



## **Civil Discourse in the Classroom: Promoting Social Justice through Middle and High School Texts**

**Course Description:** With a renewed push to increase academic performance in the classroom, genuine conversations regarding social justice issues often get pushed to the side for assessments and data collection. While many district mission statements elude to the idea that the purpose of education is to develop a socially-aware citizenry, the space for that learning and development to occur is minimal, at best. For these conversations to occur, teachers need to actively select texts that engage students in critical thinking while also utilizing strategies to create civil discourse surrounding topics which are often controversial.

The purpose of this course is to challenge teachers to intertwine purposeful texts and conversations around social justice into their existing curriculum and learning goals. In this class, participants will reflect on the challenges of engaging students in authentic conversations regarding social justice and, at the time same, learn about the necessity of integrating critical consciousness in their curriculum. Participants will learn about privilege, civil discourse, and strategies for fostering conversations the classroom.

At the end of this course, participants will reflect on new learning in this course and develop an implementation plan to utilize in their work.

**Clock Hours / Continuing Education Units: 10**

### **Learning Objectives:**

- Describe the challenges that affect a teacher’s ability to promote social justice in the classroom
- Identify how privilege can dictate how curricular decisions are made and critical conversations are facilitated in the classroom
- Integrate effective strategies for facilitating civil discourse in the classroom
- Develop new lessons that can be used in the classroom and professional development setting

**Course Requirements:** To receive full credit for the course, participants must complete ALL assignments. Failure to complete all assignments will result in a non-passing grade

### **Getting Started:**

- After registering for the course, you will be sent an email with the website address, password and course key you need to access your online course, along with login instructions.
- Access each assignment through the course home page. All assignments will be submitted through the Moodle platform on each respective assignment page.
- Please save a backup copy of all course assignments and completed work.

### **Course Outline:**

<b>Lesson Number</b>	<b>Lesson Description</b>	<b>Clock Hours</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Introductions and Overview:</b> Take the time to get to know the class layout, read over the Help section, and review any other materials present in the class to get started. Take your time!	0.2 Hours
<b>2</b>	<b>Discussion: What Makes Teaching Tough Topics Uncomfortable –</b> Participants will reflect on their own teaching experiences and reflect on the difficulties associated with teaching tough and controversial topics.	0.85 Hours
<b>3</b>	<b>Discussion: Critical Consciousness:</b> Participants will review several resources and respond to the concept of critical consciousness in their own classrooms.	0.85 Hours

4	<b>Discussion: What Is Privilege</b> – In order to develop an understanding for why teaching social justice matters, participants will reflect on what privilege is and how that affects our understanding of our students, historical events, and perspectives from under-represented populations.	0.85 Hours
5	<b>Discussion: Civil Discourse</b> – Participants will reflect on several resources for the importance of engaging in civil discourse and the importance of doing so in the classroom.	0.85 Hours
6	<b>Discussion: Fostering Classroom Conversation – Part 1:</b> Participants will reflect on the specific strategies used in classrooms to engage in civil discourse and conversations surrounding social justice through texts and literature.	0.85 Hours
7	<b>Discussion: Fostering Classroom Conversation – Part 2:</b> Participants will reflect on the Question Formulation Technique (QFT) and how it can be integrated into your curriculum.	0.85 Hours
8	<b>Discussion: Teaching Social Justice</b> – In this lesson, participant will review four different approaches to infusing student voice and social justice into their school curriculum. They will reflect on where their curriculum lands and how they can make improvements to their curriculum.	0.85 Hours
9	<b>The Opposition’s Response</b> – In this lesson, participants will reflect on the challenges associated with incorporating social justice books, including an analysis of books that have been banned in the past. Participants will reflect on the challenging conversations they have had with educators and coworkers.	0.85 Hours
10	<b>Course Reflection:</b> In this lesson, participants will write a summary of their reflections throughout the course, including new learnings	1.00 Hours
11	<b>Implementation Plan:</b> For this final portion of the course, participants will develop a lesson that can be utilized in the classroom, homeroom period, or professional development training that encompasses the new learnings within this course.	2.00 Hours
<b>TOTAL HOURS</b>		10 Hours

**Student Requirements and Assessment:** No outside materials will be required for the completion of this course. Participants will be assessed in three different ways:

- Quizzes:** Participants are required to complete a series of electronic quizzes to assess their understanding. Participants can earn up to 64 points total for the course. Each quiz may be taken up to three times, with the highest score recorded in the final grade. All quizzes must be completed in order to earn credit.
- Course Reflection:** Participants will be required to write a reflection summarizing their new learnings within the course. Participants can earn up to 10 points total for the reflection. The reflection will be graded using the following rubric:

Grading Rubric for Discussion Forums		
		Points
Critical Thinking	Makes connections to the other content and real-life that are supported by reference(s) and/or example(s)	2
	Offers new ideas, connections, or applications	1
	Expresses and justifies personal opinion	1
Assignment Specific Criteria	Addresses all parts of the reflection	6
Total Points Possible		10

- 3. Implementation Plan:** Participants will construct an implementation plan for how their new knowledge can be directly implemented into the classroom, training setting, or professional development environment. Implementation plans will be graded using the following rubric:

Grading Rubric for Implementation Plan		
		Points
Background Information	Lesson / Title Identified	1
	Target Audience and Subject/Course Setting Identified	1
	Learning Goals are measurable objectives students are expected to meet by the end of the lesson.	2
	Lesson Ties to Specific State Standards for Students, Educators, or Professionals	2
	Materials Listed	1
Lesson Plan	<i>Engage:</i> Lesson hooks audience and introduces lesson effectively.	5
	<i>Explore and Explain:</i> Lesson actively engages participants in learning new material using best practices.	5
	<i>Evaluate:</i> Lesson effectively assesses participant understanding.	5
Implementation	Writing is clear, well developed, and organized. No or few grammar and spelling errors	2
	Is realistic in their approach – understands limitations may exist	2
<b>Total Points Possible</b>		<b>26</b>

**Grading Scale:**

100-80% (80-100 Points)	Pass
79%-Below (<80 points)	No Pass

**Americans with Disabilities Act:** If you are a student with a disability and require any auxiliary aids, services, or other accommodations for this class, please email [academy@iowasafeschools.org](mailto:academy@iowasafeschools.org) or call 515.381.0588.

**Professional Development:** Prior to purchasing a course registration, it is your responsibility to ensure that National Safe Schools Convening Online Academy coursework satisfies the license renewal requirements for your state and/or district.