



Building Positive Classroom Communities
Strategies for Supporting Students' Social and Emotional Development
Graduate Course

Teacher Education Institute ©

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to provide educators with research-based strategies and practical applications for building positive classroom communities that support students' emotional and social growth. Using *Positive Classroom Communities: Activities to Support Students' Emotional and Social Growth* by Simonyi and Campanelli as the foundational text, participants will examine how intentional routines, structured activities, and reflective practices foster belonging, empathy, collaboration, and emotional regulation.

A primary goal of this course will require teachers to implement community-building strategies directly into their classroom curriculum. Participants will analyze classroom climate, design activities that promote student voice, establish restorative practices, and integrate social-emotional learning into daily instruction.

Objectives:

- Evaluate research on the importance of classroom community.
- Analyze the relationship between emotional safety and academic success.
- Develop strategies to create inclusive classroom environments.
- Design routines that promote belonging and connection.
- Explore structured activities that foster empathy and perspective taking.
- Implement conflict resolution and restorative practices.
- Incorporate student voice and leadership opportunities.
- Integrate social-emotional learning into daily instruction.
- Develop tools to assess classroom community growth.
- Create a long-term classroom community implementation plan.

Curriculum Design:

Building Positive Classroom Communities is a 3 credit graduate level or forty-five hour professional development course taught on weekends or over five full days.

Course Materials

Simonyi, S., & Campanelli, T. (Year). *Positive Classroom Communities: Activities to Support Students' Emotional and Social Growth*. Reflection and integration questions embedded within each chapter will be utilized throughout the course.

Session Outline

Session One: Foundations of Positive Classroom Communities

Content:

1. Explore the concept of classroom community and its impact on student success
2. Identify the role of social-emotional learning (SEL) in academic achievement
3. Examine the components of the CASEL framework
4. Reflect on strategies for creating safe and inclusive learning environments

Session Two: Building Student Belonging & Inclusion

Content:

1. Explore identity and representation in the classroom
2. Identify strategies to ensure all students feel valued and included
3. Examine routines that promote belonging
4. Reflect on inclusive teaching practices

Session Three: Developing Self-Awareness

Content:

1. Explore emotional literacy and recognizing feelings
2. Identify strategies to build student self-awareness
3. Examine growth mindset and identity development
4. Reflect on the use of daily check-ins and reflection practices

Session Four: Strengthening Self-Management Skills

Content:

1. Explore emotional regulation strategies
2. Identify coping skills and self-control techniques
3. Examine goal-setting practices
4. Reflect on strategies that support perseverance

Session Five: Cultivating Social Awareness

Content:

1. Explore empathy and perspective-taking

2. Identify strategies for respecting diversity and differences
3. Examine social cues and group dynamics
4. Reflect on promoting inclusivity and understanding

Session Six: Building Relationship Skills

Content:

1. Explore communication and active listening skills
2. Identify conflict resolution strategies
3. Examine collaborative learning structures
4. Reflect on strengthening peer relationships

Session Seven: Responsible Decision-Making

Content:

1. Explore problem-solving frameworks
2. Identify ethical decision-making strategies
3. Examine real-life application scenarios
4. Reflect on accountability and decision-making

Session Eight: Classroom Management Through an SEL Lens

Content:

1. Explore proactive versus reactive classroom management strategies
2. Identify restorative practices
3. Examine consistent expectations and routines
4. Reflect on SEL-based classroom management approaches

Session Nine: Assessing Social-Emotional Growth

Content:

1. Explore tools for assessing SEL development
2. Identify the use of rubrics and checklists
3. Examine observational strategies
4. Reflect on tracking student progress over time

Session Ten: Sustaining a Positive Classroom Community

Content:

1. Explore integrating SEL across the curriculum
2. Identify strategies for long-term community building
3. Examine the role of teacher reflection and self-care
4. Reflect on sustaining a positive classroom environment

Student Requirements

1. Participation: Actively participate in all activities.
2. Reading assignments: Complete all reading assignments including online Session content and linked web resources.
3. A checklist for the final project will be distributed in the first session and again in the last Session that will outline the components and elaboration necessary to achieve the corresponding grades.
4. Written reflections for each session during the course are required. Each reflection must conform to APA style. Written reflections will be due as follows:
5. Reflection questions are due at the end of each Session.
6. Final Reflections will be due at the end of the course.
7. Final project: Students are required to construct a portfolio during the course that will serve as a toolkit of specific ideas and lesson plans for their classrooms. Due by the end of Session 10.

Course Evaluation

| Assignment | Points | Grading Scale | |
|---------------------|---------------|----------------------|----------|
| Class Participation | 9 | 72-77 | A |
| Class Assignments | 30 | 66-71 | B |
| Final Project | 20 | 60-65 | C |
| Reading | 18 | | |
| Total Points | 77 | | |

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.