

Educating for Barack's World: Creating Educational Experiences that Promote Justice and Cultural Intelligence (M452INT)

August 16 – 21, 2009
Ferry Beach, Maine

Instructor:

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Course Blueprint

Overview

One of the many insights from the election of Barack Obama to the US Presidency is the realization that the future is *now*. We are not preparing to live in a multicultural world – that world is already here! Yet, broadly speaking, our thinking and educational practice often don't reflect this reality. How can we educate for a world where fluid identities mix and mingle with multiple voices and multiple realities? Working with a vision of Beloved Community in mind, this intensive course explores the insights, skills and competencies – *cultural intelligence* – that are necessary to teach and learn in a multi-racial, multicultural world. Using a wide range of evocative teaching methodologies, participants will experiment, based on their own questions, with how to interrupt dynamics such as power, privilege, limiting worldviews, learning styles and preference that thwart growth and development.

The course will be most attractive to educational workers who have a grasp of basic teaching, or who come ready to grapple with burning questions about how to engage learners in acts of growth and development. Students should come to the August session with a particular program, project or idea in mind that they'd like to offer or transform. A culminating curriculum project will be required of students seeking Meadville Lombard credit on October 1, 2009. Enrollment limited to 25.

Teaching Methodology

This course wildly assumes that people learn best by *doing*, and by focusing on problems about which they care about deeply, about which they themselves puzzled or haunted, and want to change for a different outcome. Focusing on the development of learning experiences that link deeper thinking/feeling with social action, participants will explore the inner workings of change, and how to use/create educational tools to support that

work. It is often said that the longest road in the world is between the head and the heart; therefore, this course requires the engagement of cognitive, emotional and spiritual ways of thinking and knowing as it applies to change-making. Participants will, themselves, be objects of their own learning over the course of the week, and will have opportunities to reflect upon their own learning in contrast to the learning they wish to promote in their curricular experience.

Teaching and learning in a multi-racial, multicultural world requires developing the art of negotiating the diverse ways in which learners perceive, learn and dream. The use of “texts” in the course will model how to use a variety of different teaching strategies in service of self-knowing and, of course, promoting social action. *Texts should be read prior to the August course.* Students will engage content in small and large group formats, individually, and through journaling, arts integration, and kinesthetic learning. Though not required, students should bring a laptop computer that, if possible, has the capability to connect to the internet.

Course Objectives

The course will focus on three broad themes that enable educators to develop or fine-tune social justice curricula across the educational lifespan:

Organizational and Social Change, Psychological Development:

Texts: Cole-Jones, Hobgood, Goodman, Hicks, Hurd (recommended for children/youth work), Mezirow

Framing questions:

- What are the sources of change?
- How does one become *intelligent* about cultural ways of knowing and being?
- How do you counter resistance to change?
- How are identities formed?
- What is the interplay between socially constructed identity and social change?
- How do issues of social change play out in cognitive, emotional and spiritual contexts?
- How do anti-racist/anti-oppressive theories intersect with teaching and learning experiences?

Curriculum Development:

Texts: Adkins, Dewey, Hobgood, Wood, Patterson, TED lectures on creativity

Framing questions:

- What are the foundational elements of a liberating, transformative curriculum?

- How can the experience of a “learning community” support social change? How do you build one?
- What kind of habits of mind and skills are necessary to support change?
- What examples of curriculum model effective social change?
- How does one scaffold a curriculum that addresses developmental differences?

Creativity and Imagination:

Texts: Palmer, Intrator, various music and poetry

Framing questions:

- What is the role of social imagination in promoting change?
- How can spiritual practices support change-making?
- How do you teach creativity? How do you learn to be creative?
- How can the arts support individuals and groups working for change?

Your questions!:

- What questions do you bring to this course?
- What do you want to learn about yourself? Others?
- What has been puzzling you?
- What factors have consistently complicated your work?

Texts:

Before purchasing texts (all of which can be purchased through on-line book vendors), please note that specific chapters will be assigned and available through Meadville Lombard’s on-line electronic forum called “Moodle.” Upon registering for this course, students are given access to the course “folder” in Moodle; specific details about assignments, deadlines and expectations will be available there.

Adkins, Catherine (2003). Alt Ed (an adolescent novel)

Cole-Jones, Paula (theory development in progress). Multicultural competencies in a multi-racial, multicultural context.

Dewey, John. (1938). Experience and Education.

Edutopia: The George Lucas Educational Foundation [video library]. See Moodle website for specific URLs to view prior to class.

Goodman, Diane. (2001). Promoting diversity and social justice: Educating people from privileged groups.

Hicks, Mark (2009). Building the world we dream about: An Anti-Racist/Anti-Oppression Curriculum for Unitarian Universalist Congregations.

Hicks, Mark (2008). Multicultural Competencies for Cross-Cultural Communication.

Hobgood, William (2001). Welcoming resistance. New York: Alban Institute Publication.

Hurd, Tracey (2005). Nurturing children and youth: A developmental Guidebook

Mezirow, Jack and Associates (2000). Learning as Transformation: Critical perspectives on a theory in progress.

Palmer, Parker (2007). The courage to teach guide for reflection and renewal (10th Anniversary edition with DVD).

Patterson, Kerry, et al (2005). Crucial Conversations: Tools for talking with the stakes are high.

Technology, Entertainment, Design (TED). Web-based lectures on a diverse range of futuristic, justice-minded innovation. See Moodle website for specific URLs to view prior to class.

Wood, Diane & Betty Lou Whitford (2009). A Look into the Future. Teachers Learning in Community: Realities and Possibilities.

Music and Poetry

Intrator, Sam. (2003). Teaching with Fire: Poetry that sustains the power to teach.

Music. Purchase/download audio files from I-Tunes or your preferred software distributor:

1. “Flowers Are Red” by Harry Chapin
2. “Salt” by Liz Wright
3. “Wide Awake” by Tuck and Patti
4. “The Human Touch” by Nina Simone
5. “Beau Soir” (instrumental) by Debussy

Supporting documents:

Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA). (2008). Current practices from UU Religious Educators shared at their 2008 Fall Conference.

Course Outcomes

Student will be able to:

- Develop a social justice curriculum that promotes more inclusive, democratic habits of heart and mind;
- Employ the lens of “multicultural competency” in curriculum development;
- Form a “learning community” around a social cause, unjust practice or ideology
- Nuance learning experiences with a sensitivity toward learning styles, preferences, cultural norms, and socially constructed identities (such as race, class, sexual orientation, etc.);
- Incorporate anti-racist/anti-oppressive competencies into learning experiences;
- Integrate the arts/aesthetic learning into learning experiences;
- Employ qualitative research design methodologies in service of social change;
- Model how to incorporate spiritual practices to support individual and group learning;
- Reflect on the role of the teacher in the development of learning experiences.

Assignments

Pre-Course Work

Students will be expected to read and engage with all texts prior to the course. A daily agenda for the August session will be available on Moodle, which will help you gauge your preparation schedule, as well as provide a framework for thinking about the coursework. Students will need to prepare two documents prior to the course (**due: August 7, 2009**):

1. 1-2 page “outline” of the curriculum you wish to focus upon in the course. See Moodle for the template you will need to use.
2. 2-page essay that responds to the questions:
 - Write about an experience when someone tried to teach YOU a moral lesson and it failed.
 - Write about an experience when YOU tried to teach a moral lesson to another person and your attempt failed.

Final Assignment

Due October 1, 2009. Submit a curriculum design that *transforms* (per Mezirow) an attitude, behavior or way of thinking/feeling. Try out your curriculum design in your local setting. Share what you learned about “teaching for change” with the members of

your class. Details and logistics for the project will be available during the course of the week.

Posting Assignments

All materials will be posted on the Meadville Lombard electronic forum, Moodle, by the deadline date. Complications must be negotiated, in advance, with the instructor, Mark Hicks, via e-mail, mhicks@meadville.edu.

Statement Regarding Adaptation or Accommodation

NOTE: Students experience difficulty in this course for a variety of reasons. If you need course adaptations or accommodations because you are differently abled, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible. Likewise, see me if you encounter difficulty with the course or feel that you could be performing at a higher level, or have a learning style issue that provides a challenge. As an instructor, my obligation is to ensure that the work you encounter is relevant to your needs and is accessible. Unless you negotiate inadequate conditions, I will assume your learning needs are being met. . The MLTS Chaplin, Nan Hobart, is also available in the Student Services Office, x238, for spiritual support.

Mark A. Hicks is the MacLean Professorship of Religious Education at Meadville Lombard Theological School and a former associate professor of Educational Transformation at George Mason University. He holds a doctorate degree in philosophy and education and a Master's degree in higher and adult education, both from Columbia University in New York City. As a teacher, musician, social activist, administrator and organizational change consultant, he is recognized nationally for creating curriculum and educational experiences that promote forms of robust reflection that leads to self-knowledge and social change. He is a lay leader at All Souls Church, Unitarian in Washington, DC.