Module 2

Praxis- Practices and Pedagogies for the Classroom and Teacher Flourishing

Meenakshi Chhabra

Research has shown that enhanced social emotional sills are a foundation for successful and engaged learning in the classroom. At the same time, teacher well-being and support are also critical to creating a school environment and culture, which is grounded in the principles of collaborative community and social justice.

The emphasis in this course is on student-centered pedagogy and practices that support engaged learning environment, social and emotional skills, and a collaborative teaching community.

Objectives:
1. Examine existing classroom pedagogical and teacher flourishing practices
2. Inquire into the challenges and opportunities in classroom management and teacher support
3. Adapt, contextualize and customize pedagogies and practices to meet the specific needs of the classroom
4. Build teacher learning community

The course will be offered as a five-day intensive with an online engagement before and after the course. The course is interactive and experiential and will be in a workshop training format. Students will engage in activities, practice pedagogies, explore frameworks while critically examining these in light of their unique context. Students are expected to share their insights and learning through written or artistic documentation and collaborative group projects.

Websites
Courage and Renewal http://www.couragerenewal.org/courage-to-teach/
Facing History and Ourselves https://www.facinghistory.org/
Right Questions Institute http://rightquestion.org/
Mindset works https://www.mindsetworks.com

Readings:

Intensive Modules
Day 1: Self as Teacher
Day 2: Classroom Pedagogies
Day 3: Social and Emotional Learning
Day 4: Trauma Informed Schools
Day 5: Applied Practice
Day 1: Self as Teacher
We will start with exploring teacher identity and the role of the teacher in the community. Questions about teacher support, teacher well-being and building teacher learning community will be the focus of the day

- Teacher Role in School and Community
  Identifying expectations; Balancing different roles; Staying organized; Staying motivated; Setting goals
- Teacher Well-Being and Stress Management
- Collaboration and Communities of Practice
  Levels of collaboration; What is a Teacher Learning Circle (TLC)? TLC community standards; Mission statement; Group reflection; Peer support

Day 2: Social and Emotional Learning
Research has shown that enhanced social and emotional competency has a positive impact on student academic performance. The following topics will inform the module:
  - What are patterns of communication in the school?
  - How are conflicts currently resolved?
  - Issues of inclusion
  - Effectiveness of present disciplinary actions
  - Enhancement of social emotional learning in the school culture
  - Participants will engage with practice of Positive discipline, Non-Violent communication, Constructive Controversy, and Restorative Justice.

Day 3: Lesson Planning and Classroom Pedagogies
Today the emphasis will be on examining existing and new, curriculum planning and classroom practices, and their adaptability and cultural appropriateness to the school context. Strategies for planning lessons, and enhancing student engagement, participation and performance will be discussed. The following pedagogical practices will be explored:
  - Growth Mindset
  - Right Questions
  - Facing History

Day 4: Trauma Informed Schools
There is increasing evidence demonstrating a strong correlation between students’ experiences of chronic stress and trauma, and the negative impact of that on their academic, social, and emotional development. In this module, we will explore factors that influence stress and creative ways of coping with it, which are supportive of student growth and development.
  - What is Chronic Stress
  - Stress factors
  - Strategies for managing stress effectively
Day 5: Applied Practice

Participants will select a practice/concept from the modules, and simulate a short classroom facilitation. This will be an opportunity to engage with feedback processes and strategies of evaluation and assessment. Topics covered will include:

- Facilitation
- Feedback
- Evaluation and Assessment

Grading

In-country classroom participation:  25%
Journal Posts (Journal Tab):          20%
Reading Posts (Discussion Board):   20%
Group Project (Discussion Board):   25%
Final Reflection (Journal Tab):     10%

Assignments

All posts are due by 11pm your time, on the stated due date. Post should be submitted on time.

A. Before the Intensive Weekend: Between March 20th and April 5th

- Review Websites
  Courage and Renewal http://www.couragerenewal.org/courage-to-teach/
  Facing History and Ourselves https://www.facinghistory.org/
  Right Questions Institute http://rightquestion.org/
  Mindset works https://www.mindsetworks.com
  Heart Math https://heartmath.org
  Nonviolent Communication

- Review Readings

- Teacher Offerings
  Create a list of poems, folktales, fiction, name of artist, or playwrights, from Nicaragua who have inspired you.

  - Journal Assignments (20%) – Under Journal tab (your journal posts are confidential and can be viewed only by the instructor)

Week 1 Journal Post: Due 26th of March (Revised: Give these questions some thought and we will talk about them in the class.

Address the following questions in a 400-500 words reflective post:

1. Why and how did you become a teacher
2. What is your teaching philosophy? Which education philosophers or practitioners inform and inspire your teaching practice and why?
3. What impact has your schooling experience and the historical, political, social context had on you in your role as a teacher?

Meenakshi Chhabra PhD. Global Interdisciplinary Studies Program
Week 2 Journal Post: Due 1st of April (Same as above, jot down some thoughts and bring to class).
Address the following questions in a 400-500 words reflective post:
1. Other than salary what motivates you to teach?
2. What are current challenges that you experience as a teacher?
3. How do you manage your stress? What do you do to distress?
4. How do you feel about collaborating with your peers in planning content and pedagogy for the classroom? What opportunities exist in your school for collaboration between teachers? What would make you more comfortable about working with your peers

B. Intensive Weekend:

- *Bring to first day of class a quote or poem on teaching that inspires you*
- *Jot your thoughts in bullet points on the following. These will be used for the in-class process the next day*

Journal Post 1: Due end of Day 1
1. Key learnings from day 1
2. What do you do to prevent misbehavior in your classroom?
3. What does discipline look like in your school? What consequences do you give to students who continue to misbehave?
4. How do teachers and students communicate and resolve conflicts in your school?

Journal post 2: Due end of day 2
1. Key learnings from day 2
2. What types of teaching strategies do you use to keep students actively engaged in lessons? What works and where are the challenges?
3. How do you know if students are actively engaged in your lessons?
4. What would you change about your school’s method of teaching?

Journal Post 3: Due end of Day 3
1. Key learnings from day 1
2. How do you create a safe learning environment for all of your students?
3. Which types of students do you struggle to support in your classroom? Why?
4. What do students in your class feel stressed by?
5. What are some ways that you support students in managing their stress?
Journal Post 4: Due end of Day 4
1. Key learnings from day 4
2. What are some feedback processes for teachers in your school? How do teachers receive feedback?
3. How do you offer students feedback?
4. What ways do you assess student learning?

C. In-country classroom participation (30%)
A big part of the learning process is during the five-day intensive. Students are expected to actively engage in individual and group activities, offering insights and analysis of the different pedagogies and raising critical questions for discussion. Contextual appropriateness, student inclusion, and teacher support, will be central to these conversations.

D. Reading Posts (20%) (April 22nd and- April 29th)
We will form small groups during the intensive. Each group will select one reading on each theme (Self as teacher and teacher wellbeing, Social emotional learning, classroom pedagogies, and Trauma and learning) to discuss the readings as a group and post their comments on the reading also as a group. So each group will write four posts, one on each of the readings. Posts should be between 400-500 words and must include quotes from the readings and your discussion. Posts should summarize the reading, identify core themes, offer insights, learnings and most importantly, list questions that came up for you and you would like to ask to deepen your understanding on the topic. (Due April 22nd)

Each student is expected to read the posts of the other group and offer individual responses to these. Responses can be answers to the questions posed by the teams, your own insights, and your questions on the topic related to the reading. The responses can be 350-400 words. (Due April 29th)

E. Group Project: (20%) Due on May 10th
For this assignment, you will also work in a team or group. Between April 29th and May 10th each team or group will develop a training and resource module on one of the four tropics, adapting it to the school and cultural context and school culture. The module must be designed as a tool for teachers, something they can use in their classroom. It can take many shapes. Your group might decide to use one of the skills or strategies we practiced in class, adapt it to your school, and translate that into Spanish. Or you might decide to write up one of the strategies you are already using successfully in your teaching. The idea is that at the end of the course, you have at least five- six tools for the teachers related to ; Teacher Wellness and Collaboration, Classroom Pedagogies, Social-Emotional learning, Trauma Informed Practice. The training and resources will be integrated into a resource manual that can be used by teachers in the school. It is important that you complement the course offerings with your own resources drawn from the Nicaraguan context, such as role plays, poetry, film, fiction, etc. We will discuss the assignment in class.

F. Individual Reflection (10%) Due on May 12th
This is due on May 12th. This will be posted as a Journal entry and should capture your learning from the course and application of the learning. Give specific examples for both questions.

- What have you changed in the daily classroom practice, what new strategies have you tried and which areas need more attention. Which teaching skills will you focus on improving in the next three months.
- One action you have taken to supporting yourself and your peers professionally, since the workshop (for e.g. a TLC meeting). How do you plan to continue supporting and collaborating with you colleagues?