



CREATING A POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

EDUO 9716, One semester unit

Instructor: Matt Heglie

Course Description:

During this course teachers will learn about and then practice skills for creating the kind of warm caring atmosphere that leads to an engaging learning environment for students

Course Objectives:

The teacher will practice skills that will help them become a warm, caring and positive role model

Through website readings and course assignments the teacher will be introduced to the following classroom management areas:

- A. The importance of the first day of class
- B. The need for clear directions and instructions
- C. Strategies for effective monitoring
- D. How I-messages can affect student behavior
- E. The teacher as a role model

Grading Rubric: Written Response Rubric:

Exemplary: Met and Exceeds Expectations A+ to A-	Acceptable: Meets Expectations B+ to B-	Unacceptable: Needs Improvement. Must be resubmitted.
Reflective, thoughtful ideas relevant to the assignment are clearly stated.	Presents some relevant ideas and connections to the assignment.	Few relevant ideas connected to the assignment, some ideas unclear.
Very well organized	Is generally well organized	Shows little organization
Reflective piece covers numerous facts and specific details of the learning experience	Some facts and specific details of the learning experience are included.	Few or no facts or specific details of the learning experience are included.
Free of Spelling or grammatical errors	Writing contains a few spelling or grammatical errors.	Numerous spelling or grammatical errors. Writing is difficult to read.

Course Assignments

1. What you do the first day of class sets the tone for the entire year. (4 Hrs.)

Read and study the following web sites and then do assignments #1a-e

- http://www.educationworld.com/a_curr/columnists/mcdonald/mcdonald027.shtml
- <http://www.smartclassroommanagement.com/2012/07/21/7-keys-to-the-first-day-of-school/>

See yourself as your students will see you as you welcome them on the first day of school. Practice greeting your students by looking into the mirror. Study and adjust your facial & body language to correspond in a natural way with positive and encouraging words. Do the mirror exercise for five minutes then take a break and repeat for another five minutes. Do this routine at least ten times.

1a. How did you feel upon completing the mirror exercise? Might the rehearsal help you come across to your students as a cheerful, caring and friendly teacher?

1b. Discuss a plan to quickly and effectively seat your students as they enter your class on the first day of school.

1c. How will you reveal yourself as a good natured calm teacher who is in charge of the class? This is not a word for word script but just how you intend for it to unfold.

On the first day of school, probably more than on any other day in the school year, your students will come to class well behaved and wanting to learn. Take advantage of this occasion by giving a lesson right off the bat. Choose not any lesson but one that shows off your ability, demonstrates that you are in charge, that the students can succeed and that highlights what you will expect from the students every day throughout the year.

1d. Describe your first day lesson. This is not a lesson plan but just a narrative.

1e. List the most important concepts or ideas gleaned from the two websites in part 1.

2. An upbeat attitude goes a long way toward creating a positive learning environment. (10 hrs.)

2a. For most people, consistently being positive is easier to say than to do. It is a learned skill to be practiced in and outside the classroom – with your friends, spouse, siblings, children, neighbors, and grocery clerk – everyone. Tomorrow spend the entire day being warm and friendly to **EVERY ONE** you encounter and reflect here on that experience.

How comfortable were you in doing this? Was it more difficult to be warm and friendly to some people than to others? How did you feel at the end of the day? Add any other comments that you would like to make.

Read and study the following web sites and then do assignments #2b-d

- <http://nickcrocker.com/2012/08/build-a-better-you/>
- <http://www.wikihow.com/Change-Yourself>
- <http://psychcentral.com/blog/archives/2012/06/11/7-keys-to-becoming-a-positive-person/>
- <http://www.marcandangel.com/2012/10/22/9-habits-of-super-positive-people/>

2b. The material contained on the above web sites should only be looked at as information to help you develop **your own unique plan** to recreate within yourself the affirming teacher that you've always wanted to be. Record here your plan that you will follow religiously for two weeks for the purpose of honing your positive people skills.

2c. After you have practiced these positive skills for two weeks, redo assignment **2a**. Compare the two experiences as a measurement of the effectiveness of your two week plan.

2d. List the most important concepts or ideas gleaned from the four websites in part **2**

2e. After reading the three articles linked in the following NEA web site, describe a positive classroom exercise that you have either done or would like to do.

- <http://www.nea.org/bare/print.html?content=/bare/15923.htm>

3. Being clear with your instructions and expectations will reduce the likelihood of ongoing disruption and interruptions.(2hrs.)

Read and study the following web sites and then complete assignments #3a-d

- http://www.ehow.com/how_5858455_provide-clear-classroom-directions.html
- <http://suppersec5.edublogs.org/2010/08/24/classroom-management-tips-re-giving-instructions/>
- <http://myenglishpages.com/blog/practical-teaching-tips-for-giving-instructions/>

3a. Recall and describe a time when you were confused because the instructions given were unclear.

3b. What mistakes were made in this incident?

3c. What techniques will you use to gain the attention of your students when you start to give instructions?

3d List the most important concepts or ideas gleaned from the three websites in part **3**.

4. Effective classroom monitoring can have a huge impact on the learning environment (2hrs.)

Read and study the following web sites and then do assignments **#4a-d**

- <http://www.marzanocenter.com/blog/article/monitoring-by-walking-around-part-1-withitness/>
- <http://www.marzanocenter.com/blog/article/monitoring-student-interest-by-walking-around-part-2-strategies-for-student/>
- <http://www.marzanocenter.com/blog/article/monitoring-the-classroom-by-walking-around-part-3-content/>

What will be your monitoring strategies in the following areas?

4a. Withitness

4b. Engagement

4c. Content

4d. List the most important concepts or ideas gleaned from the three websites in part **4**.

5. Using Preventive I-Messages can influence students' future actions and may avoid future problems. (3 hrs.)

Read and study the following web sites and then do assignments **#5a-f**

- <http://www.affectiveteaching.com/?p=642>
- <http://teachingsites.info/how-to-use-i-messages%E2%80%9D-in-the-classroom/>
- <http://www.bangkokpost.com/learning/education-features/211171/the-i-message>
- <http://www.slideshare.net/guest07cba0/i-messages>

5a – e Describe five classroom situations in which you could use I-messages to bring about proper student behavior

5f. List the most important concepts or ideas gleaned from the four websites in part **5**.

6. You're a role model - BE A GOOD ONE! (5 hrs.)

After studying the following web sites, complete assignments **#6a-j**

- <http://www.aimhieducational.com/TeachersAsRoleModels.html>
- <http://www.classroommanagement101.com/blog/3-ways-to-promote-positive-behavior-in-the-classroom>
- <http://psychcentral.com/news/2010/05/27/modeling-behavior-for-children-has-long-lasting-effects/14139.html>
- <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/ted-talks-education/speaker/rita-pierson/>

6a. Recall a time when you were a child and an adult apologized to you - How did you feel when that happened?

6b. Kids don't learn from people they don't like - Comment on this statement.

6c. You got 2 correct - instead of 18 wrong. In what ways will you turn negatives into positives with your students?

6d. What positive strategies will you use at parent conferences or any other time you meet your student's parents?

6e. Teachers cannot, at any time, afford to lose their self-composure and they are most vulnerable when their button(s) are pushed. First you must be fully aware of what pushes your button(s). List everything that you can think of (even the most personal insults) that a student could say to you that might cause you to abandon your positive nurturing self. Share a few of your buttons.

6f. A teacher who is creating a positive learning environment responds to disrespect with respect. Your immediate statement after an insult must be made calmly, warmly and if you can manage it with some humor. You then can deal with discipline (if needed) – remember the whole class is watching and you are the model for first-rate behavior. This again is easier said than done and takes practice. Right now, while you are calm and not confronted with insults, write out a response for every button pushing statement that you listed. These would be responses that you would hope to make if a student did direct such a comment to you. Share a few of them here.

Mirror exercise once again

6g. Look in the mirror and say all the insults listed for yourself in **6e** repeatedly until you feel you have become desensitized to them. How effective do you think this exercise has been in helping you remain cool when you feel disrespected? Explain

6h. Look in the mirror again and verbalize the insults once again but this time follow each with your written response along with warm facial & body language that correspond with

what you are saying. Remember, developing a skill takes practice. Describe your experience.

6i. Did this exercise in desensitization help you counter disrespect with respect? Explain

6j. List the most important concepts or ideas gleaned from the four websites in part 5.

7. Reflection (1/2 hr.)

Of the twenty one assigned websites discuss which one helped you the most in your quest to create a positive learning environment for your students? How did it help?

8. Philosophy (1hr.)

Now that you have read and studied all of the websites and have completed the assignments, you should have a good idea what your philosophy is in regards to creating a positive learning environment. In a short and simple statement, write it out here.

Instructions for coursework submission:

When you have completed your assignments, post all coursework at one time in the Completed Coursework DropBox at the top of the course page. You are allowed 9 months to complete the course. If you have questions about the course, you can reach your graders by email or phone.

Matt Heglie: mheglie@dominicancaonline.com

For questions concerning your registration or transcripts, contact us at info@dominicanCAonline.com or see <http://dominicancaonline.com/Dominican-CA-Online-FAQ> for more information.