Character Education in the Classroom Online

Course Outline

Course Description
Character Education in the Classroom examines the role of educators in developing moral and ethical behavior in students by assisting teachers in defining and identifying character traits that would be important in their school. Character education has become a very popular theme in education since the 1990's because of the increase of violence in schools, discipline concerns, and a national call to action for character education.

Educators will explore different theories of moral development and identify skills that can be integrated into the classroom. Practical application of the concepts shared is an important part of this course. Teachers will prepare lessons/vignettes that they will use in their classrooms. They will analyze and critique these lessons to see the value of promoting character development in students.

Another aspect of this course is the concept that the teacher can be an effective model for their students. Therefore, teachers will identify their own personal character strengths and explore how these strengths work to aid the teacher when problems occur in the classroom.

It is the intent of the author that this course stretch beyond the classroom and that character education be developed into not only a school wide program but involve the community as well. Exploring avenues to involve the entire school, parents, and the community are addressed in this course.

Objectives
- Create a definition of character
- Appraise factors that influence character
- Explain how character education has changed in schools
- Evaluate current school policies about character education
- Examine the teacher's role in the classroom environment
- Develop plans to help students connect with each other
- Discover strategies to help students care for each other
- Assess methods to improve the quality of group interaction
- Analyze six E's of character training
- Explore virtues that promote commitment
- Create methods for responding when kids don't know the answer
- Compare methods for integrating character education into the curriculum
- Develop lessons that teach moral literacy
- Implement a moral discussion in the classroom
- Examine whether teachers should express their own views
- Establish guidelines for studying controversial issues
- Assess the role of the teacher as the moral authority in the classroom
Discuss creating classroom rules
Evaluate methods for dealing with consequences of broken rules
Describe self-control in a morally disciplined classroom
Evaluate the role of perceptions in evaluating values
Assess discipline, control and problem solving
Assess a school's character education program
Identify key elements for effective programs
Examine the mission statement
Compare and contrast methods to create a positive moral culture in the school
Promote moral conversations between parents and children
Identify ways to encourage parents in leadership roles
Identify means of soliciting community involvement

Curriculum Design & Time Requirements
The basic methodology is experiential through work on prescribed topics, issues, and practical application of shared concepts. Participants will prepare, analyze, and critique lessons that can be used to promote character development within the students in their classrooms. Character Education is a 13 week 3 credit graduate level or sixty hour professional development course taught online. Modules 1 through 9 will be completed one per week. Module 10 will be completed over a two-week period so students will have time to revise and complete the final integration project.

Hardware & Computer Skill Requirements
Computer and Internet access required. Students must have regular access to a computer and be able to use computer skills to successfully complete this course. Many problems instructors and students run into stem from mis-configured browsers, incorrect software versions, pop-up blockers, and other issues. Most of these issues can be prevented by performing the browser tune up before the course or once a problem arises. Often students find it easier to use Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome, or Safari rather than Internet Explorer; for some applications Internet Explorer may work well.

Course Materials
The required textbook for this course is Culturize, by Jimmy Casas. A variety of readings will be referenced throughout the course.

Session Outline

Session 1: Setting the Stage - The Case for Character Education
Contents:
1. Defining character
2. Identifying the components of character
3. Exploring the importance of character education
4. Examining the school's involvement in character education

Session 2: Encouraging Moral Reflection
Contents:
1. Identifying historical perspectives on education
2. Exploring Lawrence Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development
3. Gaining understanding of the need for moral development
4. Identifying skills that can be integrated into the classroom

Session 3: Creating a Moral Community in the Classroom
Contents:
1. Examining the teacher's role in the classroom environment
2. Helping students connect with each other
3. Discovering ways to help students care for each other
4. Improving the quality of group interaction

Session 4: The Teacher's Role in Nurturing Character
Contents:
1. Examining the six E's of character training
2. Exploring the virtues that promote commitment
3. Understanding how to respond when kids don't know the answer

Session 5: Cultivating Character thru Curriculum
Contents:
1. Examining the curriculum - What is most worth knowing?
2. Identifying where character education fits
3. Developing lessons that teach moral literacy

Session 6: Teaching Controversial Issues
Contents:
1. Structuring moral discussions
2. Exploring whether teachers should express their own views
3. Establishing guidelines for studying controversial issues

Session 7: A Morally Disciplined Classroom
Contents:
1. Understanding the role of the teacher as the moral authority in the classroom
2. Setting up classroom rules
3. Dealing with the consequences of broken rules

Session 8: Developing Character thru Conflict
Contents:
1. Understanding self-control in a morally disciplined classroom
2. Recognizing the role of perceptions in evaluating values
3. Assessing discipline, control and problem solving

Session 9: Creating a Community of Virtue School-Wide
Contents:
1. Assessing a schools character education program
2. Identifying key elements for effective programs
3. Examining the mission statement
4. Creating a positive moral culture in the school

Session 10: Engaging Parents and the Community in Character Education
Contents:
1. Exploring changes that have affected the home-school partnership
2. Promoting moral conversations between parents and children
3. Encouraging parents in leadership roles
4. Identifying means of soliciting community involvement

Grading

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Grading Scale</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talking Points</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>100 – 93</td>
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Reading Assignments 30  92 – 85  B  
Project: Classroom Lessons  15  84 – 77  C  
Project: Assessing School Climate  15  
**Total Points**  100  

**Student Requirements**
1. **Participation:** Actively participate in all activities.  
2. **Reading Assignments:** Complete all readings and reflection assignments.  
3. Complete the Classroom Lessons  
4. Write a paper assessing the school’s climate.  

**Student Academic Integrity**
Participants guarantee that all academic class work is original. Any academic dishonesty or plagiarism (to take ideas, writings, etc. from another and offer them as one's own), is a violation of student academic behavior standards as outlined by our partnering colleges and universities and is subject to academic disciplinary action.