

Building Communication and Teamwork in the Classroom®

Building Communication and Teamwork in the Classroom relates strategies teachers can use to improve relationships with their students through making connections. Participants will recognize how to make a difference in student learning by creating a safe learning environment, decreasing disruptions through nonconfrontational strategies, exercising leadership, using effective communication, and employing team building to create a learning community.

To the right are the key areas of focus for the 45-hour course. For more information, refer to the syllabus, which provides a detailed outline of the course material as well as a bibliography of research on which the course is based.

In this course, participants will

- ▶ Identify the components of becoming an effective leader and listener.
- ▶ Discover techniques for making connections with and among students.
- ▶ Compile effective verbal and nonverbal communication skills.
- ▶ Create an emotionally-safe learning environment for all students.
- ▶ Recognize how to build a classroom community that brings unity between educators and students.
- ▶ Understand how connecting with students is an important part of team building and effective teacher leadership in creating a learning community.

Building Communication and Teamwork in the Classroom®

Course Description

Compelling research across a broad spectrum of educational arenas clearly indicates that students learn and achieve better in a positive and inviting learning environment that emphasizes mutual respect and caring. *Building Communication and Teamwork in the Classroom* is a Performance Learning Systems® course that equips experienced and beginner educators with the essential knowledge and skills necessary to foster an emotionally engaging classroom. The selected strategies participants will learn and practice are designed to improve teacher expertise in five specific areas: leadership, communication and listening, positive thinking, student support, and team building. Collectively, these skills are at the center of what makes excellent teachers successful and what allows students of all abilities and backgrounds to thrive.

Course Outcomes

Upon completion of this class, the learner is expected to be able to:

1. Discuss and apply current, validated research underlying the theories, principles, and practices of building teamwork and communication.
2. Analyze and apply the roles of an effective relational leader in the classroom.
3. Evaluate and apply strategies to make meaningful connections with students.
4. Demonstrate appropriate nonverbal-communication skills and listening strategies (SOFTEN).
5. Evaluate and demonstrate appropriate communication skills for uncovering student agendas (Open-Ended Questions, Closed-Ended Questions, Confirmatory Paraphrases, Leading Paraphrases, Summary Statements).
6. Identify and apply the elements of a positive environment (finding positive attributes in negative situations, reframing negative thinking, Positive Phrasing).
7. Evaluate and demonstrate the four types of support strategies (Positive Phrasing, Empathy Statements, Supporting Statements, Approval Statements).
8. Identify and model leadership skills to build team unity and connectedness (provide emotional support, enhance communication skills, use conventions, develop group goals, tap satisfactions, validate contributions).
9. Explain and demonstrate skills for nonconfrontation (Detachment, “I” Messages, Humor).
10. Explain and demonstrate Problem-Solving Inquiry, Contingent Action Proposal, Disapproval Statement, and Authority Statement.
11. Implement team-building strategies to create a unified, supportive classroom environment.
12. Explore Web sites that support professional development and extend knowledge of course concepts.
13. Generalize course content to reflect how diverse populations within classrooms have their needs met by the application of the skills, strategies, and knowledge gained in this course.
14. Reflect on and continuously evaluate personal practice to realign and actively seek out opportunities to grow professionally using the knowledge and skills learned in this course.

15. Work collaboratively to share knowledge, skills, and experiences, refine understanding of content, give and receive feedback, and improve expertise.

Institutional Outcomes

(To be listed here)

Required Text

Selected research articles, research summaries, and topical articles drawn from educational literature

Topical Outline

List of Concepts

Role of the Teacher/Leader

Differences among students, emotions and leadership in the classroom, emotional requirements all students crave, the influence of the teacher, roles of effective rational leaders in the classroom, connecting through self-disclosure, ways to show students that a teacher cares

Strategies for Connecting With Students

- | | |
|--|---|
| Listening | Roadblocks to communication, the compelling why of listening, listening skills (nonverbal communication, SOFTEN, minimal encouragers) |
| Uncovering Student Agendas | Open- and closed-ended questions, intonation, body language, summary statements, and coding for open- and closed-ended questions |
| Confirmatory Paraphrases | Models of confirmatory paraphrases; beginning words; feelings list; the challenge of connecting |
| Leading Paraphrases | Two steps for developing a leading paraphrase; leading-paraphrase strength continuum; distinguishing between leading and confirmatory phrases |
| Developing Understanding | Using comfort phrases that minimize feelings; responding to facts, feelings, and opinions |
| Empathy | Defining “empathy”; empathy statements; steps in creating an empathy statement; emotional conflict between teacher and student; skills tracking |
| Skill Development Through Role-Playing | Listening-skills role-plays at all grade levels for both teacher and student roles |

	Elements of a Positive Environment	Positive thinking, finding positive attributes in negative situations, reframing one’s thinking, discerning positive qualities, positive phrasing
	Supporting Statements	Supporting viewpoints and dealing with resistance, supporting-statements continuum
	Approval Statements	Guidelines for using approval statements
	Skill Development Through Role-Playing	Supportive-skills role-plays at all grade levels for both teacher and student roles
	Team Building	Desert Island simulation, leadership and natural groups, key influentials, forms of team building in the classroom, benefits of team building, leadership skills to build team unity (provide emotional support, enhance communication skills, use conventions, develop group goals, tap interests and talents, validate contributions)
Solution-Seeking Strategies	Nonconfrontation Strategies	(1) Detachment; (2) using “I” messages, teaching students to use “I” messages; and (3) humor: dealing with tense situations, the benefits of humor, handling volatile situations, humiliation-free humor, the developmental sequence of humor
	Problem-Solving Inquiry	Steps in the process; keeping, sharing, or giving power via the type of decision-making (student, shared, teacher)
	Contingent Action Proposal	Proposing an act of cooperation or compromise, and specifying reciprocation during shared decision-making
	Disapproval Statements	“You” messages and slob words
	Summary Statements	Guidelines for forming summary statements, types of summary statements
	Skill Development Through Role-Playing	Problem-solving role-plays at all grade levels for both teacher and student roles

Course Assessments and Links to Institutional Outcomes and Course Outcomes

Throughout the course, the learner will be assessed and evaluated on the completion of the following assessments. There are 13 assessments in this course. All are required for a total of 95 points. The participant will select between No. 8 and No. 9, for a total of 5 additional points and a cumulative total of 100 points for the course.

		Points	Correlations With Institutional Outcomes	Correlations With Course Outcomes
Assessment No. 1:	Research Review	20		1
Assessment No. 2:	Article Review	10		1
Assessment No. 3:	SOFTEN	6		5, 11, 14
Assessment No. 4:	Confirmatory and Leading Paraphrases	6		5
Assessment No. 5:	Positive Phrasing and Empathy	6		6, 7
Assessment No. 6:	Supporting and Approval Statements	6		7
Assessment No. 7:	Key Influentials	10		8, 14
Assessment No. 8:	The Web Connection*	5		1, 15
Assessment No. 9:	Humor*	5		9
Assessment No. 10:	Problem-Solving Skills	6		10, 11
Assessment No. 11:	Connecting Strategies	10		3, 4, 12
Assessment No. 12:	Action Plan	10		1, 3, 11, 13
Assessment No. 13:	Reflection Journal	5		2, 3, 6, 8, 14, 16
	Totals	100		

*Choose between No. 8 and No. 9

Criteria specific to each assessment will be explained in conjunction with the instructional activities.

Instructional Materials

Instructors and learners will use instructor-generated materials, learner-generated materials, print resources, and Web-based resources to facilitate learning.

Instructional Methodology

The instructional methodology of this course focuses on developing, enhancing, and improving the instructional expertise and pedagogical knowledge base of practicing educators. Strategies include instructor presentation of new content through short lecturebursts, active construction of knowledge during hands-on practice and problem solving, collaborative group work, personal reflection, in-class presentations and demonstrations, ad hoc and structured small-group or whole-class discussion, analysis of assigned reading, and application of course content and skills to each participant's individual grade level, subject area, and classroom.

Evaluation

The evaluation of learner work will be based on the defined criteria for learner assessments, which will be processed with learners prior to their instructional activities and engagement with the student learning targets (outcomes). Grading is based solely on the evaluation of student learning targets and defined criteria for learner assessments.

Formative assessment of learning outcomes is conducted throughout the course, using a variety of means that include the following: completion of assessments; constructive contributions to class discussions (whole-class as well as small-group); sharing of valuable, pertinent, and/or applicable ideas and experiences; involvement in the inductive process; interactive journal entries with written instructor feedback; critical or reflective responses to assigned readings; oral discussions in a whole-class or small-group setting; active participation and general attentiveness to the instructor and others. It is expected that each student will contribute to the academic quality of the course.

Summative assessment includes the completion of a culminating assignment that requires the participant to synthesize class content, apply it to his or her specific teaching situation, and complete a reflective action plan for implementing the major components of content and skill acquired during the course.

Grading Policy

(To be listed here)

Absence and Tardy Policy

(To be listed here)

Performance Learning Systems' Academic Integrity Policy

Performance Learning Systems expects absolute academic honesty and integrity from every course participant. The specific Academic Integrity and Honor Code Policies of our partner colleges and universities are embraced and enforced by PLS instructors. The following are considered to be serious violations:

- Plagiarism: the use of another's ideas, data, or words without proper acknowledgement.
- Fabrication: the use of invented information or the falsification of research or other findings with the intent to deceive.
- Collusion: improper collaboration with another in preparing assignments or projects.
- Cheating: an act of deception by which a student misrepresents that he or she has mastered information on an academic exercise that he or she has not mastered.
- Academic Misconduct: tampering with grades, or taking part in obtaining or distributing any part of student work that is not his or her own.

Violation or suspected violation will be investigated and pursued according to specific college/university procedures.

Identity Authentication

The college/university, Performance Learning Systems (PLS), and students share a joint responsibility to ensure that each student's contribution in an online course activity comes from that student alone. For the student, this responsibility has two parts:

1. Students are responsible for positively ensuring that every contribution to an online course created with the students' computer account is made by the student alone. Contributions covered under this policy include: written assignments; quiz and exam submissions; discussion forum postings; live participation in text-based chat sessions, phone conferences, and videoconferences. If a student allows another person to write or make any kind of submission to an online activity in the student's name, then this constitutes cheating and will be treated as a violation of academic honesty.
2. Students are responsible for ensuring the integrity of their computer account security by following the actions required of them by the PLS Acceptable Use Policy. These actions include keeping passcodes private, updating passcodes when required by Performance Learning Systems, and reporting breaches of the security policy to the IT Helpdesk.

Participant Professionalism Policy

As a courtesy to other participants and to your instructor, please refrain from text messaging, checking e-mail, or answering your cell phone during class time. Breaks are provided throughout the course so you can attend to personal matters. Using your personal electronic devices during class time is distracting and disrupts instruction and participant communication and collaboration. If you have an emergency or justifiable reason to leave your cell phone turned on during class time, please make arrangements with the instructor prior to the beginning of class.

Course Outcome Correlations With INTASC Standards for Teachers

Course Outcomes

Standard 1: Subject Matter

The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and can create learning experiences that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful for students.

Standard 2: Student Learning

The teacher understands how children and youth learn and develop, and can provide learning opportunities that support their intellectual, social and personal development.

3, 4, 5, 9, 11

Standard 3: Diverse Learners

The teacher understands how students differ in their approaches to learning and creates instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners.

13

Standard 4: Instructional Strategies

The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage students' development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.

10

Standard 5: Learning Environment

The teacher uses an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.

2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11

Standard 6: Communication

The teacher uses knowledge of effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.

1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12

Standard 7: Planning Instruction

The teacher plans and manages instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the community, and curriculum goals.

11, 14

Standard 8: Assessment

The teacher understands and uses formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure the continuous intellectual, social and physical development of the learner.

Standard 9: Reflection and Professional Development

The teacher is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of her/his choices and actions on others (students, parents, and other professionals in the learning community) and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally.

2, 12, 14, 15

Standard 10: Collaboration, Ethics, and Relationships

The teacher fosters relationships with school colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support students' learning and well-being.

15

The Interstate New Teacher Assessment and the Support for Consortium (INTASC) standards were developed by the Council of the Chief State School Officers and member states. Copies may be downloaded from the Council's website at <http://www.ccsso.org>.
© Council of Chief State School Officers. (1992) Model standards for beginning teacher licensing, assessment, and development: A resource for state dialogue. Washington, DC: Author. <http://www.ccsso.org/content/pdfs/corestrd.pdf>.

Course Outcome Correlations With National Board of Professional Teaching (NBPTS) Five Core Propositions

Proposition 1: Teachers are Committed to Students and Their Learning.	Course Outcomes
NBCTs are dedicated to making knowledge accessible to all students. They believe all students can learn.	2, 4, 6, 8, 11, 13
They treat students equitably. They recognize the individual differences that distinguish their students from one another and they take account for these differences in their practice.	3, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13
NBCTs understand how students develop and learn.	2, 6, 11, 13
They respect the cultural and family differences students bring to their classroom.	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15
They are concerned with their students' self-concept, their motivation and the effects of learning on peer relationships.	1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15
NBCTs are also concerned with the development of character and civic responsibility.	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13
Proposition 2: Teachers Know the Subjects They Teach and How to Teach Those Subjects to Students.	
NBCTs have mastery over the subject(s) they teach. They have a deep understanding of the history, structure and real-world applications of the subject.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15
They have skill and experience in teaching it, and they are very familiar with the skills gaps and preconceptions students may bring to the subject.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15
They are able to use diverse instructional strategies to teach for understanding.	3, 4, 5, 6, 7
Proposition 3: Teachers are Responsible for Managing and Monitoring Student Learning.	
NBCTs deliver effective instruction. They move fluently through a range of instructional techniques, keeping students motivated, engaged and focused.	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15
They know how to engage students to ensure a disciplined learning environment, and how to organize instruction to meet instructional goals.	4, 6
NBCTs know how to assess the progress of individual students as well as the class as a whole.	1, 2, 3, 4, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15
They use multiple methods for measuring student growth and understanding, and they can clearly explain student performance to parents.	1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15
Proposition 4: Teachers Think Systematically about Their Practice and Learn from Experience.	
NBCTs model what it means to be an educated person – they read, they question, they create and they are willing to try new things.	1, 8, 9, 10, 12, 15
They are familiar with learning theories and instructional strategies and stay abreast of current issues in American education.	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15
They critically examine their practice on a regular basis to deepen knowledge, expand their repertoire of skills, and incorporate new findings into their practice.	2, 3, 12, 14,

Proposition 5: Teachers are Members of Learning Communities.

NBCTs collaborate with others to improve student learning.	1, 2, 4, 12, 13, 14, 15
They are leaders and actively know how to seek and build partnerships with community groups and businesses.	15
They work with other professionals on instructional policy, curriculum development and staff development.	1, 2, 3, 12, 13, 14, 15
They can evaluate school progress and the allocation of resources in order to meet state and local education objectives.	2, 3, 12, 13, 14, 15
They know how to work collaboratively with parents to engage them productively in the work of the school.	4

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