

Building Classroom Communities

EDUC 244 E 2025

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

"For the most part, schools value quiet children over loud ones and operate as though adults are the only teachers in the room. The adults get to speak while the young people listen. Questions are answered rather than asked. Our schools are designed to prepare children to take their assumed place in the social order rather than to question and challenge that order. Because we train youth in the image of capitalism instead of a vision of freedom- for lives as individual workers, rather than solidary human beings- young people are taught academic content that can be drilled and tested rather than understanding literacies and numeracies as forms of power, tools for organizing, fodder for the development of their own original ideas."

- Carla Shalaby, [*Troublemakers: Lessons in Freedom from Young Children at School*](#), p. Xvi

"My career has been replete with White teachers who 'saw themselves as kindhearted people who were doing right by the less fortunate' and students who struggled to maintain their culture and identity while being forced to be the type of student their teacher envisioned."

- (Emdin, 2016, p. 4). from [*Creating Equity Warriors in the Face of White Fragility Murray and Yuhaniak*](#)

Dear Elementary Team-

Welcome to Building Classroom Communities. We are looking forward to getting to know each one of you! Throughout the summer quarter, we will begin the work of **designing a vision for places and spaces where children can learn and grow, question and wonder, and celebrate the central role of their identity and culture in their classroom community.**

Broadly, we seek to **construct a vision for classroom community** built upon authentic and meaningful relationships with students and **enact our vision of community** in our interactions with students, pedagogical practices, and the classroom environments we co-create with students and families.

Our aims are ambitious and our work is urgent. To do so will require flexibility, creativity, self-reflection, and a desire to dream a better world for ourselves and our students. We can't wait to get started working with you all,

Tasha & Catalina

HONOR CODE

Students are expected to adhere to Stanford's honor code. According to the Office of Judicial Affairs (OJA) website, "For purposes of the Stanford University Honor Code, plagiarism is defined as the use, without giving reasonable and appropriate credit to or acknowledging the author or source, of another person's original work, whether such work is made up of code, formulas, ideas, language, research, strategies, writing or other form(s)." It is important to note that using generative AI to "substantially complete" an assignment or exam by entering the prompt and submitting the output as one's own is disallowed per Stanford's Honor Code. For further information, please consult the OJA website: <http://www.stanford.edu/dept/vpsa/judicialaffairs/students/plagiarism.sources.htm>

STUDENTS WITH DOCUMENTED DISABILITIES

Stanford is committed to providing equal educational opportunities for disabled students. Disabled students are a valued and essential part of the Stanford community. We welcome you to our class.

If you experience disability, please register with the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). Professional staff will evaluate your needs, support appropriate and reasonable accommodations, and prepare an Academic Accommodation Letter for faculty. To get started, or to re-initiate services, please visit oae.stanford.edu. If you already have an Academic Accommodation Letter, we invite you to share your letter with us. **Academic Accommodation Letters should be shared at the earliest possible opportunity so we may partner with you and OAE to identify any barriers to access and inclusion that might be encountered in your experience of this course.**

SUPPORT FOR ALL LEARNERS

This course is designed to support your development as a professional educator. As educators, we are tasked with ensuring the success of ALL learners. Please let us know if the need arises for additional resources or support and we will work together to develop a plan for success.

COMMITMENT TO STUDENT WELLNESS

We are each starting the 2024-25 academic year in unique circumstances, likely not fully recovered or restored from the stresses of the past 3 years and facing ongoing uncertainties, responsibilities, and emotions. Especially under such conditions, we appreciate your active engagement in our course and will do everything we can do to support you. Without requesting or expecting details of your situation, we will do everything we can to ensure your course learning is productive and enjoyable. However, it is of the most importance that you communicate as early as possible if anything arises so we can be responsive to your needs.

Of note, current stressful events and/or mental health concerns may lead to diminished academic performance, reduce your ability to participate in daily life, or trigger a broad range of feelings. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. You can learn more about [the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus here](#).

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

If you must miss all or part of any session, please let us know as far as possible in advance so that you can complete all missed work prior to the next session. **As valuable members of our learning community, your promptness, engagement, and attendance at each class session is essential.**

Engagement looks differently for everyone but ultimately requires us all to think critically, question our assumptions, share our thinking, and actively listen, as we grow and learn together.

COURSE POLICY FOR USE OF GENERATIVE AI

You may use AI programs e.g. ChatGPT to help generate ideas and brainstorm (e.g. types of morning meeting greetings, etc.). However, you should note that the material generated by these programs may be inaccurate, incomplete, or otherwise problematic. Beware that use may also stifle your own independent thinking and creativity. You may not submit any work generated by an AI program as your own. If you include material generated by an AI program, it should be cited like any other reference material (with due consideration for the quality of the reference, which may be poor).

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Below is a table to help you organize yourself around assignments. More details for each assignment are listed below and will be available on Canvas. For the benefit of our collective learning community, it is important that each assignment is completed thoughtfully and on time.

Week of July 30th	Week of July 7th	Week of July 14th	Final Assignment
N/A	What I Wish My Teachers Knew <i>(Due Tues July 8)</i> Morning Meeting Plan <i>(Due Thurs July 10)</i>	After receiving feedback from Tasha or Catalina, teach Morning Meeting <i>(anytime from July 14 - 23rd)</i>	Morning Meeting Reflection <i>(Due Tues July 29)</i>

Due before Session 2 (July 8 by 10pm): What I Wish My Teachers Knew

Write a letter to your past elementary school teachers. In addition to words, you may wish to also represent your ideas through another form of expression, e.g., poetry, illustrations, photography, etc. What do you wish your own elementary school teachers knew about you at the beginning of the school year? Interpret this however you wish. Choose one line or image to be shared aloud as part of a found poem compilation with quotes and images from our whole class's letters. Your complete letter will only be read by Tasha & Catalina. *This assignment will be graded as incomplete/complete.*

Due July 10 by 5pm: Morning Meeting Plan

Write a lesson plan for a Morning Meeting you will lead anytime during the July 14-23rd teaching window. The Morning Meeting should be 15-25 minutes long, and include a Greeting, Sharing, Group Activity and Morning Message. Use this [planning template](#). We will also provide an example plan for your reference. *This assignment will be graded according to the rubric below. **We will provide feedback on your plan prior to your teaching.***

MORNING MEETING PLAN RUBRIC			
	1: Approaching expectations	2: Meets expectations	3: Exceeds expectations
Responsive Design	Meeting plan does not show evidence of responding to students. Meeting plan does not consider accessibility needs of students.	Meeting plan responds to student identities, interests, and/or abilities. Meeting plan demonstrates attention to accessibility needs of some students.	Meeting plan specifically addresses <i>individual as well as group</i> identities, interests, and/or abilities. Meeting plan demonstrates <i>careful attention to accessibility needs of all students</i> .
Structural Design: Components	Meeting plan does not include all recommended components nor a rationale for omitting/adapting any.	Meeting plan <i>includes all recommended components</i> (Greeting, Sharing, Activity and Morning Message), or <i>includes a rationale for not including/adapting some components</i> .	
Structural Design: Student Engagement	Meeting plan does not include language that clearly or positively communicates expectations for student actions.	Meeting plan demonstrates clear communication and positive expectations for student actions.	Meeting plan demonstrates clear communication, positive expectations for students, <i>and multiple means of student engagement based on specific knowledge of students' backgrounds, interests, strengths and/or needs</i> .
Structural Design: Timing	Meeting plan demonstrates little or no attention to timing.	Meeting plan demonstrates consideration around timing for all components.	Meeting plan demonstrates <i>careful attention to timing for all components, as well as a backup plan for potential challenges that could impact timing</i> .

Due July 29: Morning Meeting Reflection

After you've led your Morning Meeting, you have three choices for how to submit a reflection: 1) a narrative reflection (about 1-2 pages), 2) a video reflection (about 5-10 mins) or 3) annotate your submitted lesson plan using track changes/comments. **Your reflection should address the following questions: What went well? What was surprising and/or challenging? What might you do differently next time? What did you learn about your students? What did you learn about yourself and your teaching? What are you still wondering about? How did the Morning Meeting assignment and overall learnings from this course inform your future vision for building your classroom community?** This assignment will be graded according to the rubric below.

MORNING MEETING REFLECTION RUBRIC			
	1: Approaching expectations	2: Meets expectations	3: Exceeds expectations
Reflecting on specific moments that went well	Reflection <i>broadly</i> references joy, student engagement, and/or learnings	Reflection highlights <i>specific</i> moments of joy, student engagement, and what has been learned from those moments	Reflection highlights <i>specific</i> moments of joy, student engagement, and what has been learned from those moments about <i>both yourself <u>and</u> your students</i>
Reflecting on surprises or challenges	Reflection <i>broadly</i> references surprises or challenges and/or learnings	Reflection identifies <i>specific</i> surprises and challenges that came up and what has been learned since reconsidering those moments and what you would do differently.	Reflection identifies <i>specific</i> surprises and challenges that came up and what has been learned since reconsidering those moments about <i>both yourself <u>and</u> your students</i>
Connection to Vision of Community	Reflection describes <i>broadly</i> how learnings from lesson implementation impact future vision of building classroom community <i>within Morning Meeting time</i> .	Reflection describes how <i>specific</i> learnings from lesson implementation impact your future vision of building classroom community <i>within and outside of Morning Meeting time</i> .	Reflection describes how specific learnings from lesson implementation impact your future vision of building classroom community <i>both within and outside of Morning Meeting time</i> . Describes the <i>core values that you would want to be reflected and enacted</i> in your future classroom community. Explicitly puts forth <i>lingering questions/wonderings</i> you still want to explore when thinking about classroom community-building.

Connection to Course Readings	Does not draw upon or connect to any course readings.	Draws upon and connects to <i>one course reading from BCC</i> to support analysis and reflection.	Draws upon and connects to <i>at least two course readings from BCC and/or other STEP courses</i> to support analysis and reflection.
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A NOTE ABOUT READINGS

Each of the readings was carefully selected to provide a different perspective, unearth new ideas, and link together important topics. Our hope is that in reading, examining, and discussing these ways of envisioning a learning community you will begin to construct your own ideologies and envision your own transformative practices. We urge you to use the focus questions as a guide for making sense of new ideas and come to class ready to link theory to practice and envision equitable classrooms for all learners. Additionally, we strive to provide readings and resources that are responsive to the needs of our class, so readings might at times be supplemented or substituted.

Session	Guiding Questions/ Focus Routine	Readings (all will be accessible on Canvas)	Assignments
Session 1	<p>Guiding Question How is childhood defined and enacted?</p> <p>Learning Objective Teacher candidates will reimagine classroom communities that celebrate childhood while cultivating spaces where children can learn and grow, question and wonder, and honor the central role of identity and culture in their lives.</p> <p>Focus Routines: Greetings & Morning Meetings</p>	<p>Michael J. Dumas and Joseph Derrick Nelson (2016) (Re)Imagining Black Boyhood: Toward a Critical Framework for Educational Research. Harvard Educational Review: Spring 2016, Vol. 86, No. 1, pp. 27-47. https://doi.org/10.17763/0017-8055.86.1.27</p> <p>Robert Lake (2000), An Indian Father's Plea, (in Education Week)</p> <p>Recommended/Optional:</p> <p>Marjorie Faulstich Orellana (2001) The Work Kids Do: Mexican and Central American Immigrant Children's Contributions to Households and Schools in California. Harvard Educational Review: September 2001, Vol. 71, No. 3, pp. 366-390. https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.71.3.52320g7n21922hw4</p>	
Session 2	<p>Guiding Question How might we work with children and families to build a vision for a classroom community?</p> <p>Learning Objective</p>	<p>Tasha's Letter: What I Wish My Teacher Knew</p> <p>Catalina's Letter: What I Wish My Teacher Knew</p>	What I Wish My Teachers Knew (7/8)

	<p>Teacher candidates will imagine classroom communities that incorporate collective learning, authentic engagement, and celebrate the central role of identity and culture in the lives of their students.</p> <p>Focus Routines: Establishing Hopes and Dreams & Utilizing Purposeful Teacher Language</p>	<p>Responsive Classroom, <i>Our Hopes and Dreams for School</i> https://www.responsiveclassroom.org/our-hopes-and-dreams-for-school/</p> <p>Assigned excerpts from Paula Denton (2007) <i>The Power of Our Words: Teacher Language that Helps Children Learn</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforcing • Reminding • Redirecting <p>Hammond, Z. L. (2015). <i>Culturally responsive teaching and the brain</i>. Corwin Press. Chapter 9 ONLY</p> <p>Recommended/Optional:</p> <p>Donna De La Cruz (2016) What Kids Wish Their Teachers Knew. (In The New York Times)</p>	<p>Morning Meeting Plan (7/10)</p>
<p>Session 3</p>	<p>Guiding Question How might we develop a physical and social space that fosters community, engagement, imagination, and generative play among children?</p> <p>Learning Objective Teacher candidates will imagine physical and social spaces that foster community, engagement, imagination, and inclusion.</p> <p>Focus Routines: Designing Student-Centered Classrooms</p>	<p>Rethinking the Colorful Kindergarten Classroom (NYT)</p> <p>4 Ways Classroom Design Impacts Executive Functioning</p> <p>Atkins, D. (2012). From Access To Interaction. <i>Occasional Paper Series, 2012</i> (28). Retrieved from https://educate.bankstreet.edu/occasional-paper-series/vol2012/iss28/5</p> <p>Assigned Excerpts from Hertz and Miraz (2018) Kids First from Day One: A Teacher's Guide to Today's Classroom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1. Do's and Don'ts (46-48) • 2. Organization (41-43) • 3. The Environment (35-37) • 4. Room Design (40, 50-51) <p>Recommended/Optional:</p> <p>Catherine C. Lewis (1995), <i>Educating Hearts and Minds: Reflections on Japanese Preschool and Elementary Education</i>, Chapter 3 The Whole Child Goes to School</p>	<p>Teach Morning Meeting (between 7/14-7/23)</p>

Teresa Strong Wilson & Julia Ellis (2007), *Children and Place: Reggio Emilia's Environment as Third Teacher*

Hertz and Miraz (2018) Kids First from Day One: A Teacher's Guide to Today's Classrooms

[Free/Affordable Resources for Classroom Design & Set-Up](#)- Explore and contribute ideas!

[The National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning: Designing Environment presentation](#)

- [Learning Activity: Assessing Your Physical Spaces and Strategizing Changes](#)
- [Learning Activity: Content Design of Classrooms](#)
- [Learning Activity: Matching Classroom Content to Learning Goals and Interests](#)
- [Learning Activity: Preparing for Intentionally Grouping Children](#)
- [Learning Activity: How the Physical Space Can Affect Behavior](#)
- [Follow-Up Activity: Tracking Patterns to Determine Design Needs](#)

NCECDL advances best practices in the identification, development, and promotion of the implementation of evidence-based child development and teaching and learning practices that are culturally and linguistically responsive and lead to positive child outcomes across early childhood programs.

[IRIS Center* Early Childhood Environments: Designing Effective Classrooms Module](#)

- [IRIS Center* Early Childhood Environments: Designing Effective Classrooms Activity](#)

Supported by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs and located at Vanderbilt University's Peabody College, the IRIS Center develops and disseminates free, engaging online resources about evidence-based instructional and behavioral practices to support the education of all students, particularly struggling learners and those with disabilities. These resources, designed to bridge the research-to-practice gap, are intended for use in college teacher preparation programs, in professional development (PD) activities for practicing professionals, and by independent learners.

<p>Session 4</p>	<p>Guiding Question How do we support children's freedom while ensuring that classrooms are generative spaces that are as safe as can be?</p> <p>Learning Objective Teacher candidates will imagine classroom communities that promote freedom while ensuring safety and inclusion for all.</p> <p>Focus Routines: Interactive Modeling +Integrating Routines & Procedures</p>	<p>Responsive Classroom, What is Interactive Modeling?</p> <p>Interactive Modeling Video: Using Scissors Safely</p> <p>A Grandfather Asks, How Much Freedom Can My Grandson Handle? NY Times Article</p>	<p><i>Final assignment</i></p> <p>Morning Meeting Reflection (7/29)</p>
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