

Character Education in the Classroom

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
- Discuss changes that have affected the home-school partnership
- 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 in the Classroom is a 3 credit graduate level or forty-five hour professional development course taught on weekends or over five full days.

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

Assignment	Points	Grading Scale
Classroom Participation	20	100 – 93 A
Journal Assignments	20	92 – 85 B
Project: Classroom Lessons	25	84 – 77 C
Project: Assessing School Climate	20	
Research Writing Assignment	15	
Final Exam	10	
Total Points	110	

Student Requirements

Attend all class sessions for the requisite number of hours (45) and actively participate

1. in all class activities.

Complete all reading assignments. Keep a journal, reflecting upon the major ideas in

2. the assigned readings and the application of those ideas in your school and classroom.

3. Complete the Classroom Lessons and the Assessing School Climate project.

4. Pass a final exam.

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.