

COURSE TITLE: ENGAGED AND RESPONSIBLE STUDENTS: Democratic & Caring Classrooms

NO. OF CREDITS: 1 QTR CREDIT

CONTACT HOURS: 10
WA CLOCK HRS: 9

INSTRUCTOR: JUDITH A. GRAY, Ph.D.
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

There has never been a better time in education to actively implement democratic principles in the classroom. Educational reform has effectively dissolved the traditional barriers between student and teacher. More and more teachers are sharing teaching and learning responsibilities with their students, and students are increasingly encouraged to feel empowered. Notwithstanding, teachers are afraid to relinquish most tasks and decisions, especially those having to do with curriculum, classroom management, evaluation and leadership. It is no wonder that democracy is more often preached than nourished and practiced at the classroom level of our educational system.

In this course participants will learn how to create and sustain student ownership of the learning process by incrementally affirming and implementing democratic principles. As the instructor provides and models meaningful structures and activities she will show that practicing democratic principles can lead to enhanced student learning and accountability, greater respect for each other and more collaborative functioning of the classroom. When teachers allow students leadership opportunities and relevant responsibilities it is remarkable how much more motivated students become and how much richer and deeper their learning experiences. Discipline and management problems tend to diminish and classrooms become authentic teacher-learning environments where students are willing workers and teachers are effective coaches and facilitators. This course is open to all educators of grades K - 12. There is a materials fee of \$5.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

As a result of this course participants will

1. Affirm the democratic principles that apply in their classrooms
2. Understand the value and rewards of a democratic classroom
3. Be able to design and implement democratic structures for their classrooms
4. Know the current research and literature on democratic classrooms
1. Evaluate the efficacy of applying democratic principles and structures in their classrooms

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Following are general course requirements weighted to determine the granting of university credit. To issue credit Antioch University requires a 75% or better at the 400 level and 85% or better at the 500 level.

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| 1. Attendance and active participation | 40% |
| 2. Reading articles and reflecting on own learning | 30% |
| 3. Satisfactory completion of all outside assignments | 30% |

400 LEVEL OUTSIDE ASSIGNMENT:

Make a year-long plan on how and when you could implement 3 - 5 of the strategies that you learned about in this course. What obstacles, if any, do you foresee? This should result in a 2 - 3 page chart or calendar. Send a copy of the plan to the instructor at the address noted in this syllabus.

500 LEVEL OUTSIDE ASSIGNMENT:

In addition to the 400 level assignment, do **one** of the following:

1. Conduct additional reading using the attached bibliography in the area of democracy in the classroom and prepare a 4 - 6 page paper summarizing your findings and including a working annotated bibliography. Assignment should be typed in 10 or 12 point, double-spaced and sent to the instructor's address noted in this syllabus.

OR

2. Read and analyze the educational philosophy and reforms of Alfie Kohn's writings. Select 8 – 10 of his ideas and explain how each one could be used in your classroom in order to build increased democracy, equity and student self-management. Assignment should be typed in 10 or 12 point, double-spaced and sent to the instructor's address noted in this syllabus.

INSTRUCTOR FEEDBACK:

Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you would like to receive the instructor's comments and evaluation of your assignment.

MATERIAL FEE:

\$5 materials fee payable to the instructor in class by check or cash.

WHAT TO BRING:

A notebook or legal pad, pens/pencils, comfortable clothes in which to move, something warm to wear in case the room is cool, a sack lunch in case you wish to eat and a cushion to sit on if you want extra comfort.

INSTRUCTOR QUALIFICATIONS:

Judith Gray, Ph.D. is an experienced teacher and lecturer. She successfully implemented democratic principles and practices in her science and performing arts classes at Henry M. Jackson High School. Judith has presented her work on "Democratic Classrooms" to teachers and administrators at the National Coalition of Essential Schools Fall Forums. She has supervised experienced and student teachers in schools both in America and New Zealand and has published over 15 research articles and 3 books on education. Judith has a Ph.D. from the University of Arizona and a MA in Curriculum and Instruction from Northern Arizona University. She is a former Assistant Professor in the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and is currently teaching at Antioch University-Seattle.

**ENGAGED AND RESPONSIBLE STUDENTS: Democratic & Caring Classrooms
BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- Canter, L, and Canter, M. 1992. *Assertive Discipline: Positive Behavior Management for Today's Classroom*. Santa Monica, CA: Lee Canter and Associates.
A scripted formula approach based on rules, rewards and consequences.
- Curwin, R., and Mendler, A. 1999. *Discipline with Dignity*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
Respectful, coherent and relevant ideas and strategies.
- Dewey, J. 1916. *Democracy in Education*. New York: Macmillan.
An historic essay on the elements of a democratic education.
- Gossen, Diane. 1998. *Restitution*.
Practical and self-disciplined ideas to help students feel and act accountably.
- Kohn, A. 1993. *Punished by Rewards: the Trouble with Gold Stars, Incentive Plans, A's, Praise and Other Bribes*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.
An anti-behaviorist, philosophical, ambitious and controversial volume of well-researched theories and evidence about discipline and management of students.
- McDermott, C., Ed. 1999. *Beyond the Silence: Listening for Democracy*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
A collection of thoughtful articles on democracy and education.
- McKenzie, Robert. 1999. *Setting Limits in the Classroom*.
This book offers simple strategies for setting firm limits and reducing the common soft limits.
- Mednick, F. 1996. *Rebel Without a Cause: Surviving and Appreciating Your Child's Teen Years*. Minneapolis: Fairview Press.
An entertaining, genuine and practical guide for understanding teens.
- Neil, A. S. 1961. *Freedom: Not License*. New York: Hart.
A classic book that promotes self-discipline and intrinsic motivation to build democratic instructional practices.
- Nelson, J., et al. *Positive Discipline in the Classroom*.
Ideas for creating positive classroom climate using class meetings and other community-building strategies.
- Rohnke, K. 1984. *Silver Bullets: A Guide to Initiative Problems, Adventure Games, and Trust Activities*. Hamilton, MA: Project Adventure, Inc.
A wealth of activities to bring kids and teachers together.

**ENGAGED AND RESPONSIBLE STUDENTS: Democratic & Caring Classrooms
COURSE OUTLINE**

Course Schedule is subject to change.

- 8:00 Introductions, survey, and housekeeping
- 8:30 Leadership Styles activity and discussion
- 9:30 Overview of research
- 10:00 Break**
- 10:15 Chalk Talk
- 11:00 Principles and Practices activity
- 12:00 Lunch**
- 12:30 Restitution
- 1:30 Classroom Charters
- 2:30 Class Meetings
- 3:00 Break**
- 3:15 Assessment
- 4:00 Planning in small groups
- 5:30 Closure – evaluations, reflections, closing activity.

**ENGAGED AND RESPONSIBLE STUDENTS: Democratic & Caring Classrooms
COURSE OVERVIEW**

This one-day course will begin with introductions and a participant survey. This will be followed by a small group activity to expose leadership styles – with a follow-up discussion. The instructor will provide a review of the research on the topic of democratic principles in the classroom and will invite comments and questions. Next, participants will demonstrate examples of these principles at work. Groups will be formed to brainstorm ways to bring democratic principles and structures into the classroom and these ideas will be shared with the whole group. Participants will also learn how to co-create classroom charters, restitution contracts, student leadership, classroom meetings and other student-centered and equitable structures and strategies. To conclude the course, ways to evaluate the process will be devised and discussed.