



**Vermont State
University**

Center for Schools

Fall 2024

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

Number of Credits: 3 credits (45 hours)

Level: Graduate

Course Code: EDX 5710 S04

Dates: One Saturday a month (see dates below) spread across the school year from October 2024 to May 2025.

Oct. 5, 2024

Nov. 2, 2024

Dec. 7, 2024

Jan. 4, 2025

Feb. 1, 2025

March 8, 2025

April 5, 2025

May 3, 2025

Times: 10am - 3:30pm

Format: In-person

Remote Learning Technologies: none

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

Instructor: Anja Pfeffer, M.A.Ed.

Sponsor: VTSU Center for Schools

Publicize my Course on the Castleton website: Yes No

Course Cost to Student: \$1,195

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. At least half of each class 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 Goals:

- Taking time to be, reflect, and connect with self and other educators
- Identifying and learning how to put into practice the four pillars of Dare To Be Me:
 - Fostering courage (Dare)
 - Adopting a growth mindset (To)
 - Developing a sense of belonging (Be)
 - Nurturing self-expression (Me)
- Building a repertoire of strategies to bring a sense of joy and aliveness into the classroom
- Experiencing a renewed sense of belonging and purpose

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.

Course Schedule:

Date	Time	Topic
Sat, 10/5/24	10 - 3:30	Presencing: What brought us here?
Sat, 11/2/24	10 - 3:30	Noticing: Who are we?
Sat, 12/7/24	10 - 3:30	Embodied Listening: How are we showing up?
Sat, 1/4/25	10 - 3:30	Intersecting Synchronicity and Individuality: Where is the "I" in the "we?"
Sat, 2/1/25	10 - 3:30	Reflecting: What do we need to re-learn?
Sat, 3/8/25	10 - 3:30	Capacity Building: How do we want to grow?
Sat, 4/5/25	10 - 3:30	Visioning: Where are we going?
Sat, 5/3/25	10 - 3:30	Connecting: How will we sustain the momentum?

Instructor Biography:

Anja Pfeffer has been an educator in Vermont public schools for over 22 years. With the help of her 2021 Rowland Fellowship, she developed Dare To Be Me, a holistic pedagogy that centers the heart-body-mind system of students and teachers alike and that fosters a deep appreciation for the interconnectedness of all beings. After graduating from Prescott College with a Master of Arts in Equine-Assisted Experiential Education in 2016, she developed Walking With Horses: a program that brings humans and horses together to build mutually enriching relationships grounded in a heightened sense of awareness, respect, and connection. She has been offering Walking With Horses and Dare To Be Me professional development courses since 2018 and



continues to dedicate her personal and professional studies to the transformation of schools into places where students and adults co-create a culture of healing and thriving.

Required Readings/Texts: Excerpts from the recommended readings and beyond (copies will be provided by the instructor)

Other Suggested Readings/Texts:

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.

Hanh, T. N. (2015). *How to walk*. Parallax Press.

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

Joshi Hansen, U. (2021). *The future of smart: How our education system needs to change to help all young people thrive*. Capucia, LLC.

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

Keltner, D. (2023) *Awe: The new science of everyday wonder and how it can transform your life*. Penguin 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 facilitate group activities that address specific course objectives.
- Participants will submit a course evaluation to VTSU no later than May 30, 2025.

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 Friday, May 30, 2025.
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 Friday, May 30, 2025.

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.

Vermont State University (VTSU) 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

A grade of **B- or better** must be achieved to count this course toward a graduate degree at VTSU. For questions on transfer pathways, please contact your contact within VTSU’s Department of Education. Additional grading information can be found in the VTSU Graduate Catalog under Academic Policies, Credits & Grading: <https://catalog.vermontstate.edu/content.php?catoid=8&navoid=119>

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.

These course requirements can be met through a combination of Academic Engagement and Academic Preparation.

Academic Engagement is instructor-led instruction and may include but is not limited to: participating in synchronous class activities, listening to class lectures or webinars (synchronous or asynchronous), taking an exam, participating in an interactive tutorial, conducting instructor-led laboratory experiments, contributing to an academic discussion (online, virtual, or in-person), submitting an academic assignment, initiating contact with an instructor to ask a question about the academic subject studied in the course, or similar academic activity.

Academic Preparation is independently conducted by the student and may include but is not limited to: research, reading, rehearsing, study time, and completing assignments and projects.

Academic Honesty Policy

Vermont State University upholds high standards of academic integrity from all community members. Academic integrity encompasses honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and the courage to act on these fundamental values (International Center for Academic Integrity [ICAI], 2021; The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity, 3rd ed.). A student who fails to uphold these values may experience academic consequences including a grade of F, indicating no credit, for assignments or courses, or dismissal from the University. Examples of failure to uphold academic integrity may include using unauthorized aids to complete or enhance academic work, copying another person's work on exams, quizzes, or assignments, or engaging in other forms of plagiarism. To plagiarize is to use someone else's words or ideas without full and proper citation and to present them as one's own. The sharing of VTSU password and login credentials to misrepresent oneself in online learning is a violation of academic integrity. Violations need not be intentional in nature. All members of the VTSU community are expected to investigate and understand their responsibility to act with integrity, and to seek assistance when uncertain. For more information, please see the VTSU Graduate Catalog Academic Integrity Policy: <https://catalog.vermontstate.edu/content.php?catoid=8&navoid=119#academic-integrity>

Use and Ownership of Copyrighted Materials

For information and guidance, faculty and students are referred to the Vermont State Colleges Manual of Policy and Procedures annual disclosure regarding illegal file sharing and the Higher Education Opportunity Act, accessible online at the following address:

<https://www.vsc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/VSC-Annual-Notice.pdf>

Accommodations

VTSU 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 VTSU. If you have questions about these services, please email disabilityservices@vermontstate.edu or request appointments through the Portal or on the [Disability Services web page](#).

Course Drop & Withdrawal Policies

Vermont State University (VTSU) Center for Schools offers courses to educators with the expectation that registrants will complete the course. However, the university realizes circumstances arise in one's personal life that may cause disruptions. Please review the course drop and withdrawal policies detailed below very carefully.

Drop Policy

For a course that is **7 weeks or less** in duration, a student can **drop** the course **within the first seven days** for any reason. For a course that is **more than 7 weeks in duration**, a student can drop the course **within the first 14 days** for any reason. The course **will NOT appear on a transcript** and students can expect a full refund for any tuition paid.

The student must email a drop notification to the instructor and submit a Center for Schools drop request form at this link: . Once this drop period detailed above has passed, drop requests will no longer be honored.

Withdrawal Policy

After the initial drop periods detailed above have passed, but *before 60%* of the course has taken place, a student can ***withdraw*** from a course. The course **will appear on the student transcript with a “W”** and NO refund will be issued. The student must email a ***withdrawal*** request to the instructor and complete the withdrawal request form at this link: before 60% of the course has passed.

After 60% of the course has passed, withdrawals are NO longer permitted. At this point, a student has 3 options:

1. Complete the course as originally planned.
2. Request a formal extension from the instructor and the university, which if granted, would allow an additional 7 weeks to complete the coursework.
3. Accept a final grade based on the work completed to date, even if it means a failing grade.

Those who withdraw without adhering to the policies described above may receive a failing grade on their transcript and/or be liable for associated course costs. Please direct any questions to your instructor and to cfs@vermontstate.edu

Transcript Request:

www.vermontstate.edu/transcripts

Please direct transcript request questions to registrar@vermontstate.edu.