were strong on research and the effects on children.

Professor Blatt is an excellent lecturer and is clearly invested in this course. He brought in an amazing range of guest speakers and structured the course so that each assignment built on the previous to reach our final product. The course was so well put together and executed. I also really appreciated the readings and discussions regarding effective teams at the beginning of the two weeks.
He worked to connect with all students and provide a robust and yet attainable class experience. He did a great job of modeling working with a team and utilizing external resources to inform his instruction and our learning.

Joe is known as the most hardworking professor in the Ed school, and through this course, it's easy to see why. Everything is meticulously planned and detailed, the materials in class were of high quality. It's amazing to see a faculty member care so much about a course, and proof of this - he signed every single 'thank you/wrap up' letter for each of the 100+ students taking the course. I was blown away; that is dedication right there. His knowledge, dedication, and enthusiasm make for a great class experience.

Always encouraging, honest and enthusiastic. Professor Blatt is a fantastic leader of class discussion and goes above and beyond to provide the best learning experience for his students.

Joe’s passion for his work is palpable and contagious! He is thoroughly committed to quality instruction, planning and execution and this shows, every day.

In a class this large, discussions with industry expert do have the risk of diverging away from the learning objective of the class. However, Joe had been very focused not to make that happen. He often took time for quick summary of the overall discussion and/or rephrased and clarified question so that other participants in the class was able to relate the discussion in progress with the learning objective. He seemed to be focused every minute during class (and before and after class too) to make sure every students get something meaningful out of the class. Really appreciated his consideration.

Joe is a great speaker and is so excellently organized at all times which makes for an efficient and well run course.

Very fair instructor who encouraged lots of people to engage in a very large class.

In organizing his own lectures and inviting guests

The design of the course was clearly well thought out. The flow of the execution was seamless.

The guest speakers he brought in were outstanding. This course is a work of a master planner. Given the class size, the number of guests and activities planned, the course was surprisingly well managed and flowed like a charm. Joe must have spent enormous amount of time in planning and working out the finer details. Excellently organized course

Joe is a master of the classroom. He deftly controls the tempo and content of the class despite a large group and a diversity of guest speakers. He is particularly extraordinary at synthesizing key lessons from discussions, which is vital when the guest speakers range from Sesame Street to Rock Star Games. Very respectful of students and encourages discussion from a diverse array of opinions.

Joe set such a positive example as an instructor, facilitator, and student. His preparation for lectures was peerless, he helped the guest speakers with questions and reviewed discussions succinctly, and took more notes from the guest speakers than many students! What a great example he set for us.

He’s extremely approachable and clearly cares about student learning and progress.
Professor Blatt is one of the most organized classroom facilitators I have ever experienced. For a two week course, this class was impeccably outlined and constructed. Every lecture, event and activity was specifically created to correlate to a particular objective that related to the day. I was beyond impressed with the coordination and structure of this class.

Joe is a great lecturer/storyteller. His powerpoints are created really well and he’s dynamic. He clearly knows what he is talking about so it was always amazing to listen to him speak about the content.

Joe has an incredible talent for bringing the best out in people. Guest lecturers are not simply invited to the class - they are brought in and integrated wonderfully into the class flow, introducing new comments, clarifying things, raising new questions, etc. This is all done, clearly, by design and it’s really satisfying to be a part of.

Joe is an amazing leader in the classroom. He navigates and engages a class of over 100 students with ease. His enthusiasm for the course material and his class curriculum is unparalleled to any other instructor I have had within or outside of HGSE.

Professor Blatt was extremely well-organized, and set a respectful, welcoming tone where students felt comfortable expressing themselves and getting to know each other. It is clear how much Professor Blatt genuinely cares about his students and is invested in their learning and success. I was particularly impressed by how Professor Blatt created a fun, playful atmosphere in the classroom, but inspired us to take our work very seriously and strive for excellence. I also thought it was great how Professor Blatt emphasized the importance of balance between theory and traditional research and also getting out into the field to do formative research and gather feedback from industry experts. Usually in classes we might learn about the process of formative research, but I really appreciated having the opportunity to do it in this class. In a 2-week class, I was amazed by the amount we learned and actually created in our teams, and this would not have been possible without Professor Blatt’s organization, attention to detail, and enthusiasm!

In his instruction and his thorough organization of the course and careful introductions of the experts

Joe is a very caring teacher. He is passionate about the subject matter and students. He really wants people to come out of the class with the best experience. He knows a lot of people! This was great because we had the most amazing speakers. (I really enjoyed the opportunity to learn from the speakers. )

encouraging discussions and providing valuable insights into some of the most pertinent topics

Joe provides a warm and open environment for learning. Even in a large class like this one, he makes you feel connected to the course content. He was also readily available for students outside of class time if you asked to meet with him. It meant a lot to our group that Joe took the time, despite an incredibly busy couple of weeks, to meet with us and give us feedback on our work.

Used clout to bring in incredibly accomplished and valuable guest speakers, provided great feedback.
Joe’s greatest efforts in this course were clearly towards organization, which he succeeded at. He is also a great lecturer and leader of discussions, though that took somewhat of a backseat in this course.

he conveyed a true desire to have students learn and enjoy the process of learning.

Joe is so sweet! Really appreciate all the effort he put in to line up all our guest speakers, setting up the formative eval, and our field trip to the ICA. His summarizing thoughts at the end of each session were great!

Joe was always very prepared for lectures. The assignments, guests and field trips were all well-coordinated. I always appreciated his re-cap of guest presentations at the end of class to reinforce big ideas. I also appreciated that he kept powerpoints and content very specific and focused on core concepts rather then trying to cover a wide array of topics.

It is a very interesting premise for a course. His effort in organizing guests and a logical series of lectures is evident.

Professor Blatt is a genuinely kind and giving person. He is so committed to supporting students that he goes out of his way to ensure seamless learning experiences. I really appreciated all the details he coordinated behind the scenes without bringing any stress into the classroom.

The class was wonderfully orchestrated, from the guest speakers and the room reservations to the assignment scaffolding and pitch panels. Each speaker seemed to have a good sense of what the class was about and tailored their presentation accordingly, giving us things to think about and apply to our individual projects, something that could only be attributed to Joe's planning. The opportunities to engage and learn from such a range of industry experts in such a short amount of time is unprecedented, again thanks to Joe's reach and reputation in the field.

So engaging, and such a great panel of presenters. This class took over my life in the best of ways during the J Term, and I very much appreciated it. He worked like an orchestra conductor, silently leading all the parts together to create a beautiful master work.

Very well organized! He is always looking for ways to improve the class.

Joe Blatt is a wonderful man with incredible enthusiasm for the course. His course design is the most effective part of this course. It is designed BRILLIANTLY which allows for everything else to flow.

Joe runs a very tight ship. His classes are extremely well-planned and executed. On top of that, he’s also a very down to earth guy who is very honest and approachable.

Professor Blatt put together a fun, exciting, engaging, and illuminating course. Although he did not lecture often, students could feel his presence and guidance in everything. Professor Blatt’s strength was in making sure many behind-the-scenes elements were in place so that we could have a valuable experience. One of these behind-the-scenes that certainly made this course a success were the amazing TFs he picked!
Professor Blatt had a very hands-off approach to the lectures, often bringing in guest lecturers to speak to specific topics. This was a unique approach that worked well in the context of this course.

6.1.3. What recommendations would you make to the instructor to strengthen his or her teaching and/or make the course more valuable?

I think I would have preferred to meet with my group in the morning and not during a weird break in the afternoon. I often felt like I could not get much of the work done with how the classes were scheduled.

Joe is great!

I would have enjoyed more lectures from the professor.

Keep doing what he does so well already.

Honestly, I would have liked MORE class time. I was a little bit bummed in week 2 that we didn’t have as much class time with speakers and presentations! Also, I would really have liked to see the other groups do their pitches.

I’d suggest we have a master sheet/a better sign-up system for rooms. Some time was wasted in finding rooms in the last couple days.

Nothing I can think of. So much was put into making this course interesting, challenging and rigorous. It was certainly worth my time to spend 2 weeks of the J-term on this!

It would be better if we would have a chance to see other groups’ capstone pitches.

Perhaps adding just 3 more days to the course so that the intensity can be spread out.

My only concern is about the final pitch. Taking into consideration that some students may be shy (and have trouble speaking in front of a panel), perhaps an optional tutorial on public speaking could somehow be incorporated into the class. I know that if it were an option, I would definitely want to take advantage of it.

I really have no other suggestions. I must say that the amount of material covered and work done by my team is impressive.

Make the deliverables during the two weeks more formal (useful really - my group was not entirely sure what the purpose of assignment 3 was) and drop the final proposal.

Again, if I knew then what I know now about how to construct an effective pitch, that would be very helpful. Also, we don’t hear from Joe that often, I would like to hear what he has to say because he is also an expert in his own right.
It seems that the focus of the course is on proposal development, and not so much on design. One thought I had was that objectives and target markets might be randomly assigned to groups so that they can immediately jump into developing product concepts, and then having a design focused day where professionals who create for different audiences go over principles of design with separate groups. (i.e. designing for preschoolers, designing for elementary, designing for middle school, etc.).

No recommendations. Joe is great!

keep doing what you’re doing

In terms of making the course more valuable.. I would like to see a change in topic selection for the group projects. Rather than assigning groups by broad subject area here is what I propose:

Individuals rank their preferences from a list of 5-10 Objective goals: e.g. "Impact children’s abilities to make healthy eating decisions” or “increase likelihood of participation in elections (voting, petitions, tabling, etc) upon reaching the age of 18".  
Then they rank their preferred age group to target: e.g. "2-5yo, 5-7, 8-10, 11-13, 14-16, 16-18"

This would cut down on a lot of time in groups debating about target audience and specific objective goals and allow groups to be more focused on product/program design and proposal faster.

none.

Would have been great to have Joe give at least 1 lecture to have his perspective on a topic or two.

Some of the days could have been clearer, as for as logistics go. But that’s it!

Doing this class as a j-term class feels a bit kamikaze at times. I admire Joe's energy, but I found it hard to match it all the time. ...it is just very demanding to be in class for so many hours on end. I did think the way the day was broken up with group work time was good though to keep us from sitting in one place all day.

Besides the constructive criticisms I have about the design of the course itself, I wish Joe would speak more, share his insights and experiences. In other words, although the guest speakers were great, Joe himself should be considered as an "expert speaker" too (title he clearly deserves) and hence offer us the chance to hear him more and ask him questions about his many years in the field.

Reminding students to be flexible for scheduling purposes is the only advice I would give, since field events could not be determined until last minute.

I think it would be helpful to have the guest lectures only in the morning. It was difficult to stay focused on speakers in the afternoon.

The slides could have been slightly more interactive (less bullet points).
In a class of this size and time, it's hard to engage with the students. The limited time our group had with Joe was invaluable to our group morale and moving the project forward. If it’s possible, maybe there are ways to check in with groups more during the first week.

Only wished we could have had more teaching time with Joe and heard more about his own interests and work in this field.

I just think we could have seen more of Professor Blatt.. with all the guest speakers.. I would have liked more lectures just with Joe!

Some students need more coaching or explicit treatment on how to get the most out of the various speakers.

I thought it was great.

It would be nice if there could be more personal access because he is so great to learn from, but the class size makes that very hard. Also, the course was so heavy with guest lecturers, that I missed hearing some more of Blatt’s thoughts.

It would have been valuable to have a morning or afternoon lecture focusing on dance/theatre/music organizations that are creating informal learning experiences.

nada

None

None - his teaching was excellent.

more feedback and direction on assignments

n/a

None. He is great!

Work a little harder to get out of the Sesame workshop comfort zone.

I would have liked the course to last longer, and as much as I enjoyed hearing from the guest speakers, I would have liked to hear more from Joe because he is an entertaining speaker and has a lot of valuable knowledge and perspective himself.

I like the course as it is currently structured, but maybe the professor could consider teaching a few more slots e.g. guest speaker for one session, and a more academic lecture on th topic (potentially with examples from other organizations beyond sesame street) from the .
Since the class is so big, I never really got a chance to interact with the instructor. I think the class should be smaller so that Joe can really engage with and consult on the group projects as they are developing.

Be more critical of issues with projects.

As much as I adored hearing from so many incredible outside speakers, I would have loved to have heard more from Prof. Blatt. What are his insights, his perspectives, his areas of expertise?

None!

Could sessions be recorded and provided over iSites for a limited time to review?

N/A

Those PM straight talk lectures were not ok. I understand at times, the class needed to receive direct instruction on one or two topics but the structure, length and timing of those instances were not conducive to students actually learning the key concept thus rendering the effort useless.

It would have been valuable to get the course packet on making a successful pitch at the beginning of the course.

I would have loved more time listening to Joe lecture and more time in consultation with him with our group.

Please put all of the readings in one location so that students do not have to spend an inordinate amount of time just locating the articles.

To me, the course was a bit "hearts, rainbows and flowers" about Sesame Street. There are many drawbacks to working for a non-profit--it’s difficult to innovate with long grant timelines, compete with for-profits who can pivot on a dime, and large bureaucracies with lots of stakeholders.

Plus, this course trains folks for *extremely specialized* work that isn’t widely available--Sesame Street is what, 300 people? Would have been cool to talk about what other educational for-profits/non-profits look for in candidates...

Smaller groups (perhaps groups of 2 or 3) would make the process of developing the projects slightly easier to manage. Our group spent an inordinate amount of time making decisions, and I believe more learning could have taken place with a smaller group. I understand the value developing group dynamics, but this was not one of the stated goals of the course nor did it influence my decision to enroll.

Joe was brilliant in organizing this course. Its hard to find any weaknesses. Only minor thing that I would mention is that the readings are just too many. Once the course gets going you barely have time to read. May thats because I spent a lot of time in group meetings for the project. But lesser reading would definitely help.
Other than the meeting scheduled with Joe for his office hours, our group did not get face time with him on our idea. Obviously, with such an intense and logistically demanding course, I’m sure there were plenty of good reasons (and part of this is just wanting to get feedback that we didn’t get from our teaching fellow) but it would have been nice to see Joe at one of our brainstorming sessions or the pitch to get his thoughts.

More discussion time with Joe leading.

I think requiring each group to check in more frequently would be helpful. While I appreciated the various perspectives of my group, our working styles were very different and I think more frequent check-ins would have kept everyone on the same page.

None.

My biggest recommendation is that during the last 25-30% of the course, the content, including guest lecturers and readings do not seem to progress as nicely as in the beginning of the course. I assume this may be by design as to allow us to focus on our group work, however I felt like guests were getting repetitive and I was not learning as much new information.

The class could have really been improved if the class size was substantially smaller, but this is probably not Joe’s fault. I also wish he would have lectured more - many times, we heard from the guest lecturers but I felt that very seldom did I hear Joe’s perspective.

The last week of class felt very rushed, as it naturally should because it is only a two week course. However, it would have been more effective to receive the "tips on creating a successful pitch" much earlier as I felt like much of our development was last minute as we had to pivot to new approaches based on that specific material.

The only small recommendation I have is to have all the readings for each session located it one place. At times, it was slightly confusing to flip between the syllabus and the iPac to make sure I’d done all the readings.

I wished I had more time to get to know him personally. Our group only had one chance to meet with him; it would have been nicer to meet with him more often/ hear more of his voice (even in the classes themselves). Also, he seems like a wonderful teacher and I feel like a stranger to him even after taking the course because of how large it was. Would have been nice to have more interaction with Joe.

Since the class is very intensive, there were a few details when starting out the class that I think could have been better clarified. Maybe just talk a little more in class (for 5 extra minutes) about the assignments and the requirements. It just felt that at the beginning of class instructions were not as clear...but again this could be the nature of how fast the class moves.

have guest lecturers give more focused discussions/presentations

It would be nice to hear Joe lecture a bit more; he has a wealth of experience that we could all learn from. The guest speakers were fantastic, but it would be also great to hear more of his voice!
Joe is tremendous.

As discussed in a previous question, some of the guest speakers could have been better. Also, while most of the readings were relevant to what we were learning, it is truly impossible to read everything assigned and complete the group project in two weeks. Readings fell to absolute last priority in the second week as they often weren’t discussed in class and there was not enough time to complete them anyway. I felt like this class would have been even better had it been stretched over three weeks instead of two- more time to develop project ideas and absorb the information being presented. However, because of the length and format of J Term, I don’t think that will be happening.

I also thought that some of the earlier project assignments could have been scaffolded a bit better and expectations could have been more clearly stated.

Maybe be more available to address students’ concerns.

If we could have had some time on the last day (or perhaps as an optional session the following week?) to meet up again after the pitch presenting crazy was over, that would’ve been great. I think it would’ve been nice to have had an hour where we heard from Joe a bit more about how he sees all these pieces tying together and also giving us a chance to share both our challenges and highlights from the experience.

I would have liked to have class again right after lunch rather than spend that time meeting with our groups. I felt we would get going and then have to return to class. It might be easier to save group meetings till the end of the day in case they run long.

Differentiate the presentations and readings for a class made up of individuals with different work, education, and life experience. Don’t invite as many Sesame guests as there currently are. Unfortunately, a lot of information (between readings and various guests) ended up being very repetitive and therefore, disengaging.

None.

I would either align the assignments leading up to the proposal more closely to the final product (i.e. by the time the course was over, groups would only have to add one or two sections, or just proof read the proposal) or get rid of the final written component all together. I feel, at least for my group, we spent an inordinate amount of time and energy to make the pitch an accurate representation of our ideas and plan and it was somewhat anticlimactic to have to get back together to write a proposal after the course was over.

Maybe more clarity of how the final paper will be assessed.

I would love to hear about Joe’s experience in creating informal learning tools!
Hmm....that’s a hard one, because I was blown away by his brilliance in course design. I’m really stumped. Maybe have his lectures (he didn’t give many as most of the lecture time was for guests) pre-recorded and accessible on the i-site, so that way he doesn’t rush through his lecture time and he can hit all of these points on his presentations. If those are assigned as homework before class, then he won’t have to rush through the lectures, but give us time for more discussion that he can facilitate.

Personally, I would liked to hear from Joe a little more throughout this course. Sesame Street employees are awesome, but so is HGSE faculty.

none

I would suggest that Professor Blatt do some more lecturing himself. He has very valuable information to impart, but often not enough time to dedicate to his presentations.

7. **What was your reason for enrolling in the course?**

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Report includes responses submitted as of 2/11/2013
8. On average, how many hours per week did you dedicate to this course outside of class?

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9. What advice would you give to students who are thinking of taking this course (about its level, the amount of work required, any prior training needed, ways to get the most out of the course, etc.)?

Don’t expect to do anything else for the two weeks (like plan out your next semester). It is constant, strangely all encompassing with periods where you feel like you should be doing something but you don’t know what it is.

The class is super intense, but you will get a lot out of it. Besides, you can really bond with your teammates.

It’s a great class. It’s worth taking and worth the hard work!

It’s very intensive but extremely rewarding. If you manage your readings in the winter break then it is not very difficult to handle the work load. It is exhausting doing the same thing day in day out and on the weekends, but it is very interesting and very challenging. Professor Blatt invites amazing guests and that in itself is an amazing opportunity. If you want to expand your learning, be challenged and inspired, this is the course to take.

Every hour that is spent in and outside of class is worth it. Don’t let the intensity of the course discourage you from taking it.
It’s a lot of work, but absolutely take the course. It was an incredible, once-in-a-lifetime experience. Also, do the readings because they’ll let you engage more in course lectures.

Get as much reading done as possible before the first class starts!

The level of commitment for this course is very high, so be prepared that you will be required to spend the full two weeks (including time after class) working on the assignments, the final pitch and the final project. My group worked on weekends, and on the second week we stayed behind to work till the library closed. It is HIGHLY NECESSARY to complete all the readings before the course even begins, because there isn’t time to do reading once it kicks into full swing. BUT, for the amount of work you put in, the level of satisfaction and the intrinsic reward is high. This is one of the best classes I have taken here in HGSE.

This is the best course you can take in J-term. It’s a 4 credit course. The experience to learn from so many industry experts is invaluable. It’s a great course you wouldn’t want to miss.

This is a very intensive course. But if you already had a good break in December, take this course! It’s worth every minute and it adds an extra dimension to teaching and learning.

Do all of the readings before Day 1. Commit to the course completely because it’s A LOT of work. It kind of feels like a summer camp in that you’ll be spending all of your day with Joe, the TFs and your groupmates. It’s also one of the most gratifying courses here at HGSE!

Do not have any other plans while taking this course. Try to do the first week of reading material before you start your first day of class.

This is a great course that gets you connected with people in the business and practice working as a team and creating a pitch for those interested in venture capitalism.

Be ready to work hard, but you will come away feeling a tremendous sense of accomplishment. Also resist the urge to group with friends you already know. I learned so much from the teammates I was assigned to, and we brought a tremendous amount of experience and diversity to the project.

It’s A TON of work but you get a lot out of it. Take Joe’s advice and do the readings before the course starts (the readings are extensive so make sure you have time).

Buckle down, it’s owing to be yhe most intense, but best, two weeks!!!! Make choices decisively and trust your team and you’ll do great. Also, introduce yourself to guest speakers... It may lead to job interviews :)

This is an intense course, but the workload is totally manageable, the days are just long. I highly recommend it to anyone who is interested in children’s media.

This course is intense but worthwhile. Group work was a very valuable experience.
Take this course! It is extremely well designed. It's intense and condensed, but there's a nice sense of flow. In class content and guest speakers are synched up nicely with where you are in your project at every point along the way. The roster of speakers is pretty great. The course is especially appealing if you're someone who learns through doing.

This is an intense two weeks, but well worth it!

Just take it.

A huge amount of work in a short period of time, but I completely enjoyed the course!

This is a fantastic hands-on class where you will learn so much about informal learning. It is an intense two weeks, so you won’t be doing much else. It’s worth it, though.

This class is great, very useful if you’re interested in designing tools or environments for informal learning, but be prepared for a lot of work. Do the readings beforehand if you can. You won’t have time during the course.

The lectures, readings and guest experts are some of the best experiences I’ve had as a learner. Anything and everything related to Sesame Street will change the way you understand and value informal learning. However, come prepared. It might also be a terrible experience if you don’t get your group experience to work well. Lastly, and this is very important, do as many of the reading before the class begins. Trust us, at the end of the day you will be psychologically and physically beat and you won’t enjoy the awesome readings.

Students who want to express creativity and have open minds will benefit most from this course. It is well structured, fun, and lessons are put into practical application through group work. Lessons learned from group cooperation are just as valuable as the lecture lessons - students gain so much from this course.

This is a very intensive course, but the resources and industry expert presentations this course provides are extremely helpful if you want to work in children’s media. I would suggest doing most of the readings before the beginning of the two weeks because there’s very little time to do other things than group discussions once the class starts.

I recommend this course if you’re interested in learning about informal learning or about how to write a proposal and pitch a product.

Informal Learning is a draining course (time and energy wise) but absolutely worth it. This was absolutely my favorite course at HGSE.

This is a wonderful course!
The group project will make or break this experience. If you know others taking the course and enjoy working with them, form a mini-group in advance. Group work can be extremely frustrating and time-consuming - be prepared!! This experience (and stress) is even more heightened because of the intense schedule of the class and you are meeting with your group every day for hours.

It’s helpful to have some project ideas going into the class, so you don’t waste away days in the beginning trying to establish an idea and don’t have enough time to build it out or work thoughtfully through the various elements of the proposal.

As Joe recommends, do at least some of the readings in advance of the course because there is little time and energy outside of classtime after working on the group project.

It’s a great class and it will take over your life for two weeks.. but at the end of it .. you have four credits! It’s like a sprint!

It’s one of the most intensive and helpful J-term courses out there. Go from 0 to 100 in two weeks. Joe is a phenomenal teacher. Watch the classroom experience design. Just take it!

Group work can be harrowing, but I think it’s a great way to learn. The days are long, but fun, and the class feels like a true event. A great way to spend two weeks in January.

If you want to engage in some fun activities, listen to experts talk and get four credits in the J-term, then take the course!

Be prepared to put in a lot of time, but it will be a lot of fun and you will have something to show for it at the end.

Be prepared to be flexible and come in with an open mind in regards to your group project.

Take it...I had the most amazing group and it was one of my favorite HGSE experiences

Read the syllabus, read about the topics and guest speakers, get hold of some people that you are really comfortable working with and with whom you share the same interests, and prepare early for the class. Think of some ideas for projects. Brainstorming and meeting sessions are very crucial and precious, as the course starts immediately.

This course is intensive but extremely rewarding, if possible do the reading prior to its start and then you can throw yourself into the course fully.

The course is a lot of work, in and out of class. It depends on the group that you are in about the success of the course. The instructor is amazing, and the speakers are of the highest quality. Overall a great course to take for people who know a lot and beginners in the field of technology in education.

It’s a lot of work, but amazing and very rewarding class

Take the course if you want to learn about the most updated media and technology approach to informal learning. It’s an intense class but it’s definitely worth it!
Joe is a master teacher. Lectures are wonderful too. A must take.

Great class. Complete readings before class begins, then review notes before classes, be ready to dig in with your group on the project- remember it is a school assignment, don’t get too serious about your internal group "debates" :)

This course is great but it is a lot of work in a short amount of time. The majority of your time is spent on a group project, which could be awesome if you like your group or could be challenging if your group dynamics aren’t so great.

Do the first week’s readings before class. Be fully engaged every minute because every minute there is something awesome to learn. Make the most of the networking opportunity both with the speakers and with fellow students. The group is a great network post the course.

It’s an intense two weeks!

Make sure you have plenty of time!

You should do the first week’s readings over winter break and the second week’s readings during the first week of class if you are unable to read them all before the course begins. The second week is simply too intense to keep on top of both readings and group work.

VERY INTENSIVE. BE PREPARED!

Pitch is challenging but worth it. Make sure you are interested in informal learning, children and working with others on a group project if you want to take this course. Class is a lot of work. Early on discuss with your group how to delegate and divide work among each other. Recommend at least 2 proof readers on everything and make a decision. Do not fight over a topic or try to gather perfect data...you are on a short schedule and sometimes the best option is the closest one at hand. Use your TF and Joe to bounce ideas/questions off of. Also take full advantage of guest speakers to answer questions and to receive feedback on your product and theories in general.

This course is intense but so worth it -- take it!

Be clear to articulate working styles and expectations with your group at the VERY beginning.

Start your reading way before J term starts, because there’s no way you’ll be able to catch up once things get going. It’s an intense two weeks, so be sure to get good rest too. And coffee helps :)

Do your laundry before starting.
Have a solid idea of what you are passionate about in mind before signing up for the course. This will be your guiding force.

Give 100% and you will thrive in this course.

You will learn about educational media, product development, group learning (collaborative learning) and have access to industry experts. It is a relatively intense two weeks but in a 'real world' way. You will also establish "intimate" working experience with your HGSE cohort member that are difficult to establish in a typical "meet twice a week for a semester" type of class. PLUS Joe is a great curriculum designer and an instructor who are always there to support you throughout your journey. Highly recommended.

Do it.

This course is heavily focused on Sesame Street--you will live and breathe Sesame Street for 2 weeks. That said, Joe Blatt is a pleasure to learn with, the project is interesting (though I wish it required more "making" than "proposing"/"planning") and the course is well-paced for a 2-week intensive.

This is a great course, especially if you have an interest in product design and like working at a fast pace! The course requires you to spend a significant amount of time working in a group. If at all possible, I recommend coming into the class with an idea for your project.

This course was a great experience. Try to get the readings done before the start of the J-term. After that its really difficult to get time to read. The group project is the anchor of the course and the more you put in to it, the more you will get out of the course. It does seem intense looking at the schedule, but I really did not find it unbearably tiring. It is intense yes, but rewarding as well.

Don’t expect a life outside of this course. It is very, very intense. Having said that, if you are interested in informal learning or in media for young people (even if the project isn’t up your alley) you will benefit from this course. The group project environment was not so conducive to building something that would continue as a future business, but as a learning experience, it was excellent. The course structure is truly world class, as were the guest speakers, as was Joe’s prolific teaching style.

Don’t kid yourself - this will be a LOT of work. Expect to drop off the face of the earth for at least part of this course. Split up the readings among your teammates. But the guest speakers are astoundingly talented and endlessly inspiring. Bringing your ideas before kids in just 8 days (!) is amazing. And you'll have something tangible at the end of just 2 weeks - that just doesn’t happen anywhere else.

It’s an intensive time-suck but you will have as close to an authentic work experience as you’re going to get at Harvard.

This is an intense course, but so worthwhile! While the material may seem light, however, it is not. You will be working 10-12 hour days if not more. Keep this in mind when planning what you are prepared for over your winter break.

The group work is intense for this class. There’s no time to step back from the class and process everything that is going on.
This was a J-Term course, so it was intense, but considering it was my only academic obligation over the two weeks, it was very manageable. I would recommend getting all of the reading done ahead of time - it allows you to focus on other things during the week and the readings are also very helpful and interesting. Once the course starts, you will most likely not want to continue reading outside of class, so get it done early. Also, take advantage of the outside speakers -- find out who interests you most and come prepared to ask questions, connect, etc. It's a great opportunity to meet experts.

This is an intense two-week class that will go by extremely quickly. Knock as many readings out of the way before the term starts, otherwise you probably won't get to them. Come in to class knowing the topic area you'd like to work on and a potential product you'd like to develop.

I would highly encourage students to take this class! Although it's fast-paced and intense, the structure and excellent support from the professor and teaching fellows keep it from ever feeling overwhelming. It is such a unique opportunity to learn about how experts are creating top-notch products to promote children's learning, and then to actually work with a team to create and pitch an idea of your own. You have many opportunities to receive feedback from industry experts, Professor Blatt, your teaching fellow, other students, and potential users along the way, that you will be surprised by the quality of the product that you will present at the end of just a few weeks.

This is a great course and a wonderful experience. The experts lectures make the class very engaging. The class, however, is VERY dependent on group work: your experience with aspects outside of the course will be determined by whether you are placed into a "good" group or not. Very time consuming course.

Take this course! It is intensive time wise but great because you will be immersed in interesting lectures and you will learn. The group project will open your eyes to new possibilities.

Do take it, its fun, intense and challenging, a perfect combination. If you want to learn how to work with a diverse team in a short sprint like format, this course is definitely for you.

The course offers the chance to work on a team and gain experience in the design and creative process. Even though my focus is on adult education, I still enjoyed the course lectures and guest speakers. Joe makes an intense 2 weeks both fun and engaging.

This course is fantastic. DO NOT take it if you do not like groupwork, do not take it if you aren't willing to commit. There were a few people like that (not in our group) and that was unfair to their groups.

This course is not very difficult, but it is quite a lot of work for two weeks. There is no prior training needed, but an interest in informal learning through media should be a given.

If you're not interested in digital media-based informal learning, you will likely not enjoy the course as it is very digital-media centric.

Take it! It's a ton of work (especially the second week) but SO WORTH IT! Even if you're not considering a career in media or informal learning, take it! When else are you going to get the chance to hear from Executive Vice Presidents, Producers, and CEOs of Sesame Street, WGBH, Rockstar Video Games, Glee, and the like? It's a once in a lifetime opportunity and well worth the effort.

Report includes responses submitted as of 2/11/2013
Get as many as the readings done ahead of time as you can. Try working with new people. There is such a variety of students to work with so don’t feel like you need to have an idea or a team put together before class starts.

Talk with the professor before beginning class if you are a "mature" student (in age) and ask how the design of the class might address your work and life experiences as they may be different than a younger crowd’s. Although, if you just like the idea of designing the project, research based, pitched, etc - then it’s a great exercise.

This course was the highlight of my HGSE experience thus far. It is a lot of work, so be prepared for late nights, but it’s worth it. I had an exceptional team, learned a ton, and will likely move forward on making our project a reality. Take this class!

Absolutely take this course. Best experience at HGSE. The learning opportunities and experiences in this course are unmatched. The workload is completely worth the final product - it becomes something you truly become invested in and care about over the course of the two weeks.

The work level is intense, plan on having nothing else going on for the class term, but it is an amazing course and well worth it.

TAKE THIS COURSE!!!! Do as much of the reading before the class begins as possible.

As a J-term course, HT-123 is very fast-paced and content-packed. I would recommend approaching this class not with the goal of absorbing everything, but of picking and choosing a few interesting ideas out of many.

Be prepared to work hard and have fun! Also, when working in the group, realize that you have strengths that are different than those of your classmates, so be committed to providing your expertise while being humble about others’ contributions.

Think of this class as a journey or experience, rather than a regular course. It will eat up two entire weeks of your life. As long as you are prepared to give up all outside activities for those two weeks, you will have a highly rewarding experience.
10. How would you characterize this course in terms of the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 - Very Low</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5 - Very High</th>
<th>No Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A - Amount of Workload</td>
<td>0% 0%</td>
<td>1% 7%</td>
<td>32% 22%</td>
<td>57% 66%</td>
<td>0% 0%</td>
<td>100% 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0) (0)</td>
<td>(1) (7)</td>
<td>(29) (20)</td>
<td>(51) (58)</td>
<td>(0) (0)</td>
<td>(88) (87)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B - Benefit to You</td>
<td>0% 0%</td>
<td>2% 8%</td>
<td>22% 66%</td>
<td>0% 0%</td>
<td>100% 100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0) (0)</td>
<td>(2) (7)</td>
<td>(20) (58)</td>
<td>(0) (0)</td>
<td>(87) (87)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. What is your primary school affiliation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Affiliation</th>
<th>Percent (Count)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HGSE Ed.M./CAS</td>
<td>88% (78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HGSE Ed.D.</td>
<td>1% (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HGSE Ed.L.D.</td>
<td>1% (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Harvard Master's Program</td>
<td>6% (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Harvard Doctoral Program</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Harvard Degree Program</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other University Degree Program</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Degree</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>1% (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100% (88)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12. If you answered "HGSE Ed.M./CAS," what is your program?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts in Education</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>(9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Policy and Management</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Education</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Development and Psychology</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>(8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Education Policy</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language and Literacy</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning and Teaching</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>(9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mind, Brain, and Education</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>(7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevention Science and Practice</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>(0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Leadership</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>(0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Studies</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Education</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>(0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology, Innovation, and Education</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>(26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>(78)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13. In this space, you may add any additional specific feedback not addressed in earlier sections of this survey.

I am really glad that I took this course. The organization of this course is amazing, and it really inspires me in thinking about how to utilize media for learning.

Best course I’ve taken at HGSE so far!
I also really love the concentrated intensity nature and diverse student composition of the course. If all courses can be taken one at a time in an intensive fashion, that’d work great for me.

The class was really well structured. I appreciated that time for group work was woven into the day's activities. I also really liked it that a lot of different skills were put into use - writing, public speaking, interpersonal skills, analysis, synthesis etc.

Special thanks to Joe and TF David. Thanks for making this J-term such an amazing learning experience. The two-week course is very intensive. It’s better to have read all materials before class begins. But it’s all worth it.

Thank you Prof Blatt and all the TFs for an amazing two week course. I appreciate the meticulous attention in planning every detail of the course. Your enthusiasm diffused much needed energy especially towards the end of the day. The standing ovation given by the class was heartfelt and completely justified. You inspire me.

Thank you so much, Joe. This was yet another fascinating class that will have a great impact on my professional and personal life.

It would be nice to get feedback on the second to last written assignment immediately after our pitch so that we could start working on the final assignment as soon as possible.

Sometimes it was disruptive to the group to return to class sometimes in the middle of a meeting. Perhaps have class over a concerted amount of time to free up more space with the group

Thank you Joe and teaching staff!

This class was a breath of fresh air. It got me engaged in a way other classes have not. I wish I could take other classes in this same concentrated, design-driven format.

Great course-thanks to Prof Blatt and all the TFs.

It almost felt like we had two different courses: I loved the one in the morning and hated the one in the evening and night. One might argue that it depends on which group you are assigned, but in general, I think there is too much pressure and intense work scenarios in a very narrow time frame. Although the argument is that that mirrors professional life, I can attest that it doesn’t. I had to produce similar work in less time, but never under so many "harvard egos", and more specifically, with at least some consensus on what needs to be done.

The most difficult issue was choosing what problem to focus on. After many days, and infinite internal criticisms on the others’ ideas, we ended deciding always on a vote. And it was always a 3-2 vote. That is, you ended up resenting the group because ideas were always linked to some specific person.

A better alternative could be to have the group work focus on how to improve a certain basic idea/problem that already exists, on how to scale it, or on how to create an outreach campaign.
Students should be encouraged to submit proposals to i-lab and other challenges - collaborating with such challenges would be fantastic. This being said, many of these challenges focus on feasibility and practicality, and the vagueness of the assignment was an area of tension in the group project, as “unlimited budget” can mean different things.

The opportunity to network with lecturers and truly experience learning outside of the classroom is fantastic.

Thank you!

I really enjoyed this course and the wonderful guest speakers. My only recommendation would be to have a few more guest speakers whose work targeted audiences beyond the 3-5 yr old range.

Thank you Joe for the wonderful course content, your knowledge, and the incredible arrangement of guest speakers.

I don’t know how to put the groups together in a better way, but a stressful group experience can overshadow the other terrific elements of the course. Perhaps having the TFs more involved in the first week would help the groups along. In the end, I am happy I took the course, but I wish there was some way to better moderate the group experience, so I could spend more time on the content and less time managing people getting along or picking up slack for those who were less committed to the team.

I would consider adding a peer evaluation within groups at the end of the course. This doesn’t need to necessarily change people’s grade, but it might provide a way to hold group members accountable during the course and in the week after working on the final proposal. We were told several times that everyone in the group would receive the same grade (which generally seems fair), so there is little incentive if someone wants to coast and let the rest of the group do all the work. If there is agreement among the majority of the group about a student’s participation, then that might be something to take into consideration.

There was not much time or space, but it could be fruitful to provide some semi-formal space for the groups to mingle and give each other feedback. Some group mixer evening drinks. Or a designated hall (big one) as a communal workspace once a week.

This was one of the best lecture classes I have ever had. Great job.

None.

I think smaller groups would have worked better given the short amount of time. There was a lot of wasted time going back and forth on decisions and it was frustrating to have a different viewpoint than the rest of my group that I didn’t choose and to have to do things the long way when I could see an easier way.

N/A
I told many people that even if I didn’t have a spring semester, this course would have made my tuition worth it.
Perhaps the best thing this course enabled me to do was to come away with a way to answer ANY question I’ll be asked in future job interviews about teamwork. This course is unlike any other in terms of how it enables strong teamwork skills. More important than our final product, pitch or proposal, what was really remarkable was my incredibly successful teamwork experience.
Thank you Professor Blatt!

N/A

n/a

So glad that I did this.

This course is great! I would highly recommend it to anyone looking to experience new perspectives and ideas on learning and children.

Thanks, Joe, for an amazing course and all the effort you put into it!

I would suggest some element of group feedback. One member of our group literally stopped participating. He failed to respond to emails, failed to attend meetings, and failed to do his share of the work. Now he will benefit from the work of the rest of the group by receiving the same grade. I wish there were a way his grade would reflect his effort (or lack thereof) and his disrespectful attitude. But there was no outlet to address these concerns.

Thank you! I really enjoyed this course.

Thanks Joe/TF’s. I truly enjoyed it. One of the best courses I’ve ever taken/seen

The course involves a significant amount of sitting, at least 12 hours every day for 2 weeks. Perhaps more field trips, perhaps that require walking to a destination would be helpful!

Get started on brainstorming and nailing down your project idea early—the second week is INSANE and the more you get done the first week, the better. That being said, don’t be afraid to throw out an idea four days into it if it’s just not working—we picked a completely new idea on the Monday of the second week and ran with it and it worked out great. Also, keep a working Google Doc of your ideas but start thinking in terms of the proposal (not just the pitch) from day 1. That will make coming back together after the pitch to put the paper together a lot easier.

I was really impressed and appreciative of how the teaching team put together or project groups. We had a great blend of talents, but having the common interest area helped us get starred right away. Thanks.

TAKE THIS COURSE!!! It’s AMAZING!!

Report includes responses submitted as of 2/11/2013
The only thing I would recommend would be to have less Sesame Street talks. Although super interesting, by the second week, the presentations, slides, clips, etc started to sound the same. I would have enjoyed a more varied perspective of successful informal learning ventures. Christine Zanchi from WGBH was by far the best expert presenter! Bring her back again.