



Teacher Self-Care: Building Social Connections and Support Systems

EDUO 9051 2 Graduate-Level Credits/Units

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Course Syllabus

Course Overview

Social connection is one of the most important factors of well-being, and social support is an essential for positive work functioning. Learn the psychology behind social connection and social support at work. In the course, you will learn ways to foster better work relationships in school and online.

Course Objectives:

In this course, participants will have opportunity:

- Explore the psychological science of social support and connection
- Evaluate the difference between emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal support
- Identify how to engage and create communities at school and online

Course Relation to CCS or other Professional Standards:

NBPTS – National Board for Professional Standards – 5 Core Propositions •

<http://www.nbpts.org/fivecore-propositions> - National Teaching Standards, Five Core Propositions

- Proposition 1: Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
- Proposition 2: Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
- Proposition 3: Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.
- Proposition 4: Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.
- Proposition 5: Teachers are members of learning communities.

How to Submit Coursework

Each completed assignment in this course is submitted to the instructor for review. Follow directions at the end of each assignment on how to prepare and in which Moodle Dropbox to place completed work. Name each file submitted with your last name and assignment number (i.e. BrownAssignment3. Make sure you place your full name, course number and assignment number at the top of each document page. You will receive feedback from your instructor within 5 days indicating successful completion of the assignment or the need for revision. Assignment grades will be averaged for the final course grade.

Grading assessment rubrics for written projects and for presentation projects are found in this document.

Course Assignments

There are 5 modules that make up this course. In Modules 1 and 2, participants will research the background of the science behind social connection: why social connection is so important and how it supports our wellness. In Module 3, participants will reflect on their own systems of support. In Module 4 and 5, participants will focus on engaging in supportive communities to increase their own well-being. Participants are expected to read the assigned material for each module, and complete the required assignments according to criteria.

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Introduction

Overview:

Welcome to this class! The purpose of this short first assignment is for me to get to know who you are and where you are coming from (both geographically and mentally). Thank you in advance for taking the time to introduce yourself.

Assignment:

For your first assignment, please write a short autobiographical paragraph (200-500 words) to introduce yourself to the course instructor. In this introduction, include the following:

- Your current position
- Why you chose to take this course
- What brought you to the field of education
- What are some of your future goals
- Anything else that you would like the instructor to know

**Submit to Dropbox Under:
Assignment 1: Introduction**

Module 1

Overview:

Social connections are significantly important to human functioning. We are wired to connect, and relationships certainly serve an important purpose in our lives. In this module, participants will read about the psychological science behind human connection and its impact on our wellbeing. At the end of this module, participants will submit a reflection based on guided questions and their notes.

Assignments:

1. Create a note taking tool to hold your questions and reflections as you read through the material for this Module including the blog posts and videos. You will use these notes to write a reflection at the end of this module. These notes will not be uploaded for feedback, but is for your use in formulating thoughts for a reflection.
2. Read the following articles about social connection and the psychological impact of being socially connected. Use the guided questions to help direct your note-taking:
 - a. Articles
 - i. Connect to Thrive:
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/feelingit/201208/connect-thrive>

- ii. The Power of Social Connection:
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/brain-wise/201302/the-powersocial-connections>
 - b. Guiding Questions
 - i. What are some of the findings about health-related outcomes for social connection?
 - ii. Take a look at some of the abstracts that are mentioned in these articles— what are the findings of this research?
3. Read more about work-specific social connections and the impact that it can have on our own well-being
 - a. Articles
 - i. Why Work Relationship Affect Our Mental and Physical Health:
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/alicegwalton/2016/10/13/why-workrelationships-affect-our-mental-and-physical-health-sostrongly/#1a2a38732075>
 - ii. Positive Relationships in the Workplace: Work is Social and So Are We:
<https://positivepsychologyprogram.com/positive-relationships-workplace/>
 - b. Guiding Questions
 - i. What are some of the work-specific findings about health-related outcomes for social connection?
 - ii. How can our psychological well-being be impacted by work relationships?
4. **Synthesize your learning** by writing a reflection that shows what you have learned from this module and what questions you still have. Your reflection should be based in the notes you took and do the following for **each article** in a paragraph (4 paragraphs in total):
 - a. Two things you learned from the article
 - b. Two questions that you have based in an aspect of the article (for example, 'I wonder how X applies to Y' or 'The article mentioned X, how might this happen in schools?')
 - c. One key takeaway from the article
5. In one document, submit your reflection to Moodle

**Submit to Dropbox Under:
Assignment 2: Importance of Social Connection**

Module 2

Overview:

Now that we have learned some preliminary findings in the science of social connection, we will hear what the experts in the field have to say. In this module, participants will watch three talks on social connection findings, and then pick one to reflect on. By the end of this module, participants will have reflected on how social connection plays a role in their life and work.

Assignments:

1. Watch the following talks related to social connection. Use a separate note sheet to jot down thoughts on the talks—this will be helpful for later. Consider taking a short (or long) break in between each talk.
 - a. The Power and Science of Social Connection:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WZvUppaDfNs>
 - b. Social Support and Wellness:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PQBin3EL67M>
 - c. The Importance of Social Connections at Work:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i0SC-903F5o&t=146s>
2. Revisit your notes, and pick one talk that stood out to you as important, or maybe had the most important takeaway for you. You may want to re-watch this specific talk for the following assignment.
3. You will now reflect on this talk and write a blog post where you compare some findings or key messages in this talk to your own life. Your blog post should be 400-800 words. Use the following guidelines to write your post:
 - a. Your writing should be in 'blog post' style—which means that it is relatively short (400-800 words) and is written in a personal manner. Check out the following resource to guide your writing:
<https://www.wordstream.com/blog/ws/2015/02/09/how-to-write-a-blog-post>
 - b. In your post, do the following:
 - i. Describe the key finding that you are writing about from the talk
 - ii. Relate this finding to a problem (or something that is going very well) in your work life
 - iii. To do this, think about describing a situation, discussing a past situation, comparing and contrasting a situation where this finding (from the talk) was present or when this finding was not present
 - iv. The format is flexible, but if you need more guidance think about starting out your post with describing one of the talks, then describing how this relates (or does not relate) to your life, then posing some questions to your imagined audience
 - c. Submit your blog post in a single document

**Submit to Dropbox Under:
Assignment 3: Social Connection Applied**

Module 3

Overview:

There are many different types of social support that come from different areas of our lives. In this module, participants will learn about various types of support. Then,

participants will reflect on their own systems of support and identify strengths and weakness. By the end of this module, participants will have reflected on their systems of support and reflected on the areas in which they need more support.

Assignments:

1. First, read about the different forms of supportive behaviors:
 - a. Types of Support: <https://www.med.upenn.edu/hbhe4/part3-ch9-key-constructsocial-support.shtml>
 - b. We will be reflecting on these types of support throughout this module. It will be helpful to capture this table in your notes, or save this table for later.
2. These four different types of support are helpful in different ways. First, create a table (use the following as an example) to identify how these different types of support might show up in a school setting.

Type of Support	Definition	Application in School Setting
Emotional	Expressions of empathy, love, trust and caring	
Instrumental	Tangible aid and service	
Information	Advice, suggestions, and information	
Appraisal	Information that is useful for self-evaluation	

3. Next, reflect on your own systems of support. In another table (layout is up to you), identify all of the areas where you receive each type of support and **who** they come from. You should list as many as you can for each type of support. These types of support do not have to come solely from people who you work with—they can include personal relationships, therapists, community members, etc.
4. Write a one-page reflection (400-600 words) where you identify the strengths and weaknesses of your current support system. Use the tables you created in tasks #2 and #3 and the following questions to guide your submission:
 - a. Overall, how do you feel about the current support that you receive?
 - b. This about the types of support...
 - i. Which type of support is most beneficial for you to receive?
 - ii. Which type of support is least beneficial for you to receive?
 - c. Think about the amount of support you receive...
 - i. Which type of support do you most often receive?
 - ii. Which type of support do you least often receive?
 - d. Additional questions...
 - i. Where does most of your support come from?
 - ii. What types of support to you give the people around you?
5. Submit your reflection as a single document

**Submit to Dropbox Under:
Assignment 4: Current Systems of Support**

Module 4

Overview:

Engaging and creating communities within your school is an important factor to teacher job satisfaction and your health and well-being. In this module, you will identify different ways to create community within your school and make a plan! By the end of this module, participants will have a plan to form new social connections.

Assignments:

1. At many schools, there are different communities for teachers that are available to join. However, this might not always be the case. First, Identify the different ways that you could create community within your school. This might be through a simple exercise, joining a club, or creating one that doesn't exist yet.
 - a. Teacher Morale Ideas:
<https://www.educationworld.com/sites/default/files/teachermoraleebook%5B1%5D.pdf>
 - b. Clubs in the workplace: <https://smallbusiness.chron.com/clubs-workplace-12114.html>
 - c. Consider doing further research based on your own interests and the needs of your school
2. Choose ONE of the following activities to do for your assignment (choose #3 OR #4)
3. Join a club or community that already exists at school OR lead an activity from resource 1a at your school:
 - a. In a journal-style post (personal and informal), write about your experience thus far joining this community or running the activity
 - b. Your reflection should be 400-600 words and include the following:
 - i. When and where did you participate in this community/club/activity? (this time will vary, but can include one group meeting, running one activity, etc.)
 - ii. What is the purpose of the club/community/activity?
 - iii. What new connections did you make by participating?
 - iv. What did you learn?
 - v. Will you continue to be a part of this community? Why or why not?
 - c. Submit this reflection in a single document

4. Create a plan to start a club at your school that does not already exist (and that would be feasible to start!)
 - a. Create an overview of the club you will start and include the following information:
 - i. What type of club will you start?
 - ii. What will be the purpose of the club?
 - iii. Why should other teachers join your club?
 - iv. When will the club meet?
 - v. How will the meetings be structured?
 - vi. What materials will you need (or resource) to run this club?
 - b. Create a flyer that could be sent out at school or over e-mail to inform other teachers of the club you will start. The flyer should:
 - i. Include the basic information people should know: when it will start, the primary purpose, the name, how to sign up
 - ii. Colorful and enticing—in other words, it should not just be a word document with the basics (try using [canva.com](https://www.canva.com) to design your flyer)
 - c. Submit the overview and flyer as a single document

**Submit to Dropbox Under:
Assignment 5: Creating Community at School**

Module 5

Overview: While it is important to have support groups at your school, the online teacher world is an up and coming place to receive support and professional development from other teachers around the world. In this module, participants will identify different online communities that exist for teachers. By the end of the modules, teachers will have engaged with an online community in some way and log different things they have learned.

Assignments:

1. First, you will identify different online communities that exist for teachers. There are teachers on many different apps and social media sites that use technology to communicate ideas and support. Take a look at these resources and begin to think about what tool might work best for you:
 - a. Twitter for Teachers: <https://njalternateroute.rutgers.edu/blog/25-best-twitter-accounts-educators-follow>
 - b. 5 steps to grow teacher instagram: <https://kaysemorris.com/5-steps-to-skyrocket-your-teacher-instagram-growth/>
 - c. 15 Teacher Vloggers to Follow on YouTube: <https://blog.planbook.com/teachervloggers/>
2. For most of these platforms, all it takes to join the community is to create a profile and follow the ideas listed in task #1.

- a. If you aren't interested in sharing your own material, you can also create a personal or educational account just so you can follow and learn from others.
 - b. Create a profile on one of these platforms (other platforms not listed might include Pinterest, Facebook, or reddit).
 - c. Give yourself some time to set up a profile and start engaging with the community—for most of these social media platforms it is as easy and scrolling and learning.
 - d. If you are looking for people to 'follow' or 'subscribe to' when you have created your profile, all it takes is to find one educator that you align with and notice the people that they mention or follow. Searching relevant hashtags might also help you find others to follow.
3. Create a log of things you have learned from the social media platform that you joined:
- a. You will submit this log at the end of the time period. For two weeks, experiment with either the profile you created in task #2 (or a new one if that works best for you). Whenever you learn something new, see something new, or see a message that inspires you or supports you in anyway take note of it to log it.
 - b. Use the following table structure to 'log' your experiences:

Date	Platform Used	User (where did the information come from?)	What I learned (description of information)	How this helped me (reflection)
12/12	Instagram	@teachercreds	The teachercred account posted a statistic about how teachers need to be recognized.	I looked in the comments of this post and found that many people had the same thoughts as me. I even followed some of them because it seemed like their content overlapped with what I want to learn.

- c. Log 10-12 experiences. This may take longer than two weeks. Don't let any of these platforms overwhelm you—instead think of them as your continued learning and support. You shouldn't leave these resources feeling drained. If you are, you may consider trying a different platform or following different people.
- d. Submit your reflections in the form of a table

**Submit to Dropbox Under:
Assignment 6: Joining an Online Community**

Conclusion

Overview:

You have now completed the all 5 Modules of this course, and this last assignment will serve as a reflection of the entire course.

Assignments:

Write 1-2 paragraphs about what you have learned in this course. What is your big takeaway from this course? How will you use this information at school and for your own personal life?

**Submit to Dropbox Under:
Assignment 7: Final Thoughts**

Course Assessment Rubric

<p>EXCELLENT Meets or Exceeds Course Objectives: A to A-</p>	<p>ACCEPTABLE Majority of Work Meets Course Objectives; B+ to B-</p>	<p>NOT ACCEPTABLE Needs Considerable Improvement: Resubmit Work Suggested: C or below</p>
<p>All work is very organized.</p>	<p>Most work is generally well organized.</p>	<p>Work shows little or no organization.</p>
<p>Answers are well thought out and demonstrate reflection on the material.</p>	<p>Answers are complete and demonstrate some reflection on the material.</p>	<p>Answers are brief and do not demonstrate any reflection on the material.</p>
<p>Assignment use specific examples and provide a detailed description of how the assignment can be incorporated into a learning environment.</p>	<p>Assignment use specific examples or somewhat describes how the assignment can be incorporated into a learning environment.</p>	<p>Assignment do not use specific examples or describe classroom incorporation.</p>
<p>All assignments are completed and meet or exceed the page or paragraph requirement. Templates or assignment documents are fully filled out, with thorough elaboration and</p>	<p>The majority of the assignments are completed and meet the page or paragraph requirement. Templates or assignment documents are mostly filled</p>	<p>Assignments are not completed and do not meet the page or paragraph requirement Templates or assignment documents are not filled out.</p>

thoughtful detail put into each component.	out, indicating some thought put into each component.	
Work is free of spelling and/or grammatical errors.	Work has few spelling and/or grammatical errors.	Work has numerous spelling and/or grammatical errors.

- You are allowed 9 months to complete the course. Course questions? Contact your instructor by email.
- For questions involving your registration please contact us at support@dominicanCAonline.com or call (800) 626-5080. To change your address, link to your Dominican Store account at https://www.dominicanaonlinestore.com/store/index.php?main_page=login
- For Dominican Self-Guided course information, link to <http://dominicancaonline.com/DominicanCA-Online-FAQ>

Syllabus