

**COURSE TITLE: AWAKENING GENIUS IN THE CLASSROOM**

**WA CLOCK HRS: 10**  
**OREGON PDUs: 10**

**NO. OF CREDITS: 1 QUARTER CREDITS**  
**[semester equivalent = .66 credits]**

**INSTRUCTOR: Mary Ann Johnson**  
**maryajohnson-advisor@comcast.net**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

In this book, Armstrong encourages a renaissance of thinking about the true meaning of genius. He defines human genius from the standpoint of education as “giving birth to the joy in learning.” Starting with a fresh look at how we observe genius in ways other than IQ tests, Armstrong creates a list of twelve innate qualities which describe the generative, expressive manifestation of genius that we can see (or restore) everyday in a classroom.

Armstrong provides remedies that call for teacher modeling of their own joy of learning. He provides a list of practices to provide simple genius experiences in the classroom. His suggestions help to counter the often-damaging effects of scripted curriculum, and standardized grading and testing along with other factors that degrade the love of learning. He provides a rich repertoire of research and specific, realistic and practical resources to develop your own plans to encourage the expression of genius in your classroom.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:** Upon completion of this course, participants will have:

1. Learned the 12 indicators of the qualities of genius and learned how home, school and popular media can cause genius to shut down.
2. Learned how to generate genius experiences for yourself and your students.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

Completion of all specified assignments is required for issuance of hours or credit. The Heritage Institute does not award partial credit.

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**HOURS EARNED:**

Completing the basic assignments (Section A. Information Acquisition) for this course automatically earns participant's their choice of CEUs (Continuing Education Units), or Washington State Clock Hours or Oregon PDUs. The Heritage Institute offers CEUs and is an approved provider of Washington State Clock Hours and Oregon PDUs.

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**UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT INFORMATION**

**REQUIREMENTS FOR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT**

Continuing Education Quarter credits are awarded by Antioch University Seattle (AUS). AUS requires 75% or better for credit at the 400 level and 85% or better to issue credit at the 500 level. These criteria refer both to the amount and quality of work submitted.

1. Completion of Information Acquisition assignments 30%
  2. Completion of Learning Application assignments 40%
  3. Completion of Integration Paper assignment 30%
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## **CREDIT/NO CREDIT (No Letter Grades or Numeric Equivalents on Transcripts)**

Antioch University Seattle (AUS) Continuing Education Quarter credit is offered on a Credit/No Credit basis; neither letter grades nor numeric equivalents are on a transcript. 400 level credit is equal to a "C" or better, 500 level credit is equal to a "B" or better. This information is on the back of the transcript.

AUS Continuing Education quarter credits may or may not be accepted into degree programs. Prior to registering determine with your district personnel, department head or state education office the acceptability of these credits for your purpose.

## **ADDITIONAL COURSE INFORMATION**

### **REQUIRED TEXT**

- *Awakening Genius in the Classroom*, written by Thomas Armstrong; 1998, 81 pages, ISBN 0-87120-302-2.
- For additional reading access an annotated Master Bibliography for this course that enhances any teacher's toolbox.

- ***Awakening Genius in the Classroom***

ISBN# 0871203022

by Armstrong, Thomas

ASCD

[Buy from Amazon](#)

### **MATERIALS FEE**

Text is available from Amazon used for about \$4.

## **ASSIGNMENTS REQUIRED FOR HOURS OR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT**

### **A. INFORMATION ACQUISITION**

Assignments done in a **course forum** will show responses from all educators active in the course. Feel free to read and respond to others comments.

#### **Assignment #1: Introductions.**

Briefly introduce yourself and tell why you have chosen this book.

**From "Preface and Chapter 1"** Answer *one (1)* of the following questions: What connotations does the word "genius" bring up for you from your past? **OR** What are the origins and some derivatives of the word **genius** that Armstrong is using, based on the *Compact Oxford English Dictionary*?

#### **Assignment #2: Original Premises.**

Think back to your original reasons for getting into education. Can you place yourself somewhere in the past at the moment when you decided to become an educator?

What were the reasons that prompted you to help children learn?

#### **Assignment #3: The Romance Stage of Learning.**

Answer *one (1)* of the following questions: Would it have made a difference to you if the title of this book had been "Awakening Creativity in the Classroom"? If so, what would that difference have been for you? Do you feel not enough attention, too much attention, or just the right amount of attention has been placed on the "romance" stage of learning in contemporary education? Expand on your assessment.

#### **Assignment #4: 12 Qualities of Genius.**

**From "Part 1: Every Child is a Genius, The Twelve Qualities of Genius"** List the 12 qualities of genius in order of the importance you feel they have in the education and development of the child.

#### **Assignment #5: Classroom Environment.**

Describe the classroom environment in which these 12 qualities of genius are likely to be encouraged?

**Assignment #6: Theoretical Foundations.**

**From “Theoretical Foundations”** If a child does not grow up around creative or imaginative adults, do you think that there are areas of the brain and/or networks of synapses that are literally starved to death due to this neglect? Why or why not?

**Assignment #7: The Role of Home.**

**From “Part 2: The Genius Shuts Down, The Role of the Home”** Explain the four familial patterns that have a negative effect on student innate genius. What implications does this have for providing appropriate educational programming? How does this book alter the notion that “There’s not a lot I can do to help this particular kid. He’s already been ruined by his home environment.” How is it possible to dialogue about home patterns that shut down a child’s genius without falling into a blame-the-parent syndrome?

**Assignment #8: Standardized Testing Effects.**

What are the effects of standardized testing on the expression of genius in both teachers and students?

**Assignment #9: The Role of the School.**

**From “The Role of the School”** Describe the changes you have had to make in your lesson plans or to prepare for standardized tests, curriculum, or administrative-mandate. Did these changes enhance any of the 12 qualities of human genius?

**Assignment #10: Author’s View.**

What is the view of the author for balancing the priority of the curriculum, textbooks and standardized testing with the priority of cultivation of the genius of every student?

**Assignment #11: The Role of the Popular Media.**

**From “The Role of the Popular Media”** “There is little left for the child or adolescent to do in the face of these ready-made logos, characters,” etc. As a result, kids simply sit back and passively drink in those images. Can you give an example of your experience of this phenomenon?

**Assignment #12: Awaken Genius.**

**From “Part 3: How to Awaken Genius in the Classroom”** Consider the qualities of genius in your own life. Reflect upon what you would like to do in order to awaken or reawaken aspects of your own inner genius.

**Assignment #13: Indicators of Geniality.**

List the indicators of a genial classroom.

**Assignment #14: COURSE FORUM.**

Describe some experiences or materials you have used with your students that created special moments of joy, creativity, curiosity or playfulness, humor or other qualities of genius.

**COURSE FORUM: Can you encourage genius while working outside a classroom and via media instruction partially or completely? How might that be possible?**

**This question is being changed to reflect new realities for teachers during the pandemic adjustments to teaching, so answers from previous students will be responding to a different question: "Is it realistic to believe you can encourage genius in the classroom and follow the mandates of Common Core curriculum?"**

**If others have already left comments to either question, respond to any that caught your interest.**

**ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS REQUIRED FOR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT****B. LEARNING APPLICATION**

In this section you will apply your learning to your professional situation. This course assumes that most participants are classroom teachers who have access to students. If you do not have a classroom available to you, please contact the instructor for course modifications. Assignments done in a course forum will show responses from all educators active in the course. Feel free to read and respond to others comments.

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### Assignment #15: Lesson Development.

#### Assignment #15-A:

- Adapt a lesson reflecting what you've learned in this course.
- Implement your lesson with students.
- Write a 250-500 word commentary on what worked well and what could be improved.
- Include any student feedback on your lesson.
- Share what you've learned with other teachers taking our courses by adding your Lesson to The Heritage Institute Lesson Library [here](#). For a sample lesson plan template click [here](#).
- Submit your modified lesson to your instructor via the online response box or file upload.

OR

#### Assignment #15-B:

- Adapt a lesson reflecting what you've learned in this course. (Do not implement it.)
- Share your learning with other teachers by contributing your Lesson to The Heritage Institute Lesson Library [here](#). For a sample lesson plan template click [here](#).
- Write a 500+ word article about a noteworthy teaching success you've had with one or more students.
- Please refer to the guidelines on our blog [What Works: Teaching at its Best](#) prior to writing your article.
- When you submit your article to your instructor, please also email a copy to [Yvonne Hall](#) THI blog curator and media specialist.
- Indicate whether or not you are OK with having your article considered for publishing on our website.
- Submit your lesson to your instructor via the response box or file upload.

### Assignment #16: (500 Level ONLY)

In addition to the 400 level assignments, complete **one (1)** of the following assignment options:

**Option A)** Compare and contrast the material in this book with information you find in another book or online research of articles. For online research, quote any important URL. Write a summary of information you found, and then compare/contrast with information in the course text.

OR

**Option B)** Create an Annotated Bibliography of five (5) books or articles related to the subject of this course. The annotation should include Title, Author, Publisher (or URL), length of the book or article and your review of information contained. Add your opinion of the value or your criticism of the contents of each book or article, and rate the importance of the material in contrast to the subject of the course.

### C. INTEGRATION PAPER

Assignment #17: (Required for 400 and 500 Level)

#### SELF REFLECTION & INTEGRATION PAPER

**(Please do not write this paper until you've completed all of your other assignments)**

Write a 350-500 word Integration Paper answering these 5 questions:

1. What did you learn vs. what you expected to learn from this course?
  2. What aspects of the course were most helpful and why?
  3. What further knowledge and skills in this general area do you feel you need?
  4. How, when and where will you use what you have learned?
  5. How and with what other school or community members might you share what you learned?
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#### INSTRUCTOR COMMENTS ON YOUR WORK:

Please indicate by email to the instructor if you would like to receive comments on your assignments.

#### QUALIFICATIONS FOR TEACHING THIS COURSE:

**Mary Ann Johnson, M.Ed Adm.** has worked with students of all levels, from alternative high school to gifted classes. She has also

been a junior high vice principal and is now working with teachers for continuing education in classes, distance learning and building leadership groups. She is a teacher emeritus who has led seminars for educators which focus on developing a quality learner environment for students and for teachers. Her courses are research-based and resonate with user-friendly and energizing content.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### AWAKENING GENIUS IN THE CLASSROOM

**Erwin, Jonathan**, *Inspiring the Best in Students*, pb 210 pages, ASCD, 2010. When you wonder what would be the greatest gift you could give your students, it would probably be the skills of social and emotional development, and in a classroom, it would include helping students meet their most basic needs. Both are the focuses of this book. The intrinsic needs defined as Choice Theory by William Glasser include survival, love and belonging, power, freedom and fun. Erwin translates that information into specific lesson plans to teach students how to enjoy feeling good and emotionally safe, having friends and feeling accepted, feeling a sense of competence and importance, experiencing independence, and being able to laugh and play. The teaching strategies are specific and will guide you to the joy of teaching what really matters to students.

**Harris, Bryan**, *Battling Boredom: 99 Strategies to Spark Student Engagement*, pb 133 pages, Eye On Education, 2011. If you want to increase the variety of ways to increase student involvement and thinking, you will find 99 possible strategies to help engage your students, and probably banish any boredom you may be experiencing as well. The strategies in this book are divided into seven categories, including work for whole class groups, pairs, and individuals, as well as for reluctant learners. No special equipment or preparation is required. Eric Jensen, brain researcher, has endorsed it as “the most practical engagement book on the market.”

**Sagor, Richard**, *Motivating Students and Teachers in an Era of Standards*, 2003, pb 152 pages, ASCD, 2013. The pressures of standards and high-stakes testing can lead to higher student dropout rates and teacher attrition, but basing school work on strategies that also meet the five basic human needs can provide the experience of learning with deep pleasure in the process. Like Jonathan Erwin's book, this book will bring you specific ways to provide real-world benefits to your students. There are even specific ways to handle classroom management and discipline in ways that teach self-management and social responsibility by students. These lifelong skills are one of the most important gifts a teacher can provide for students. Sagor provides plenty of specific ways to keep the climate of the school a healthy and intellectually vibrant place to learn.

**Sullo, Bob**, *Activating the Desire to Learn*, pb 164 pages, ASCD, 2007. In the Introduction to this book, Bob Sullo states, “External control may lead to compliance, but it never inspires you to do your best.” The skills to bring out the best in your students are portrayed in chapters focusing on ways to inspire your students at each level: elementary school, middle schools and high schools, with specific lists of “What You Can Do,” that are age and culturally appropriate. Sullo provides a thorough rationale with research that will inspire and inform you to create the classroom you have longed to create. The core of the book is focused on the deeply satisfying pleasure of learning, and that it can best occur when human needs are fulfilled in the process of education.