

# Syllabus

## Teaching With Discussions

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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:00-12:30 p.m. or by appointment

### **Overview and Goals:**

As educators, we know a great deal about how "language in action" works to induct students into rigorous intellectual practices, and how, on the contrary, it can serve to shut students out of the academic conversation. But simply getting students to talk (in recitation sessions, in small cooperative groups, or in large, teacher-guided group discussion) does not guarantee that the talk will be productive. In order for talk to promote rigorous thinking and problem solving that leads to high quality academic research and writing, talk must be accountable-along several dimensions. The talk must be accountable to the classroom community, to appropriate evidence, and to standards of rigorous thinking in that particular discipline. Accountable classroom talk includes and supports all learners as participants in the conversation, not just native English speakers or the economically and academically advantaged students. And crucially, for talk to be productive, instructors must be able to link – in practice – their academic purposes (content), the design of tasks/activities, and the talk they orchestrate. This course is about “Accountable Talk” – what it is, what it looks like across a range of disciplines, and how to make it happen reliably in one’s classroom teaching.

In this class, you will develop tools with which to reflect on your own teaching practice and your students’ learning. You will develop the tools for looking closely at the culture developed in your class, the design of good framing questions or tasks, what it means to enact them well, and how to investigate systematically the learning outcomes of those tasks or units of study. This will include learning how to work with audio and video records of your work as a resource for on-going reflection and improvement as an instructor. The final project will involve creating a CD-ROM portfolio of your teaching that demonstrates your ability to reflect critically on your goals and effectiveness as an instructor – as someone who values teaching as well as academic scholarship.

### **Time and Place:**

The class will meet for 7 weeks, on Tuesdays, 2-4 p.m. in the Small Conference Room of the Education Department at Clark University. The first session is on October 28.

Note: This course is a 1-credit course in the Teaching Certificate Program. You must check with your graduate department to see if you can count this credit as part of your graduate program.

### **Required and Recommended Texts:**

Required (available at the Clark/Tatnuck Bookstore):

- Bean, John C. (2001). Engaging Ideas: The Professor’s Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking, and Active Learning in the Classroom. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Accountable Talk: Classroom Conversation that Works. (3 CD-ROM set). (handed out in class).

Recommended (available via the National Research Council website):

•Science Teaching Reconsidered. Committee on Undergraduate Science Education (1997). Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.

**Week One**  
**Tuesday, October 28**

Introduction to class, goals, requirements, and one another.

An overview of Accountable Talk

Tools for reflecting on classroom practice

The value of videotaping

The development of an “e-folio”

An introduction to Shared Inquiry: Reading and discussing “A Game of Catch”

**Week Two**  
**Tuesday, November 4**

Moving from Instructional Purposes, to Tasks, to Talk

Talk Format Trade-Offs: Lecture, Discussion, Recitation, Group Work

Emphasis on Lectures

Videos from the Bok Center

Readings:

•Accountable Talk: Classroom Conversations that Work (E-book, Chapters 1, 2, and 3, text only, but videos are optional – all dealing with K-12 classrooms)

**Week Three**  
**Tuesday, November 11**

Class meets in Computer Lab – Jonas Clark 103 – 3:30-5:00 p.m. (Note special time)

An Introduction to PowerPoint

The role of digital technologies in teaching and reflecting on teaching

Readings:

•Engaging Ideas: Chapter 1, pp. 1-12.

•Science Teaching Reconsidered: pp. 1-20 (Xerox to be handed out in class on Nov. 4<sup>th</sup>)

**Week Four**  
**Tuesday, November 18**

Group Work

Equity and Access

Readings: (all very short)

•Accountable Talk: Classroom Conversations that Work (E-book, Chapter 4, text and videos)

•Working in Groups (handout from the Bok Center)

•Classroom Discourse: The IRE Sequence, Revoicing, and Participant Frameworks (PDF file on the AT e-book)

•Tip for Teachers: 20 Ways to Make Lectures More Participatory

- Women and Men in the Classroom: Inequality and Its Remedies (handout from the Bok Center)
- Sensitivity to Women in the Contemporary Classroom (handout from the Bok Center)

**Week Five**  
**Tuesday, November 25**

Whole Group Discussion  
Formative Assessment  
Working on the e-folios

Readings:

- Position-Driven Discussion (PDF file on AT e-book)
- Newton, One-on-One (handout from Eric Mazur’s physics class at Harvard)
- Managing Hot Moments in the Classroom (handout from the Bok Center)
- The Muddiest Point and other Classroom Assessment Techniques (handout from Cross and Angelo)

**Week Six**  
**Tuesday, December 2**

- Class presentations of teaching video and analysis

**Week Seven**  
**Tuesday, December 9**

- Class presentations of teaching video and analysis

**Grading:**

Attendance and Active participation in class discussions	20%
Teaching Journal	20%
PP presentations	10%
Video tape presentation and reflection	20%
E-Portfolio	30%

•Teaching Journal – This is an informal notebook (or electronic journal) in which you document and reflect on your current teaching, in light of readings and discussions in class. You may use any format or style you like. I will collect it at the end of the course, looking to see the seriousness and depth of your engagement with course material.

• Everyone will prepare at least two PP presentations (with another member of the class), discussing and extending the readings for that session, and leading a discussion based on them.

•Everyone will make at least two video tapes (early and late) of their teaching, incorporating group discussion, and reflect on the “talk” that occurs in light of course constructs, such as talk formats, talk moves, and formative assessment of student learning.

•Final product: an electronic portfolio, burned on a CD, due by 5:00 p.m. on December 16. No late e-folios accepted.