

COURSE TITLE: CREATING INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS: Setting Yourself up for Success
NO. OF CREDITS: 6 QUARTER CREDITS
[semester equivalent = 4.00 credits]

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

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Imagine starting each school day in a classroom designed to reduce stress for both you and your students—a space where every child feels supported, routines are intentional, and peers work together to support one another’s growth.

This course is designed for Pre-K through 2nd-grade teachers, school administrators, special education teachers, and counselors who want to create classrooms that are inclusive, calm, and effective. Using the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), you’ll learn how to intentionally design classroom environments and routines that reduce stress, foster engagement, and support all learners.

All course materials are included in the syllabus and are of no extra cost.

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

1. Become able to create inclusive and intentionally structured learning environments that minimize stress and support student engagement.
2. Developed and applied routines that foster consistency, predictability, and emotional security for all learners.
3. Implemented strategies that encourage peer collaboration, enhancing both social and academic development in the classroom.
4. Analyzed and refined their classroom practices based on evidence-based strategies and student needs to continuously improve learning outcomes.

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.

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.

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 Equivalent 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**

None

None. All reading is online.

MATERIALS FEE

None

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:

Read: [What is Inclusion Slide Show](#)

Read: [A Summary of the Evidence of Inclusive Education](#)

Answer the following questions (2-3 pages)

1. Reflecting on your current role and the population you serve, how do you define inclusion in your classroom or school setting?
2. What personal beliefs and experiences shape your perspective on inclusion? How do these beliefs influence your approach to creating an inclusive, calm, and supportive learning environment for all students?

Assignment #2:

Listen: [Podcast: Rooted in joy](#): Creating a classroom culture of equity, belonging, and care

Answer the following questions (2-3 pages)

1. How do you create a sense of belonging in your classroom?
2. Explain the concept of freedom dreaming. What would this look like for you?
3. What does she mean by "humanizing your students?" Can you describe an example of how you might do this?

Assignment #3:

Watch: [People are Not Supports](#)

Read: [Emergency preparedness and in-the-moment management procedures for severe episodes of challenging behavior](#)

Answer the following questions (2-3 pages):

1. How do you differentiate the terms "support," "strategies," and "resources"?
2. Why is it important to understand these distinctions in educational contexts?
3. What role do Educational Assistants or paraprofessionals play in supporting students, and how can their presence be used most effectively in the context of educational support?

Assignment #4:

Watch: [Responding to Challenging Behavior through Responsive Relationships](#)

Read: [Creating Equitable Caring Community of Learners](#)

Read: [Including Childrens' Home Languages and Cultures](#)

Answer the following questions (3-4 pages)

1. Summarize the key takeaways from the three resources. What are the main ideas about supporting children through relationships, equity, and cultural inclusion?
2. Choose one strategy from the readings or video that resonates with you. Describe how you would apply this strategy in your classroom or school setting to support diverse learners.
3. Think about a time when a child's behavior or learning needs were better understood through a responsive relationship or cultural lens. How did acknowledging their background and individual needs help create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment?

Assignment #5:

Read: [Visual Supports and Environment Slide Show](#)

Read: [Haring Center Inclusion Kit](#)

Answer the following questions (3-4 pages, including photo)

1. Using google images, find an example of a classroom that is set up with good environment supports and visuals. How is the environment supporting students and teacher? What could be improved?
2. What could be improved in your environment?
3. How could you improve your use of visuals? Give specific examples.

Assignment #6:

Read: [Teaching of Behavior Expectations Slides](#)

Read: [Behavioral Expectations for Early Childhood Classrooms](#)

Answer the following question (4-5 pages)

1. Describe the posters, schedules, visuals, and social stories you use to help students understand rules and expectations. Explain how you introduce and model these visuals to ensure students use them effectively.
2. Some students need extra guidance to meet expectations. Discuss strategies for supporting these students, such as cueing, social stories, one-on-one instruction, and frequent check-ins. Explain how these tools help reinforce positive behaviors and provide necessary scaffolding.
3. Reinforcement of behavioral expectations is key to maintaining a structured and positive classroom. Explain how you use positive attention, peer modeling, and reinforcement systems to encourage appropriate behavior. Provide examples of how students are acknowledged for following expectations and how consistency plays a role in maintaining classroom norms.
4. Someone walking into your classroom should be able to immediately recognize behavioral expectations. Describe the signs, routines, and student behaviors that make these expectations clear. Explain how you create an environment where both students and visitors understand expectations naturally.
5. Finally, reflect on why explicitly teaching behavioral expectations is crucial in early childhood education. Summarize how your approach fosters a positive, inclusive, and structured learning environment.

Assignment #7:

Read: [Predictable Daily Schedules/ Routines within Routines](#)

Watch: [1st Grade Daily Schedule in Depth 2025](#)

Answer the following questions (3-4 pages)

1. Identify one area of your classroom schedule that could benefit from a more defined routines within a routine.
2. Describe how you would implement it, what visuals or supports you would use, and how you would teach it to students.
3. Reflect on how embedding these routines can enhance classroom management and student success.

Assignment #8:

Read: [Transitions Slide Show](#)

Read: [Mastering Classroom Transitions](#)

Create a "Transition Planning Portfolio" (3-4 pages)

1. Design strategies for 2 different transitions during your day (e.g., from group work to individual work, from recess to class, arrival time, etc).

Each transition description should include:

Auditory signal (song, bell, etc)

Visual aids

Movement activity

2. Ideas for how mindfulness or calming techniques can be used during the transition (e.g., breathing exercises, body scans, drink of water or simple stretches)

3. A brief reflection on how to make the transition smooth, engaging, and calming for student

Assignment #9:

Read: [Best Practices for Creating an Inclusive Environment Article](#)

Answer the following questions (3-4 pages):

1. Summarize the main points of the article. What are the key strategies for fostering inclusivity?

2. Choose one best practice from the article and describe how you have seen it implemented in a workplace, school, or community setting. Explain how you would apply it in your own classroom or school.

3. Imagine you are responsible for making a space more inclusive (hallway, family room, office, etc). Identify changes you would make based on the article's recommendations. Explain why this change would be important

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.

Assignment #10:

Read: [Peer related Social Skills Slide Show](#)

Listen: Podcast: [How to teach social skills in the classroom](#)

Answer the following questions (3-4 pages)

1. Reflect on the strategies you use to encourage peer interaction in your classroom, including the curriculum, books, and social skills taught. Describe how you create opportunities for collaboration and relationship-building, the specific social skills (such as communication, empathy, and conflict resolution) you teach, and how these skills are integrated into daily activities.

2. Discuss how you support students with varying social abilities by differentiating strategies for diverse needs.

3. Finally, reflect on the impact of these efforts, considering improvements in students' social-emotional growth and classroom dynamics.

Assignment #11:

Read: [Indicators of Inclusion](#)

Read: [Instructionally Enhanced Pyramid Model Classroom Implementation Guide](#)

Answer the following questions (4-5 pages)

1. Reflect on two indicators of inclusion that you consider strengths in your practice and provide examples from your teaching to support your choices.
2. Identify two areas for improvement in inclusion for you and explain why they need further development, considering factors like student needs, classroom dynamics, and personal growth. Discuss challenges you've faced in these areas and how you plan to address them.
3. Using the Classroom Implementation Guide or other relevant resources, create a plan to improve these areas, outlining strategies, tools, and resources to support your growth.
4. Finally, describe how you will measure success and track your progress over time.

Assignment #12:

Listen: [Autism weekly podcast](#)

Answer the following question (2-3 pages)

1. What were some of the arguments on the podcast about why inclusive education is good for all children?
2. What did you learn about the history of special education and current trends?
3. What came up for you while listening to this podcast? Did it shift your thinking at all?

Assignment #13:

Read: [Sample Neutralizing Routine](#)

Create: Neutralizing Routine: (2-3 pages)

1. Develop a personal routine that helps you stay regulated during the day. This routine should be something you can use to reset your emotional state during stressful moments.
2. Create a list of co-regulation strategies you can use to support children's emotional regulation in the classroom, such as modeling calm behavior, providing quiet spaces, or using calming tools.
3. Write up does not need to be in narrative format, can be bulleted list or format that works for you

Assignment #14:

Research: Choose one educational equity issue (school discipline disparities, lack of culturally responsive curriculum, underfunding in Special Education, lack of mental health support, etc). Research how this issue impacts marginalized students.

Write: 2-3 page Advocacy Statement

1. What would a small-scale advocacy effort look like to address this issue? What is one small action you can take to advocate for change?
2. How would you involve the community you are advocating for in the decision-making process?
3. What strategies would you use to amplify the voices of those directly impacted rather than speaking for them?

Assignment #15: (500 Level ONLY)

Interview: Conduct an interview with a parent or caregiver about their perspective on inclusion in education. It can be in person, by phone, or via video. Ask about:

- Their child's experience with inclusion and feeling part of the learning environment.
- The role of teachers and staff in supporting their child.
- Effective forms of support and challenges faced.
- The role of the school community in fostering inclusion.
- Suggestions for improving support and inclusion.

Write a 4-5 page Reflection Paper:

1. Summarizes key insights from the interview.
2. Reflect on the importance of inclusion and its impact on the child's development.
3. Discuss effective support strategies and how they can be applied in your practice.
4. Highlight challenges and recommendations for improving inclusion based on the perspective of a parent or caregiver.

Assignment #16: (500 Level ONLY)

Read: [Case study](#)

Answer the following questions (4-5 pages)

1. What are the underlying needs behind the student's behaviors (beyond what you see on the surface)?
2. What specific strategies would you use to support the student's emotional regulation, communication, and social relationships in the classroom? Use examples from this course of strategies you could implement.
3. How will you involve families, support staff, or community resources in the intervention plan?
4. How might your own biases or emotions show up in your response to the student?
5. How do the student's needs connect to larger issues of equity or access to resources?
6. What would it mean to shift your mindset from "How do I fix this behavior?" to "What is this behavior trying to communicate?"

Assignment #17: (500 Level ONLY)

Video Observation: Select one routine during your day (e.g., circle time, group work, free play, transitions) and video record yourself facilitating the activity. You do not need to submit the recording, but it should be used for reflection. If you do not have your own classroom, observe in someone else's classroom.

Reflection Paper: After watching your video, write a 4-5 page reflection paper that addresses the following:

1. **Inclusion Practices:** Analyze how you supported the inclusion of all students during the routine. What strategies or practices did you use to ensure every student, including those with diverse needs, was engaged and supported?
2. **Classroom Environment:** Reflect on how the environment (physical setup, materials, group dynamics) supported inclusive practices during this routine.
3. **Peer Interactions:** Consider how peer interactions were encouraged and what steps you took to promote collaboration and positive relationships.
4. **Strengths and Areas for Growth:** Identify your strengths in promoting inclusion and any areas where you could improve. What strategies could you use moving forward to further support inclusion?
5. **Impact on Students:** Reflect on how your practices may have impacted students' sense of belonging and their ability to participate fully in the routine.

C. INTEGRATION PAPER

Assignment #18: (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:

Alison Beanblossom, LCSW, earned her master's degree from the University of Chicago in 2003 and has over 20 years of experience as a school social worker. She is currently the Early Childhood Mental Health and Wellness Manager at Portland Public Schools in Portland, Oregon, where she supports educators, students, and families in fostering social-emotional well-being. Throughout her career, she has held multiple roles in Head Start, including Home Visitor, Program Manager, and Mental Health Consultant, giving her a deep understanding of early childhood development and family engagement. In addition, she serves as an adjunct professor at Portland State University, contributing to the development of future professionals in the field.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Beacon School Support. (n.d.). How to teach social skills in the classroom with Miriam Campbell. Retrieved from https://beaconschoolsupport.co.uk/podcast/how-to-teach-social-skills-in-the-classroom-with-miriam-campbell?utm_source=chatgpt.com
This podcast discusses effective methods for teaching social skills to children in the classroom. Miriam Campbell provides practical

strategies that educators can use to promote peer interaction and social competence among students.

Finley, Todd. "Mastering Classroom Transitions." Edutopia, 19 May 2017. Retrieved from www.edutopia.org/article/mastering-transitions-todd-finley.

This article provides teachers with strategies for effectively managing classroom transitions to reduce disruption and maintain engagement. Todd Finley emphasizes the importance of routines, visual cues, and movement activities in supporting smooth transitions and keeping students focused.

Grand Valley State University Autism Education Center. (n.d.). START connecting: Behavioral expectations for early childhood classrooms. Grand Valley State University. Retrieved from <https://www.gvsu.edu/autismcenter/start-connecting-behavioral-expectations-for-early-childhood-classrooms-457.htm>

This resource offers guidance on establishing behavioral expectations in early childhood classrooms through visual aids and structured routines. It helps educators create a consistent environment that supports children's understanding and adherence to expected behaviors.

Hehir, T., Grindal, T., Freeman, B., Lamoreau, R., Borquaye, Y., & Burke, S. (2016). A Summary of the Evidence on Inclusive Education. Instituto Alana. Retrieved from <https://alana.org.br>

This study demonstrates that students with disabilities in inclusive settings show improved academic and social outcomes compared to those in segregated settings. It underscores the benefits of inclusion for both students with and without disabilities.

Holahan, A., & Costenbader, V. (2000). A Comparison of Developmental Gains for Preschool Children with Disabilities in Inclusive and Self-Contained Classrooms. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 20(4), 224–235.

This study compares the developmental progress of preschool children with disabilities in inclusive versus self-contained classrooms. The research highlights that inclusive classrooms provide social and academic benefits for all students.

Odom, S. L., Buysse, V., & Soukakou, E. (2011). Inclusion for Young Children with Disabilities: A Quarter Century of Research Perspectives. *Journal of Early Intervention*, 33(4), 344–356.

This article reviews 25 years of research showing that inclusive education supports cognitive, social, and emotional growth for children with disabilities. It emphasizes that inclusive settings benefit all students by promoting a sense of belonging and fostering diverse social interactions.

U.S. Department of Education. (2017). *A Preschool's Guide to Inclusion*. Washington, DC: Office of Special Education Programs.

This guide provides information on how inclusion in preschool settings benefits all children by fostering a sense of belonging and preparing them for future success. It offers strategies for implementing inclusive practices and supporting children with diverse needs.