

What you need to do...

Course Structure/Requirements

Your sources of information for this course include knowledge, understanding and insights gleaned from analytical reading, carrying out a broad range of experiential activities, reflection on your insights and experience as you read and carry out activities, and reflection on life experiences.

There will be a strong emphasis on engaging with different educational processes during this course and reflecting on how they contribute to or inhibit learning when we acknowledge the impact of all forms of violence on learning. All sources of knowledge on the issue will be equally valued and seen as contributing different facets of understanding of the complex picture of how violence affects learning and how to support learning in a context of violence.

1. Reading

There are key readings for each week. You will get more from the course if you spend some intense reading and/or reflection time. Read these key texts, or if you are already familiar with them you may want to choose readings that interest you from the further readings, put more emphasis on activities, journaling, or you could re-read key texts to reflect and push your own analysis further to develop new insights and understanding.

2. Course Activities

Each two week period try at least **two or three** activities. I strongly encourage you to try to find a small group of people (or even one more person) who will try activities with you – it's much more fun that way and leads to rich reflection and deep insights. You might think about colleagues, friends, children, or partner who would be interested to play and reflect with you... It doesn't have to be the same group each time – try out different combinations and try working alone and notice the differences as you reflect on the experience each time.

A wide range of activities for you to choose from will be included in an activity sheet – posted every two weeks. They include:

- Observation of/reflection on literacy programs/practices
- Reading(watching)/writing fiction (short story, novel, poetry, movies) and biography/documentaries
- Watching/doing movement
- Listening to/creating music
- Observing/creating visual arts
- Reading/writing further critical readings (non-fiction)

The list may lead you to think of other activities which are relevant to what you want to explore in the course. You may prefer to design and experiment with some activities you think up yourself. If possible try several activities from each sheet and take time to reflect on the

experience. You may want to follow one theme throughout the course - such as carrying out a program observation from each activity sheet - or you may want to sample and explore modes with which you are less familiar or less comfortable, or you may choose to primarily stay within a mode you know is effective for your learning. I encourage you though to explore new approaches for some of your activities. You will be invited to post your creations, and extracts from your reflections, throughout the course. We will discuss your experiences with activities and readings online. A detailed posting “Introduction to Activities” will provide you with more information about this range of activities.

3. Journal

You are encouraged to create a journal during this course - you might choose to use words, drawings, charts, collage or any combination of different modes. You might include activities you carry out, reflections – on readings, activities, and the experiences in class – detailed observations.

You will not be expected to show your entire journal to anyone but you are encouraged to post extracts during the course and you will use excerpts from it to teach an insight and understanding that you think is important for others - students, educators, administrators, policy-makers, or researchers - to know, understand, and/or integrate into their practice.

4. Engaging in discussion online

The quality of the course will be largely dictated by the strength of participation of each student online. You are encouraged to post results of carrying out activities, reflections, comments and questions online regularly and to engage with others about what they have posted. In order to create a sense of community one of my first posts will ask you to post some information about yourself. Please post this by the end of **Week 2** at the latest.

As well as general discussion you are also invited (and required if you are taking the course for credit) to post a description of a key struggle and a practice you think is particularly useful for acknowledging and/or addressing and counteracting the impact of violence on learning and to respond to struggles and interesting practices others post. (For more detail see **2** below)

Assignments for Grade

1. Engaging in discussion

Although I often question whether to give any portion of the grade for participation – I am acutely aware that for some, talking - whether in person or online - is a more comfortable exercise and more useful for working out thoughts and understanding than for others – in this course there will be a percentage of the grade assigned to engaging online. I think it is important to build a community of learning – and in an online course if you are silent others cannot learn from your wisdom, your questions, or your struggles.

So “participation” is a request to post even if only extremely briefly (even to say that you cannot

respond) to each week's online activity/activities – and I will try to make clear which specific activities require a response – even if it is only to “pass”.

It is also a request to try to stay present and engage at least three or four times in a two week span. That way we can all learn from each other and I will not be wondering whether you are just too busy, in need of encouragement, in crisis, or disappointed by the direction of the course. If you find yourself unable to participate when the going gets tough you can send me a private email.

Participation is worth 10% of the final grade.

2. Posting a key struggle and a best practice

1. At a time that seems appropriate during the course you should post a key struggle you have when you think about the impacts of violence on learning and/or how to address some aspect of this impact on learning in your setting (or in a setting you hope to work in). You can choose when you post this up to the end of **Week 5**.

You are expected to write a paragraph or two to articulate in detail what your struggle is, what you have tried already, what questions it leads to for you etc. You must also respond at least once with some care and thought to other struggles that are posted.

2. Also at an appropriate time during the course – where it fits in with the course content if possible, but no later than **Week 8**, you should post a description of some way you/your program/organization is addressing or planning to address the impact of violence on learning (and teaching) that you think others might benefit from hearing about.

This should be a page or so providing a clear description of what you do, why you think it is an effective practice and for whom. You must also respond at least once with some care and thought to another practice that has been posted – exploring the strengths and weaknesses you see it would have in your context.

These two posts are worth 15% of the final grade.

3. Creating a resource to teach others about the issue

You are invited to focus on some aspect of the issue of violence and learning and develop materials in any form – for any audience – to “teach” others about this issue. This could include inviting others to try out activities, or to read or watch something you found particularly helpful, as well as creating your own original materials in any format and any form that helps to draw out the complexity of an aspect of the issue. Multi-media creations are encouraged!

You are creating a tool to further develop understanding of some aspect of the issue. During **Weeks 10** you will post draft creations and you will “talk” about this work in progress and receive feedback from myself and fellow students during Weeks 10 or 11, which will hopefully

prompt further thoughts and questions for you to deepen and strengthen your creation. You will submit the final version with your final paper (see 4). (Final and posted draft materials are worth 20 - 55% of final grade depending on the balance you choose between a traditional academic paper and a non-traditional multi-media exploration to teach others about some aspect of the issue – see 4 for description of the paper).

I am currently building a website: www.learningandviolence.net which is intended to be a multi-media educational resource for everyone interested in the issue of violence and learning and a site for networking on the issue. At the end of the course I hope to discuss with you whether you are interested in submitting your creation to be included in the website so that it can be a tool to provide broader education on the issue.

4. Brief or In-depth Paper

To complete your assignment for the course you will need to create an analytical paper (worth 20 to 55% of the final grade depending on the balance you choose between paper and teaching materials). Either:

a. A brief reflective paper to build on your teaching tools with some analysis of why and how you chose to address the aspect you did and the implications for learning and teaching.

OR: b. A more in-depth paper developing an analysis of one aspect of how violence affects learning AND how educators broadly, or in one particular context, can take account of this impact and support learning effectively.

When you submit your paper/materials state the proportions of your grade you wish to be assigned to the materials and the paper – if you are choosing a brief paper you should have a full and complex set of materials and be assigning a higher percentage to that component. If you are choosing a lengthier, fuller paper it is likely you focused less time and energy on your materials and should therefore be assigning a smaller percentage of the grade to these and focusing your work on the paper.

Paper and materials (draft and final) together will add up to 75% of your grade. You will choose the proportion of that to be allocated to the material and the proportion to be allocated to the paper. The minimum you can allocate to each is 20% and the maximum 55%. You must state your choice when you submit the paper.

In Summary:

Each two week period:

- 1. Read key reading/s**
- 2. Respond to online activities**
- 3. Try at least 2 – 3 activities from the activity sheet (or ones you make up)**

- 4. Keep a journal with your reflections on readings and activities**
- 5. Post 1 or 2 reflections online**
- 6. Respond to some posts of others**

Last dates to post required pieces:

End of Week 2 – January 23rd - Personal description

End of Week 5 – February 13th - Key struggle

End of Week 8 – March 6th - Interesting practice you want to share

End of Week 10 – March 27th - Draft material you have created

End of Week 12 – April 9th - Reflection on course completed

Approximately two weeks later – exact date to be announced - submit completed material and paper.