



**Vermont State
University**

“Dare To Be Me” - Teaching and Learning with the Heart, Body, and Mind

Professional Development Course for Educators

Syllabus

2023-24 School Year

Course Title: “Dare To Be Me” - Teaching and Learning with the Heart, Body, and Mind

Number of Credits: 3

Level: graduate

Course Code: EDU 5515 C04

Dates: One Saturday a month (see dates below) spread across the school year from October 2023 to May 2024.

Oct. 14, 2023

Nov. 4, 2023

Dec. 2, 2023

Jan. 6, 2024

Feb. 3, 2024

March 9, 2024

April 6, 2024

May 18, 2024

Times: 10am - 3:30pm

Format: In-Person

Location: Hazen Union School, 126 Hazen Union Drive, Hardwick, VT 05843

Instructor: Anja Pfeffer

Mobile Phone: 802-681-3662

Email Address: circleofharmonylearningcenter@gmail.com

Expectation: Students enrolled in this course will complete a series of activities, readings, and reflections before, during and/or after any scheduled face-to-face or synchronous sessions. This will assure that Carnegie expectations for a credited course, both new learning and hours of outside preparation, are sufficiently met.

Course Description: “Dare To Be Me” (DTBM) is a pedagogical philosophy and practice that invites students and teachers to embark on a personal and educational journey of courage, growth, belonging, and expression. It aims to turn the traditional public school system on its head by fostering *aliveness* through exploration and dialogue grounded in deep connection to place, to each other, and to their full selves. In this course, educators engage in a process of self-discovery and empowerment so they can help promote a collaborative school culture that is centered on holistic wellbeing. Participants will spend active time in Nature, learn a variety of mindfulness activities, practice quiet introspection, and discuss how their own and their students’ mental, physical and emotional wellbeing impacts classroom culture and academic achievement. Through different forms of reflective journaling, they will form a vision of who they want to be as a teacher and colleague.

This course will be held at Hazen Union School and on the Hardwick Trails and will go throughout the whole school year. Most of the time will be spent outside, even in winter. Weather appropriate clothing is therefore absolutely necessary. Participants will also be asked to sign a liability waiver on the first day of the class.

Audience: All Educators (including PK-12 teachers, administrators, guidance counselors, school-based clinicians, school nurses, school support staff (limited to 12 participants))

Course Objectives:

- I can attune to my own and other people’s physical, mental and emotional needs.
- I can create a classroom and school environment that builds the foundation for wellbeing through awareness of self and others, deep listening, caring, and respect.
- I can synthesize deep connection to the natural world, contemplative and mindfulness practice, identity exploration, adventure and movement into activities that nurture the whole heart-body-mind system.

- I can cultivate an “I can” attitude within my classroom and within our school community.
- I can develop strong relationships with students and colleagues.

Primary Methods of Instruction: Participants will examine what “holistic wellbeing” means to them as human beings and as educators. They will spend active time in Nature, learn a variety of mindfulness activities, engage in quiet introspection, and discuss how their own and their students' mental, physical and emotional wellbeing impacts school culture and academic achievement. Through different forms of reflective journaling, they will form a vision of who they want to be as a teacher and colleague.

Required Readings:

Excerpts from the recommended readings and beyond (printed copies will be provided)

Recommended Readings:

Brackett, M. (2019). *Permission to feel: The power of emotional intelligence to achieve well-being and success*. Celadon Books.

Brown, B. (2021). *Atlas of the heart: Mapping meaningful connection and the language of human experience*. Penguin Random House.

Heath, C., & Heath, D. (2010). *Switch: How to change things when change is hard*. Crown Publishing.

Kagge, E. (2020). *Walking: One step at a time*. Vintage Books.

Menakem, R. (2017). *My grandmother's hands: Racialized trauma and the pathway to mending our hearts and bodies*. Central Recovery Press.

Muhammad, G. (2023) *Unearthing joy: A guide to culturally and historically responsive teaching and learning*. Scholastic Inc.

Murphy Paul, A. (2021). *The extended mind: The power of thinking outside the brain*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing.

Shalaby, C. (2017). *Troublemakers: Lessons in freedom from young children at school*. The New Press.

Shevrin Venet, A. (2021). *Equity-centered trauma-informed education*. W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Su, F. (2020). *Mathematics for human flourishing*. Yale University Press.

Van Der Kolk, B. (2014). *The body keeps the score: Brain, mind, and body in the healing of trauma*. Penguin Books.

Wall Kimmerer, R. (2013). *Braiding sweetgrass: Indigenous wisdom, scientific knowledge, and the teachings of plants*. Milkweed Editions.

Walker Leslie, C. (2015). *The curious nature guide: Explore the natural wonders all around you*. Storey Publishing.

Welling, T. (2014). *Writing wild: Forming a creative partnership with nature*. New World Library.

Assignments:

- Participants will keep a weekly journal in which they reflect on the concepts of the course and how they apply to their daily work with students.
- Participants will lead group discussions on specific topics related to the readings.
- Participants will design and facilitate group activities that address specific course objectives.

Projects:

1. “Action Project” (Participants design/plan a project that puts at least one aspect of their vision in action during the following school year. These projects are specific to each participant’s population of students and subject area.). Due at midnight on Saturday, June 8, 2024.
2. “Dare To Be Me - My Journey and Vision Forward” (8-10 page Reflective Essay; complementary poetry and art strongly encouraged). Due at midnight on Saturday, June 15, 2024.

Evaluation: Ongoing evaluation by the instructor throughout the course & narrative self-evaluation at the end of the course.

Grading: Grading will be based on active participation in sessions, completion of assignments, and both projects.

Castleton Academic Policies

Grading Policy:

Grades are indicated by letters with a designated “quality point” value assigned to each as follows:

A	4.0
A-	3.7
B+	3.3
B	3.0
B-	2.7
C+	2.3

Additional grading information can be found in the Castleton University Graduate Catalog, under Academic Policies, accessible online at:

<http://catalog.castleton.edu/index.php>

Academic Honesty Policy:

Castleton University is a learning institution committed to the highest standards of scholarly conduct. The students, faculty, and administration make up a scholarly community whose integrity and success necessarily stem from a mutually agreed upon code of academic standards and principles that promote trust and honesty and prohibit the attempt to gain unfair academic advantage. Membership in the Castleton community means sharing responsibility for upholding and safeguarding these academic standards and principles.

Any violation of academic honesty will be considered cheating and will be dealt with accordingly by the appropriate authorities.

For more information click the link below to access the Castleton University Graduate Catalog Academic Policy section:

http://catalog.castleton.edu/content.php?catoid=16&navoid=1204#Academic_Honesty

Use and Ownership of Copyrighted Materials:

For information and guidance, faculty and students are referred to the Vermont State College Manual of Policy and Procedures as it relates to the use and ownership of copyrighted materials. Guidelines are set out in Policy 416, accessible online at the following address:

<http://www.castleton.edu/library/information-literacy-graduation-standard/information-literacy-tutorial/information-ethics-citing-sources-and-fair-use/>

Accommodations:

Castleton is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to qualified students with disabilities so that no such student shall, by reason of a disability, be excluded from participating in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs or activities of Castleton University. For more information, please contact the Coordinator of Disability Services, at (802) 468-1428.

Course Drop Policy:

Castleton University offers courses to educators with the expectation that participants will complete the course. However, the University realizes circumstances arise in one's personal life that may cause disruptions. **The policy for dropping a course is that a participant will notify the instructor in writing of the intent to withdraw from the course. The withdrawal notice should be made within the first week of the course and should include the reason for withdrawing.** After week one, changes in class status will be considered for health, bereavement, and personal or emergency situations only. Those who withdraw without adhering to this policy may receive a failing grade on their transcript and/or be liable for associated course costs. For more Academic Policy information, check the link below to access the Castleton University Graduate Catalog: <http://catalog.castleton.edu/content.php?catoid=23&navoid=2159>

Transcript Request:

www.castleton.edu/transcripts