



Building Positive Classroom Communities
Strategies for Supporting Students' Social and Emotional Development
Online 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 sixty hour, three credit graduate level course completed over a thirteen-week period. During the first week of the course, the participants will complete an introduction. Modules one through nine will be completed one per week. Module ten will be completed over a two-week period, so students will have time to revise and complete the final integration project.

Hardware & Computer Skills Requirements

Students may use either an Apple computer or a PC. Students should possess basic word processing skills and have internet access with an active email account. Students also are expected to have a basic knowledge of how to use a Web browser, such as Internet Explorer, Firefox, Google etc.

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.

Module Outline

Module 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

Module 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

Module 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

Module 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

Module 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

Module 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

Module 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

Module 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

Module 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

Module 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 module content and linked web resources.
3. A checklist for the final project will be distributed in the first session and again in the last module 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 module.
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 Module 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.