

## **Teaching Life's Essentials - Happiness**

**EDUU 9987**

**1 Semester Credit/Unit**

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### **Syllabus**

#### **Course Overview**

Welcome to **Teaching Life's Essentials - Happiness**. This class was created as part of a seven course series entitled **Teaching Life's Essentials**. The other courses in the series are:

- **Compassion**
- **Curiosity**
- **Resilience**
- **Growth Mindset**
- **Inspiration**
- **Tolerance**

Isn't it true that great teachers are born not made? We say "not at all". With the guidance of the courses in this series, you can take your teaching to a new level; one that brings the highest degree of satisfaction to yourself and your students. Great teachers are remembered not for the knowledge they impart but for the way they encourage and lift their students' achievement, not just in a subject, but in the important skills of living a fulfilling life. These skills of happiness, of inspiration, compassion, curiosity and resilience are essential for both the learner and the teacher. This course will bring research to inform along with techniques and activities to imbue your delivery of required curriculum with the essence of greatness-both yours and your students'.

Teachers will read and view research that confirms the importance of developing certain skills and practices to bring about happiness. Following directed practice activities, they will engage in a positive attitude and lifestyle that can serve as a model for their students.

#### **Course Objectives**

In this course participants will have an opportunity to:

1. Read and study given website resources
2. Practice skills that can lead to a happy life style
3. Model their happy life style to their students
4. Project success in creating a happy classroom
5. Communicate with other teachers about happiness

## Course Relation to Professional Standards

This course aligns to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

TEACHERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR MANAGING AND MONITORING STUDENT LEARNING.

- a) Teachers Call on Multiple Methods to Meet Their Instructional Goals
- b) Teachers Value Student Engagement
- c) Teachers Engage Students in the Learning Process

TEACHERS ARE MEMBERS OF LEARNING COMMUNITIES

- a) Teachers Use Feedback and Research to Improve Their Practice and Positively Impact Student Learning

This course aligns with National Student Standards

NL-Eng-K12.1 READING FOR PERSPECTIVE

- a) Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, themselves, and of the cultures of the US and the world...

NL-ENG-K12.2 UNDERSTANDING THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE

- a) Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g. philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of the human experience.

## How to Submit Coursework

**Preparation:** Prepare assignments in either Word or PDF formatting. Mac users of Page can save their work as a Word file. Make sure you place your full name, course number and assignment category at the top of each page. Place all **A** assignments in one document. Do the same for **B** assignments.

**Document names:** Name each document with your last name and assignment letter (BrownAssignmentsR; BrownAssignmentsA; BrownAssignmentsB).

Place each completed document in the corresponding assignment submit area. You will receive feedback from your instructor, but don't wait for it to continue with your coursework. **Forum Postings:** Submit all Forum postings using the Forum associated with your course. Label each discussion post with the number of the assignment it fulfills.

Each completed assignment in this course is submitted to the instructor for review. You will receive feedback from your instructor within 2-5 days indicating successful completion of the assignment or the need for revision. Assignment grades will be averaged for the final course grade.

Grading rubrics for written projects and for presentation projects are found in this document.

## Course Assignments

There are 3 assignments to turn in: Assignments **R, A, B** and Forum **R2-R3**

### **R - Resources Links**

**R1.** Reflect on a time/event when you felt happy or had a sense of well-being. Write 1-2 pages, addressing the following questions/statements:

- Describe the time/event when you felt happy or had a sense of well-being.
- Explain why these feelings occurred.
- What conditions do you believe need to be in place for happiness to occur in someone's life.

### **Resources Links**

[What happiness is](#)

[What Makes People Happy](#)

[How to Find Happiness](#)

[What is Happiness and Why it is Important](#)

[Tips for Happiness in Daily Life](#)

[27 Common Things That Prevent Our Happiness](#)

### **Forum R2-R3 - Read and Study all of the articles in the Resources Section above**

**R2.** Choose three of the articles above, reflecting on the significance of the article to you as a person and as an educator. Make at least **three posts** on the Forum that address the most interesting, challenging or important ideas you found in the Resource articles.

**R3.** Respond to at least **two posts** by other students if available.

### **A - Read and study the website links below and then respond to A1 – A11 in one document**

- [Happiness is a Skill](#)
- [Happiness is a Skill - YouTube](#)

For one week **consciously** spend each day being warm and friendly to **EVERYONE** you encounter. Smile and whenever possible make a **positive** comment. Prepare for this endeavor by identifying general statements you can make to strangers – like “How are you today?” If the response is “Fine” you could respond with a smile, “Glad to hear it” and then be on your way. Respond to their children, pets or anything you notice that could make a person feel recognized. Make upbeat small talk with the grocery clerk and every service person you come in contact with. At the end of each of the seven days make comments in a *Positive Comments Journal* regarding your feelings and thoughts about that day and your developing skill.

**A1.** Submit your *Positive Comments Journal*.

**A2.** At the conclusion of the week are you a happier person? Discuss.

**A3.** Did the behavior practiced during that week become a habit? Discuss.

## **Mirror exercise**

The objective is to see yourself as your students see you. Practice greeting your students as you look into a mirror. Study and adjust your facial and body language to correspond in a natural cheerful way with positive and encouraging words. Do the mirror exercise for two minutes. Take a break and repeat for another two minutes. Repeat this routine several times.

**A4.** How did you feel after completing the mirror exercise?

**A5.** Do you think it may help you come across to your students as a cheerful, caring, friendly and happy teacher? Explain

**You cannot afford to lose it in the classroom at any time and you are most vulnerable when a student pushes your buttons. To keep in control during these challenging moments, you must first be fully aware of what pushes your button(s).**

**A6.** List here 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 happy, positive and nurturing self.

**A7.** Now, while you are calm and not confronted with insults, write out a response for every button pushing statement listed in A6.

**A8.** Look in the mirror and verbalize the insults listed in A6 over and over again until you feel you have become desensitized to them. Do you think it may help you remain cool when students disrespect you? Explain.

**A9.** Repeat the insults facing the mirror again but this time respond with your written rejoinders along with warm facial and body language to correspond with what you are verbalizing. Remember, developing a skill takes practice. Relate your experience.

**A10.** A happy 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 with some humor and a smile. You then can deal with discipline (if needed) – remember the whole class is watching and you are the model for good behavior. This is easier said than done and takes practice. Are you ready? Explain.

**A11.** How do your warm experiences and the mirror exercises fit in with the two above website links?

**You are a role model - BE a happy one – It's contagious!**

**B - Read and study the website links below and then respond to B1 – B6 in one document**

- [Every Kid Needs A Champion](#)
- [Why We Should Embrace Mistakes in School](#)
- [Teacher Role Models: How to Help Students Who Need it the Most](#)
- [25 Ways Teachers Can Be Role Models](#)

**Happy teachers model their mistakes by showing that it's ok to make them**

A local newspaper has written a story about your class and the main reason that the students in your class are so happy. The thrust of the article is that the students are not afraid to make a mistake. They are not afraid because you have made it ok through the playful way you have acknowledged your own mistakes.

**B1.** Write the article that appeared in the newspaper

\* Have fun with this fantasy assignment. Be imaginative, creative and inspirational. The idea is that projected fantasies can create some reality and that some unhappy school kids are distressed because they live in fear that they are going to make a mistake. You have made them happy because they no longer fear making mistakes. It may be fiction now but it could be reality tomorrow!

**B2.** Do you think Rita Pierson is correct when she says that students don't learn from teachers they don't like? Explain.

**B3.** Justify this statement – Contagiously happy teachers will be liked by their students who will learn from them.

Like Rita Pierson you have been asked to give a TED Talk on *Happiness* and how to teach it.

**B4.** Compose the introduction of your talk

**B5.** Outline the body

**B6.** Write out the conclusion

## End of Course

### Course Assessment Rubric

<b>EXCELLENT</b> Meets or Exceeds Course Objectives: A to A-	<b>ACCEPTABLE</b> Majority of Work Meets Course Objectives; B+ to B-	<b>NOT ACCEPTABLE</b> Needs Considerable Improvement: Resubmit Work Suggested: C or below
All work is very well organized.	Most work is generally well organized.	Work shows little or no organization.
Answers are well thought out and demonstrates reflection on the material.	Answers are complete and demonstrate some reflection on the material.	Answers are brief and do not demonstrate any reflection on the material.
Assignment use specific examples or references from multiple sources.	Assignment use specific examples or references from just a few sources.	Assignment do not use specific examples or references from the readings.
All assignment are completed using complete sentences.	The majority of the assignments are completed using complete sentences.	Assignments are not completed in complete sentences.
Work is free of spelling and/or grammatical errors.	Work has few spelling and/or grammatical errors.	Work has numerous spelling and/or grammatical errors.