

**COURSE TITLE: 8 FAMILIAR FORCES FOR IMPROVING CLASSROOM CULTURE**

**WA CLOCK HRS: 60**  
**OREGON PDUs: 60**  
**PENNSYLVANIA ACT 48: 60**

**NO. OF CREDITS: 6 QUARTER CREDITS**  
**[semester equivalent = 4.00 credits]**

**INSTRUCTOR: Shaila Bora**  
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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Class Culture is a magical mix with no recipe and yet it is the special sauce for optimal student learning. Continue to refine your mastery as you inspire a class culture of acceptance and appreciation as learners develop intellectual character. Revisit 8 Familiar Forces: Expectations, Language, Time, Modeling, Opportunities, Routines, Interactions, and Environment. Summon these forces for guidance and support to be more effective in your everyday rhythms and relationships as curator of a culture of thinking which everyone values and that values everyone.

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

1. Revisited the 8 Familiar Forces which create, sustain and enhance group culture: Expectations, Language, Time, Modeling, Opportunities, Routines, Interactions and Environment.
2. Imagined and visualized how to use classroom culture, as a shaper of students' development as powerful thinkers and learners, to inspire the personal, professional and planetary upgrade.
3. Collected an inventory of stories, practical guidelines, self-assessments, case studies, inquiry projects and other resources that inspire and guide the facilitation of cultures of thinking.
4. Customized and implemented in a learning environment, one supportive practice gleaned directly from any of the forces.
5. Reflected on their own classroom culture and considered how to strengthen and curate its culture of thinking with the guidance of the 8 Familiar Forces.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

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

The use of artificial intelligence is not permitted. Assignment responses found to be generated by AI will not be accepted.

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**HOURS EARNED:**

Completing the basic assignments (Section A. Information Acquisition) for this course automatically earns participants their choice of CEUs (Continuing Education Units), Washington State Clock Hours, Oregon PDUs, or Pennsylvania ACT 48 Hours. The Heritage Institute offers CEUs and is an approved provider of Washington State Clock Hours, Oregon PDUs, and Pennsylvania ACT 48 Hours.

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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**

Ritchhart, Ron. *Creating Cultures of Thinking*. 2015. Jossey-Bass. San Francisco, CA. \$16 + shipping for used textbook on Amazon.com ISBN 978-1-118-97460-5

None. All reading is online.

### **MATERIALS FEE**

Text, Ritchhart, Ron. *Creating Cultures of Thinking*. 2015. Is approximately \$16 from Amazon.com

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

### **A. INFORMATION ACQUISITION**

Assignments done in a course forum will show responses from all educators who have or are taking the course independently. Feel free to read and respond to others' comments.

Group participants can only view and respond to their group members in the Forum.

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

Read the first paragraph of the Introduction p. 3. Use the prompt from the paragraph and describe your extraordinary experience as a valued member of a culture of thinking.

Continue reading the Introduction to its conclusion on p. 11.

**Post your response.**

#### **Assignment #2: Expectations**

Read about how beliefs shape our behavior: Chapter 2, pages 38-58. In a real or virtual pocket notebook, jot down contrasts of each belief set (there are 5.)

Now imagine how to go about an immediate upgrade, one that will make an impact. From which belief set would you choose to act? In a 1-2 page paper discuss 1) what you learned that influences and perhaps has altered the way you think about expectations *for* students. 2) Any key understandings to remember from your selected belief set and 3) how you might use your new thinking to creatively solve a problem in your school/classroom?

**Post your response.**

#### **Assignment #3: Language**

Let's focus on how to leverage language to support learning. Read the introduction to Chapter 3: pages 63-68.

Now let's get into the treasure: the collection of seven (7) language moves that guide us to communicate with just the right words.

- Your task is to create a 3-column table with seven (7) rows, Table Title: Seven Key Language Moves.
- Use the bulleted language moves on page 68 and write the name of each language move in the first column.
- As you read about each language move (pages 68-83) record your annotations in the second column.
- In the third column use numbers to prioritize the language move in order of preference for your own personal development.

For a funtastic finale compose a paragraph which explains how certain elements of your top choice might be applied in your professional situation to improve classroom culture.

Submit *both* the Table and your concluding paragraph to the instructor.

**Post your response.**

#### **Assignment #4: Time**

**“How do I pace that fleet footed class time to optimize student learning?”**

Time, on any day there never seems to be enough of it, but... there can be!

Read Chapter 4: pages 89-111.

Let's delve into the topic: Planning and Maintaining a Daily Agenda. Go to YouTube. Search: *How to Plan Your Week/ The Art of Manliness*. Watch the presentation.

On page 101, review key principles (bulleted) to build a culture of thinking; keep them in mind as you go about weekly planning.

Your task: You are mentor to a new teacher. Write a feature article, for Educational Leadership or another publication that suggests guidelines and offers tips for weekly planning that uses a posted Daily Agenda.

Remember: *Manage energy, not time.*

**Post your response.**

#### **Assignment #5: Environment**

On page 257 read the 3rd paragraph beginning with, "To access this invitational quality of a classroom...." Assess your own classroom by jotting down observations in response to the questions in the paragraph.

Watch the TED talk by Mac Barnett: *Why A Good Book Is A Secret Door*.

Read Chapter 9, pages 227-258.

- Your task: Become a curator of your classroom. Consider how to redesign your learning space to promote performance and boost creativity. How may your physical environment generate good vibrations, offer more comfort and provide opportunities for exploration?

In a 1-2 page paper discuss changes you would like to make and the benefits you expect to observe.

**Post your response.**

#### **Assignment #6: Modeling**

Read about the unsung heroes: Implicit and Explicit Modeling in Chapter 5: pages 115-137.

In a 1-2 page paper: 1) compare and contrast the different modeling practices in the continuum on p. 125. 2) in a summary paragraph present what you have learned from reading about these models that influences and perhaps has developed how you think about modeling.

**Post your response.**

#### **Assignment #7: Opportunities**

Ask yourself: How much of student energy is spent on rote, ready-made or reproductive tasks? How often do students direct their own learning? How often do I encourage class discussion and sharing to provoke deeper thinking? How often do students engage in experiential learning? Questions such as these promote pondering about how we humans may learn from opportunities presented to us.

Read Chapter 6: pages 142-170.

Your task: Observe and do an audit of your own or in a colleague's classroom. Record the use of class time that tracks kinds of thinking that foster learning vs work. Set up the 2-column audit to record Duration (amount of time in minutes) and Format: 1. Low-level = memory work and reproduction of procedures 2. Unfocused or Transition Time 3. Worthwhile Learning = understanding, transfer, inference, and novel application responses.

Discuss your findings with a colleague or the colleague you observed. Based on the audit analysis, determine times when a teacher might step aside so that students are doing more learning together and/or on their own. Target where and when reliance on worksheets, prepackaged materials, study guides, and scripted teaching might be reduced and redirected to other learning formats. How might these tasks be bumped up to replace low-level tasks with more purposeful opportunities? Also, talk about how classroom observations

support teachers getting better together.

Compose a synopsis of your audit analysis and discussion – highlight insights as well as areas of opportunity.

**Post your response.**

### **Assignment #8: Interactions**

On YouTube watch: *Austin's Butterfly* from Expeditionary Learning.

Read Chapter 8, pages 201-224. Reflect upon the protocols guiding interaction in your classroom.

In a 1-2 page report: 1) list your protocols and explain how they structure classroom interactions to create and support a culture of thinking 2) share an inspiring story of how some or all of your protocols support *nondirectivity*, the one variable that has the greatest impact on student achievement.

Post your response.

### **Assignment #9: Routines**

Read Chapter 7, pages 173-195. Develop a discussion with other teachers at your school on the somewhat overlooked interactional and thinking routines that guide classroom culture within a grade and across the grades. Consider using the Ladder of Feedback (see Appendix B) to guide your discussion. In a 1-2 page summary highlight memorable details from your discussion including suggested guidelines and considerations for improving our practice and student learning.

Post your response.

## **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 who have or are taking the course independently. ?Feel free to read and respond to others' comments. Group participants can only view and respond to their group members in the Forum.

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### **Assignment #10: Develop a Lesson. (Required for 400 and 500 level)**

Complete **one** of the following options:

Read Chapter 10 pages 261-266: Moving toward Transformation. Note the four (4) areas of attention and consider how these areas connect to your own professional life. On pages 263-304 browse through all, some, or one of the six (6) case studies that offer a closer look at how the ongoing process of facilitating cultures of thinking inspires and supports real change. Choose one (1) of the case studies to read in its entirety, one that connects with your own experience. Consider how growth and development look similar and different from the vantage point and context of the author and yourself. Is there any overlap? (Venn diagram)

#### **Option A)**

- Develop a lesson to reflect what you've learned in this course.
- Implement your lesson with students in your classroom.
- Write a 2-3 page commentary on what worked well and what could be improved.
- Include any student feedback on your lesson.

(The following is encouraged but not required):

Share what you've learned with other teachers taking our courses by also contributing your Lesson to The Heritage Institute Lesson Library located at <https://www.hol.edu/lesson-plan-library>

**OR**

**Option B)**

Use this option if you do not have a classroom available.

Develop a lesson to reflect what you've learned in this course. (Do not implement it.)

Write a 2-3 page summary concerning any noteworthy success you've had as a teacher with one or more students.

**Post your response.**

**Assignment #11: A New Activity**

At the end of most Chapters, there is a list of possible activities that reinforce and expand the Chapter's key messages. Locate the *one(1)* Chapter which you liked best. Select one of the suggested activities to try out. In your pocket notebook keep track of your observations and thoughts. Write a 1-2 page report relating how the activity you tried out contributed to building a culture of thinking.

**Post your response.**

**Assignment #12: (500 Level ONLY)**

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

**Option A)**

**Stories of Learning**

Get a better sense of how others are building cultures of thinking. Read three (3) teacher articles from [www.StoriesofLearning.com](http://www.StoriesofLearning.com) For each article write a description of relevant connections you made between experiences in the selection and your own experiences: what did you think or wonder about, how did you feel? What is the author trying to share? Did you learn something that made you change the way you think about how to build a culture of thinking?

**OR**

**Option B)**

**IFS Individual Feedback Session**

Pursue further study concerning a topic from Chapter 4: Individual Feedback Session. In a 1-2 page paper propose how, based on your readings, findings, feelings, experience and insight, you might facilitate your own IFS as an opportunity to build trust, encourage student self-reflection and offer your own teacher feedback.

**OR**

**Option C)**

**Further Exploration**

Research more about one (1) of these topics from Chapter 9: Schools As A Living Museum, Nature Tables, Classroom Design or Documentation of Students' Thinking.

In a 1-2 page paper summarize your findings and share how you might use the Living Museum suggestion to facilitate a culture of thinking in your classroom.

Post your response

*Just one assignment remaining, the Integration Paper.*

*Thanks for taking the course and heartiest wishes for Creating Cultures of Thinking at your school! and now your Integration Paper.*

**C. INTEGRATION PAPER**

Assignment #13: (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 400-500 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:**

Instructors will comment on each assignment. If you do not hear from the instructor within a few days of posting your assignment, please get in touch with them immediately.

#### **QUALIFICATIONS FOR TEACHING THIS COURSE:**

**Shaila Bora, M.A.** is currently working toward her PH.D. in Philosophy. Courses offered by Shaila are designed to tap into the creative potential and intuitive knowledge that each of us carries within. Through light touch supervision, we will open a dialogue that encourages experimentation with new techniques, and ways of being and doing that are already latent and waiting to be called forth. Nurturing this unique artistic spirit entails reflecting on and acting from your own experiences, observations, suggestions, questions, relationships, and perhaps a gentle nudge from a supportive someone else. So go ahead and choose the adventure that commands your thoughts and liberates your energy. Are you ready to try something new now? Come on, jump in, and let the magic happen.

#### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

##### **8 FAMILIAR FORCES FOR IMPROVING CLASSROOM CULTURE**

**Covey, Stephen**, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. Simon & Schuster: New York, NY. 2013.  
ISBN 978-1451639612

This international bestseller explores how good organizations can be turned into ones that produce remarkable, sustained results. The book contains oodles of stories and examples from the great and not so great. Unleash your potential and bring the 7 Habits into your life. Note: I offer a course based in Covey's principles: Empathetic Communication for teachers, start living the habits today!

**Lakoff, G. & Johnson, M**, *Metaphors We Live By*. University of Chicago Press: Chicago, IL. 2003.  
ISBN-10: 0226468011

Does our talk structure our experience of reality, the way we perceive the world? our experience of the classroom? Find out in this now classic book from the 80's. Metaphors are much more than a literary device; they are a fundamental part of our thought processes whenever we try to think abstractly. How is your use of metaphor inhibiting or facilitating an agenda of thinking in your classroom?

**Loehr, Jim & Schwartz, Tony**. *The Power of Full Engagement*. The Free Press: New York, NY. 2005.  
ISBN 978-0-74322675-2.

Learn how to manage energy, not time. Tap into physical, emotional, mental and spiritual energy as primary sources of personal renewal. Accomplish what is most important to you by changing your habits. This book includes specific daily recommendations to more skillfully balance your energy expenditure with intermittent rest and recovery. The results might be astounding!

**Longman**, *Longman Advanced American Dictionary*, Pearson Education Limited: Essex, England. 2005.  
ISBN 1 405 82111 6

A rave review for a dictionary that offers help for learners of Academic English. It's nice to know a non-narcissistic dictionary that doesn't use the word being defined in its own definition!

**Sizer, Ted & Sizer, N.F.**, *The Students Are Watching: Schools and the Moral Contract*. Beacon Press: Boston, MA. 2000.  
ISBN 978-0-807-03121-6

Another engaging read from the author of *Horace's School*. How are the people in your school spending their time? Students learn from school routines and rituals. Read the book and find out what students really are learning from modeling, grappling, bluffing, sorting, shoving and fearing.

**Thornburg, David**. *From The Campfire to the Holodeck*. Jossey-Bass: San Francisco, CA. 2013.  
ISBN 978-1-118-63393-9

This entertaining book talks about how to engage every student by offering spaces for effective learning: campfire, watering holes, caves and life. Prepare better lessons when you organize around your classroom space.